ABSTRACT

THE CONTRACTING AND CONTROVERSY OF THE INTERIOR FURNISHINGS FOR THE TORONTO CITY HALL: A CASE STUDY IN DESIGN POLITICS

By

Marian K. McKeever

This study investigates a relatively unresearched area of design--design politics. Its purpose is to 1) examine the role politics can assume in a public design program and 2) suggest how this role can be better defined and structured to encourage, not undermine, an integrated, total-design approach.

The case studied is the controversial contracting of the interior furnishings for the Toronto City Hall. The distinctive design of Viljo Revell--the winning entry in the most extensive architectural competition of the century--stands as a symbol of the city, an architectural wonder. Yet the furnishings are labeled unsuccessful. This study questions "why a city courageous enough to produce a superb building by international competition seemed incapable of establishing empathy with the design concept when it came to selecting the furnishings."[1] The research methods employed were personal interviewing, examination of original records, and analytical study of relevant literature.

The facts are presented in the first three chapters of the study--reviewing historical background of the City Hall and Square, the controversial contracting of the furnishings, and the art work controversy. The fourth chapter is an analysis of the decisions made, the consequences, and possible alternatives; the final chapter, conclusions and future implications of the study.

In the case of the Toronto City Hall, irresponsible decision-making and poorly defined policy resulted in design programs susceptible to political intervention and controversy. The complexities of the interior furnishings were never understood; the need for an integrated design approach was never realized.

The study evidences the need to redefine design decision-making roles and to restructure public design programs. Design, not politics, must be recognized as the priority in public design projects.

The conclusions of the study are far-reaching. The scope of public design encompasses all building projects undertaken by a government--from city halls and courthouses, to low-income housing, urban redevelopment, public schools, and universities. Political decisions often determine the design of such structures. Thus, it is the responsibility of all concerned design participants to educate political

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decision-makers of the need for good public design (to elevate public taste, develop civic pride, and stimulate a creative environment); and for an integrated, total design approach to achieve this end.

To overcome the weaknesses suffered by the City of Toronto--weaknesses that can threaten any public design program--the author suggests 1) more responsible decision-making, by delegating both the responsibility and the authority to those most qualified; 2) better defined policy, considering not only the goals and objectives but also the means by which they are to be realized; and 3) a more structured framework of roles and responsibilities, insuring design collaboration throughout all phases of the program.

This study is not conclusive. Further research is required in areas of decision-making, policy planning, and public administration before a successful restructuring of public design programs can be realized. Certainly it is an area worthy of further investigation.

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[1]Robert Gretton, "The Great Furniture Debate." Canadian Architect 10 (June 1965): 55.

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By

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to examine the role politics can play in the design decision-making process; and secondly, to promote the concept of the "total design environment". By reviewing the facts of one specific case--the contracting of the interior furnishings for the Toronto City Hall, the reader will be provided with a deeper insight into the political interplay that can affect the creative processes of architect and interior designer, and disrupt the flow of the integrated design approach.

Interior design as a profession is entering a new era. No longer can the complexities of interior furnishings be ignored. Rather, they must be recognized as an integral part of the total design concept. Brock Arms, AIA, AID, and NSID, defines "total design environment" as "the harmony of the building shell and the loose furnishings within it."[1] He notes that collaboration--shared tastes, mutual

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[1] Brock Arms, "Interiors: What is the Architect's Role?" American Institute of Architect's Journal 44 (December, 1966): 34.

understanding, and enthusiasm--is the key to a successful design approach.

In the contracting of the interior furnishings for the Toronto City Hall, this key to success was never realized. Due to political intervention, there was no collaboration between architect and designer. Nor was there mutual understanding between Councilmen and designer, architectural and interior. In the case of the Toronto City Hall, as with many civic projects, politics entered into the design decision-making process, severing the tie between architect and designer, thus destroying the chance for an integrated design.

The emphasis of this study is not the interior furnishings of the City Hall, but rather the decision-making processes by which they were selected. It is a case study of political decision-making in a designing process. By definition a case study

> examines the making of a decision. Typically it falls into the decision-making realm of administrative theory and political behavior. Its characteristic features are concern with a single decision or group of related decisions; a person or group of persons who make, authenticate, or proclaim the decision; and a chronological and analytical narrative of the process by which the decision was given birth....
>
> Some account is given of the numerous personal, political, and economic factors that surrounded the process of decision.... Emphasis throughout is on the decision, whether taken as the act of process; and exploration is made of rejected and hypothetical alternatives....

> The research and writing techniques for a case study involve contact with original records, use of interviews, canvassing of relevant analytical literature, and the difficult art of organizing a mass of material into a logical form of presentation.[2]

The components of this thesis are most adaptable to a case study approach. The study is divided into five chapters. The first reviews the historical background of the Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square. From its very inception, the project was plagued by political controversy. The second chapter focuses upon the City's decision-making processes for the design and installation of the furnishings for the new City Hall. It studies in depth the preliminary planning for the furnishings, the Furniture Design Competition, the controversial contracting process, and the aftermath. The following chapter studies political decisions--and indecision--in the selection of a city hall mural and other "proper" works of art. The fourth chapter is a personal analysis of the design decision-making processes, and the final chapter, conclusions and future implications of the study.

Although much has been written concerning the architecture of the Toronto City Hall--it was the most extensive

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[2]James W. Fesler, "The Case Method in Political Science", and Edwin A. Bock, "Case Studies about Government: Achieving Realism and Significance", Essays on the Case Method in Public Administration (New York: International Institute of Administrative Sciences, 1962), pp. 72, 76, 89.

architectural competition of this century--little has been recorded about the interior furnishings or the designing process. Indeed, little research has been done to determine the role of politics in a public design decision-making process. By documenting and analyzing the political decisions made in the contracting of the furnishings for the Toronto City Hall, the author hopes to make others--architects, interior designers, politicians, the public as a whole--aware of the need for an integrated design process, a process unhampered by excessive political intervention.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

TORONTO'S NEW CITY HALL AND CIVIC SQUARE

> Frank Lloyd Wright called it a "grave marker", a "Romanesque abortion", a "piece of categorical sterility". Columnists and cartoonists had fun describing it as "Nate's clam shell", "Phillips Pholly", the "hair dryer", and other picturesque names. But the people took the new City Hall to their hearts long before its construction had started. Now the twin curved towers with the saucer-shaped Council Chamber between them are recognized as the trademark of Toronto and acclaimed one of the most distinctive buildings in the world. The new City Hall story graphically illustrates the trials and tribulations in planning, starting, and completing a large municipal project. Private enterprise would have completed the project in three years instead of the ten years it did take.[1]

In January, 1954, the City of Toronto initiated a federal system of metropolitan government. Toronto, the second largest city and financial center of Canada, was no longer a simple central city, but a rapidly growing urban agglommeration. And it was in need of a new political structure. The existing government--a central city and twelve suburban municipalities--was incapable of providing for the physical needs of the increasingly populated urban

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[1]Nathan Phillips, Mayor of All the People (Toronto: McClellan and Stewart Limited, 1967), p. 140.

community. The creation of a metropolitan government was the culmination of a long history of citizen as well as official concern with the problems plaguing the Toronto area--poor physical planning, haphazard urban sprawl, inadequate housing for lower income families, generally poor housing conditions, and the absence of federal or provincial legislation to alleviate these conditions.

Initially the City of Toronto fought vigorously against federation, knowing the City would bear the financial burden of the alliance and that the City would pay for the development of the suburbs. Yet City participation and funding was later accomplished upon the assumption that when the time came for help to flow from the expanding and increasingly affluent suburban communities back into the hard-pressed central city, a similar sense of responsibility would prevail. The system created in 1954 introduced a new political unit--the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto ("Metro"). The Metro Council consisted of twelve representatives from the city and one, the mayor or reeve, from each of the twelve suburban municipalities. The Metropolitan Corporation was to be responsible for developing and executing policies on the major social, economic, and physical development matters. The Metro concept as explained by Frederick G. Gardiner, the first Metropolitan Council Chairman, "assumed that all residents of the metropolitan area,

whether in the central city or in the fringe areas and semi-rural suburban communities, must combine their resources to ensure the survival and development of the whole metropolis."[2]

Metro would work closely with the existing City government--a twenty-three member City Council consisting of eighteen aldermen (one from each of the city's precincts), four controllers, and one elected mayor. The mayor and the four controllers formed the Board of control which functioned as an executive council, making all necessary preliminary decisions and setting the program for the City Council meetings.

To encourage more effective communication and coordination between City and Metro, Nathan Phillips, the newly elected mayor of Toronto, recommended that the two branches of government be housed under one roof. The existing City Hall, completed in 1889, was inadequate to fulfill the needs of Toronto's changing political structure; and a new City Hall was proposed.

Years before, December of 1946, the people of Toronto had voted in favor of the acquisition of land for a new Civic Square. Phillips felt this approval of a new Civic

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[2]Albert Rose, Governing Metropolitan Toronto (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1972), Preface.

Square meant public endorsement of a new City Hall--"to envision a Civic Square without a new City Hall is to think of a crown without a jewel."[3] Yet in December, 1955, the people of Toronto voted against proceeding with construction of a new City Hall. However, the plan for a City Hall was not abandoned.

Metro Council selected a special committee on accommodation to meet with representatives on the City to study Mayor Phillips' proposal of housing both political units in one new City Hall. The proposal of this committee was that the Metro Corporation would participate with the City of Toronto in the construction of the new Civic Square and City Hall on a joint-ownership basis. On February 7, 1956, Chairman Gardiner, addressing Metro Council, recommended they enter into agreement with the City as "owners in common" of the new City Hall. On the assumption that Metro would require 100,000 square feet of space, and the City, 300,000 square feet, exclusive of joint use of a council chamber and committee rooms; Gardiner proposed that the Metro Corporation pay the City one-quarter of the acquisition costs of the land and one-quarter the cost of construction for the new civic complex. Gardiner also indicated his choice of a building would not be as imposing or ornate as some might suggest for a civic center, but a simpler,

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[3]Phillips, Mayor of All the People, p. 115.

yet attractive and economical edifice. In his opinion, the citizens of Toronto did not want a prestige building involving excessive expenditure, but desired a simple, dignified, functional structure.

At a City Council meeting on February 13, 1956, approval was given for a Joint Committee of the Toronto City Council and Metro Toronto Council to study this proposal. Realizing the inherent difficulties of joint-ownership, this committee recommended accommodation of the Metro Corporation in the new City Hall should be on a rental rather than ownership basis. The committee proposed that the City of Toronto finance the building of the Civic Square and City Hall, and rent the needed space to the Metro Corporation. The terms of occupancy would be embodied in an agreement negotiated by both City and Metro.

Mayor Phillips strongly supported this proposal. He felt that the City should build and own its City Hall. He opposed Gardiner's suggestion of joint-ownership, as well as his proposal for a simple, functional complex. Phillips felt Toronto deserved the finest City Hall and Civic Square in the world. "It should be a most important element in the life of the city, a symbol of Toronto, a source of pride and pleasure to its citizens, to be used and enjoyed by them."[4]

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[4]Nathan Phillips, Foreword to Conditions of the Competition: City Hall and Square, Toronto Canada, by the Corporation of the City of Toronto, September, 1957, p. 1.

The Joint Committee had requested three local architectural firms to submit plans for the new civic center. On March 26, 1956; Marini and Morris, Mathers and Haldenby, and Shore and Moffat, submitted their proposal for the new complex. The plan consisted of a plaza with four buildings. The City Hall--a twelve-story rectangular building housing the administrative offices--was the center of the complex. A lower building accommodating the Council Chamber, the Mayor and Metro Chairman offices, and the committee rooms was placed directly in front. Flanking the City Hall were two Registry Office Buildings--one already did exist, the other would conform in scale and style to the existing one.

Upon the assurance of the architects that the proposed buildings would provide a dignified civic center--aesthetically pleasing, architecturally sound, and well-designed--the committee approved the plans. The proposal was also approved by Metro Chairman Gardiner. Mayor Phillips strongly opposed the proposed complex.

Finding it disappointingly conservative, Phillips stated:

> For an undertaking of this importance, we should have the best architectural brains in the world. We should have an international competition for the design of the City Hall and Civic Square.... Somewhere in the world there may be another Christopher Wren, Leonardo da Vinci, or Michelangelo.[5]

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[5]Nathan Phillips as quoted by William Bragg: "Nate Phillips' Soft-Sell Won the City Hall War", Toronto Star, 11 September 1965.

The Controllers turned a deaf ear to Mayor Phillips' proposal. But Mayor Phillips persisted with his plea for a grand international competition, gaining the support of his City Council.

The Metro Corporation had agreed to rent space in the new City Hall at a rental of $6.00 per square foot on the ground floor, $5.00 per square foot of space occupied on other floors, and $2.50 per square foot of space shared by City and Metro--the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms. These rates would be reviewed at the end of each five year period for re-evaluation and adjustment. Metro also agreed to buy the old City Hall for $4,500,000.

In December, 1956, the question of building a new City Hall on the Civic Square site was once again presented to the voters. By a majority of 5,000, the people of Toronto agreed to build a $18,000,000 City Hall. And the City Council approved the recommendation for an international competition. Mayor Phillips' vigorous and continuous campaign for a new and exciting City Hall was a success.

Professor Eric Arthur of the School of Architecture, the University of Toronto, was appointed by the City Council to act as professional adviser of the competition. Under his direction, the City of Toronto Planning Board studied the site of the proposed complex--a twelve acre area in the heart of Toronto's financial and commercial district--and

prepared a comprehensive program on the Conditions of the Competition. Also incorporated into the conditions, were the findings of a professional team of architectural consultants on the present and future space requirements of both City and Metro.

At a meeting of the City Council held September 3, 1957, the terms of the competition were approved. Council appointed a team of five internationally known architects as jury to judge the submissions of the competition. The jury included Sir William Holford, architect and town planner, London, England; Charles E. Pratt, professor of the Theory of Architecture at the Polytechnic Institute of Milan, editor of Casa Bella, and practicing architect with clients from New York to Milan; Eero Saarinen, architect born in Finland, practicing in the United States, also known for his excellent furniture designs; and Gordon Stephenson, past professor of Town and Regional Planning, the University of Toronto, and present consultant to city planning boards in Toronto, Hamilton, and Halifax.

The competition received approval from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the International Union of Architects. The only formidable opposition was the Ontario Association of Architects suggesting that the open international competition carried the implication that local architects lacked the talent to design so important a public

building. (They later accepted the competition and acted as advisor to the proceedings.)

The conditions were presented in a brief introduction and two parts. In addition to all the technical information to direct the competing architects, the conditions included the functional and space requirements for the various departments of both the City and Metro governments. They also encouraged the competitors to create, not just an office building, but a unique complex, clearly distinguishable as the seat of civic government:

> One of the reasons for this competition is to find a building that will proudly express its function as the centre of civic government. How to achieve an atmosphere about a building that suggests government, continuity of certain democratic traditions, and service to the community are problems for the designer of the modern city hall. These were the qualities that architects of other ages endeavored to embody in the town halls of their times.[6]

The competition was organized in two stages--preliminary and final; the principle objective to restrict the amount of work and expense to the competitors. At the end of the preliminary stage, the five man jury was required to select a maximum of eight competitors for the final stage. The City agreed that each of the eight finalists would receive $7500, and the winning architect would, in addition to being given the commission to execute his design, be paid an advance of fees of $25,000.

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[6] Ibid., p. 3.

The preliminary stage was open to any architect in the world who could prove membership in a recognized architectural society or institute and who, upon payment of $5.00, received a copy of the Conditions of the Competition. Designs were required to be shown by drawings at a one inch to thirty-two feet scale and a model scaled one inch to fifty feet. In addition, each submission was to be accompanied by a brief explanatory report of the design.

The response was overwhelming. By April, 1958, five hundred and twenty architects representing forty-two countries had submitted designs. There can be little doubt that the number of submissions from many different countries represented a unique cross-section of contemporary architectural thought. When displayed for the judging, the plans and models completely filled the Horticultural Building at the Canadian National Exhibition, an area of 32,000 square feet. Considerable administrative work and great care was necessary, not only for the preparation of the display, but also for providing adequate security for the many foreign entries which had to clear customs.

Throughout the process, anonymity was maintained. Identification was made possible by assigning each submission a number, then placing the number on each drawing and model, and on the sealed envelope containing the competitor's name. Each entry was examined by Professor Arthur to ascertain compliance with the conditions of the competition.

On April 22, 1958, the jury began to judge the preliminaries entries. Professor Arthur acted as the non-voting chairman. After six days of deliberation, the jury announced the eight finalists. In the opening remarks of their report, the jury stated:

> The worldwide invitation extended to architects by the citizens of Toronto has aroused such interest and stimulated so great an effort on the part of the competitors, that our task of selecting not more than eight designs of the five hundred and twenty to take part in the Final Stage has not only been an exciting one, but an exacting one.[7]

Four of the eight finalists were from the United States--I. M. Pei, Wills and Parkin, Frank Mikutowski, and William B. Hayward. Other finalists and their country were David E. Horne, Canada; John H. Andrews, Australia; Gunnlogsson and Neilsen, Denmark; and Viljo Revell, Finland.

These eight finalists were then required to develop and resubmit their designs. Submissions included more detailed drawings (one inch to equal sixteen feet) and models (one inch to thirty-two feet scale). Each entry was carefully checked and measured, and all details were made available for the jury.

On September 22, 1958, the five jurists returned to Toronto to judge the final stage of the competition.

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[7]Report of the Jury, as quoted in the City of Toronto Planning Board's Synopsis of the City Hall and Square Competition for Toronto, Canada, December, 1958, p. 4.

The judging took place in a room high in the existing City Hall overlooking the competition site. After four days of careful study and lengthy discussion, the decision of the jury was announced. The winning design was that of Viljo Revell of Finland.

The jury's decision was not a unanimous one. Sir William Holford and Professor Gordon Stephenson had serious reservations about the design--its suitability to the site, the efficiency of the complex, and the flexibility for future expansion. Yet all members accepted the majority decision that Revell was the winner of the competition, and all members agreed his entry was indeed "the most original in conception of any of those submitted."[8]

While judging the entries, the jury carefully considered the conditions of the competition--to create a building which expresses its function as the center of civic government. They realized that the City Hall needed to bear a conscious relationship with its surroundings, and also to be a dynamic architectural statement. To achieve this successfully, several approaches were recognized.

First, the City Hall could be similar to the surrounding structures, easily absorbed into the downtown landscape. The distinctiveness would be derived not from the building

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[8]"Finnish Entry Wins Toronto Civic Centre Competition: Report of the Majority", Architectural Record 124 (November, 1958): 10.

itself, but from its setting in the square. The jury was of the opinion, however, that this approach did not fully comply with the conditions of the competition.

Secondly, City Hall could be made tall and soaring, rising above all other buildings in the downtown area, a dominant feature in Toronto's skyline. Several competitors attempted this, but the jury felt such an approach was impractical, for there was no way to insure that such an effect would be maintained.

Also, a relatively low, horizontal building built in the square could achieve a great dignity by its simple contrast to the background. The jury had agreed that this was a promising concept and five of the finalists had pursued this approach.

Finally, the jury conceived that City Hall could be a distinctive building, different in both form and materials from the surrounding office structures. It would be impressive when seen from the Square and immediate neighborhood, as well as a distinctive feature in the silhouette of the city when viewed from a distance.

In appraising the finalists, the majority concluded that Revell had achieved a design which most excellently achieved this last approach.

> The monumental qualities are of a high order, and its composition of great strength. Its shape is distinctive and dynamic, setting it apart from the other

> structures in Toronto and from administrative and office buildings everywhere....[9]

Many other considerations were weighed in the decision of the jury. The design of the square itself was of vital concern and interest. And the jury agreed that Revell had achieved a successful, lively space; an attractive foreground to the proposed structure as well as a pleasing backdrop to the present city hall.

The interior spatial arrangement was also of prime importance. Revell's public access areas, those parts of the building most frequented by the public, were found to most successfully meet the conditions--"this is the citizens first impression of City Hall. Without extravagance, it should be impressive."[10]

Revell's placement of the council chamber as a center focus was found to have great significance as a symbol of democratic government. Also highly praised by the majority, were the functional organization of the composition and its structural economy.

The jury found the overall design composition to have strength and dramatic expression. It consisted of four elements: the civic square, the podium, the council chamber and the office towers.

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[9] Ibid., p. 13.

[10] Conditions of the Competition, p. 21.

The civic square, the southern portion of the site, formed a forecourt to the City Hall. A rectangular pool, placed in the square on the axis of the existing city hall, would reflect both the old and the new city halls. Three precast arches spanned the pool, enhancing the lines of the composition. From the square, there would be two main entrances into the hall--one, the public entrance into a large public hall, the center for governmental business; and the second, the ceremonial entrance into the council chamber via an exterior ramp. An elevated walkway surrounding the square on three sides joined the building with the square. The floor of the square was to be precast concrete paving slabs. Beneath the square would be an underground public parking garage.

The three story podium covered the northern half of the square. This horizontal structure would house the main public hall, the municipal library, the land title office, and the registry office. The main public hall was a magnificent, round room with a great circular rotunda cutting upward through three floors to a skylight above. Around this room would stretch a long, continuous counter at which all public business would be transacted. The jury found the arrangement to be most efficient, and the room most handsome.

Above this main floor was a mezzanine devoted to circulation; and a second mezzanine with departmental offices for

both the City and Metro governments, including the offices for the Mayor, the Metro chairman, and the Board of Control.

The roof of the podium constituted an upper plaza, the inner part contained within the towers, the outer part overlooking the square.

The Council Chamber, seen as a broad, low dome, was the focus of this rooftop plaza. The Mayor or Metro Chairman would sit in the slightly sunken area in the center of the chamber. Around them at a higher elevation, a semi-circular seating gallery would accommodate spectators. A non-supportive curtain wall would divide the Council Chamber from the member's lounge and kitchen. The unit would be encircled by a gallery offering an excellent view of the civic square and surrounding areas of the city.

To complete the composition were the two curved towers, rising from the podium and enclosing the council chamber unit. The west tower, twenty-one floors, was considerably smaller than the east tower, twenty-seven floors; yet both were similar in design and construction. Together, they would accommodate the various City and Metro departmental offices. Structurally, the towers were to be convex curved reinforced concrete walls--"back walls"--and an interior line of columns. Each floor would be supported on the back wall and carried on the columns to the glass curtain wall on the concave face of the towers. The back walls would be

faced with Botticino marble. The inner walls would be glass. The jury agreed that the carefully shaped curves of the towers, and the materials chosen achieved a perfect balance and strengthened dignity.

Overall, it was agreed that the complex when viewed closely would stand as a symbol on the city in the urban landscape. And from a distance, the curving forms would create a distinctive feature in the Toronto skyline.

Although agreeing that the complex could be a symbol of the city, and that the concept was both original and imaginative; two members of the jury seriously questioned the suitability of the design. Sir William Holford and Gordon Stephenson presented their reservations in a minority report to Council, hoping their statements would be considered in modifying the final design. They openly criticized the design for presenting blank walls to the surrounding areas, shutting of City Hall from the east, north, and west. They feared that such a feature would retard the future development of these sectors of the city. They also criticized the monumental, inhuman scale and stark design of the complex. And they found the landscaping to be disappointingly unfinished.

They had strong reservations about the internal circulation within the buildings, requiring involved, complex movement from the office towers to the Council chamber, and

from tower to tower. They believed the one-sided office tower arrangement would create horizontal lines of communication, less effective than those found in the traditional two-sided arrangements of office space. They also found defects in the working accommodations of the Council Chamber.

Holford's and Stephenson's strongest objection, however, was the cost of the proposed unit. They claimed the form of construction for the office towers was the most expensive that could have been devised. As also adding to the cost, they listed the variety of structural forms and materials, and the considerable space demanded solely for circulation. They suggested that without changing the main effect of the composition, the cost could be reduced by revising the spatial arrangements, construction method, and the structural materials. They further warned Council that to realize Revell's design and preserve the integrity of the concept, it should be prepared to greatly increase the proposed budget of $18,000,000.

City Council had little more than minor objections to the winning design. Mayor Phillips was most pleased with the structure: "It is monumental, breathtaking. I favor it wholeheartedly.... The architect should be given full co-operation and the maximum support of all concerned."[11]

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[11]Nathan Phillips, quoted by Stanley Westhall, "City Hall Cost seen $30,000,000", Toronto Globe and Mail, 27 September 1958.

And although the Ontario Association of Architects had not readily accepted the idea of an international competition, they more than accepted Revell's design:

> A great design has emerged and a fine architect will join our ranks for some years in Canada ... great and deserved has been the publicity for Mr. Revell. Newspapers in Toronto have given space to the competition normally reserved for declarations of war or peace.... We cannot possibly exaggerate when we say that at no time and in no place in the world has the attention of two million people been so vividly drawn to the place of the architect and his services to society. We should not be surprised if Toronto people raised their hats to Mr. Revell as he walks our streets.[12]

Viljo Revell enjoyed such respect and distinction in his native Finland. Born January 25, 1910, in the small town of Vassa, Revell had decided in his teens to be an architect. At the age of eighteen, he left Vassa and enrolled in the Institute of Technology in Helsinki, the only recognized architectural school in Finland. During his college years, he travelled throughout Europe, establishing a substantial practice and reputation. Upon completion of his studies, he opened an architectural office in Helsinki and practiced throughout Finland. He admired the work of Alvar Aalto, at that time generally unrecognized, and worked twice as his assistant. He had designed apartment houses and communities, business and office buildings, shopping

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[12]"Editorial: The Toronto City Hall and Square Competition", Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (October, 1958): 359.

plazas, factories, churches, and municipal buildings--as well as their interiors.

In addition to his private practice, Revell devoted much time and effort to common endeavors and problems of the architectural profession. He served as director of the Institute of Finnish Architects and Superintendent of the Museum of Finnish Architecture. He often entered architectural competitions, a Finnish tradition, finding them to be healthy for the profession. He was most excited about the Toronto Competition and felt his entry was the most important work of his life.

Although he had visited the United States and Mexico in conjunction with a research scholarship, he had never been to Canada.

Upon his winning the competition, Revell immediately flew to Toronto. Hoping that the people were content with his design, he was not disappointed. He received a warm and welcome reception by the city and her people. He bought a house in Toronto, prepared to give the necessary time for the realization of his design.

In March, 1959, Viljo Revell signed the New City Hall and Civic Square Architect's Agreement, drafted by the City Council's Planning Board. The contract covered the professional services to be rendered by the architect and his associates. (Under the Conditions of the Competition, Revell

was required to associate himself with a member of the Ontario Association of Architects. In compliance to this condition, Revell had selected John C. Parkin and John B. Parkin of Parkin Associates in Toronto as his associates.) The agreement required City approval in the undertaking, executing, and competing of the design. It stated that it was the responsibility of the architects to consult the Committee of City Property of all phases of the design and construction from inception to completion.

Together with his associates, Revell proceeded with the preliminary sketches and drawings, and a realistic estimate of the cost of the complex. At a special meeting of the Board of Control held November 2, 1959; the architects presented the Stage I Report. The designs reflected the concept of the original proposal, yet certain revisions were made to economize. By modifications of the interior space, the architects reduced the cubic content while increasing the net floor space of the original design. They had carefully examined the space requirements of all the departments--City and Metro--and readjusted the interior space to satisfy those requirements, both present and projected.

The question of cost was a most vital one. Most disturbed was Metro Chairman Gardiner. He had opposed the idea of an international competition. He had never wanted a

"prestige" building and refused to pay the high rental demanded for space in such a building:

> If Toronto wants something like the leaning tower of Pisa to attract attention, it should not expect the other municipalities to pay for it.[13]

Referring to earlier negotiations, he refused to pay more than the estimated $6 per square foot on the ground floor and $5 per square foot on higher levels. City Council and the architects had to listen; the City needed Metro in the project. It also needed citizen approval and support; and it was feared that

> Gardiner's vociferous and widely quoted blasts about the cost of the project, may stir up taxpayer rebellion against approving any funds beyond the $18 billion already okayed.[14]

With this in mind, the architects presented their Stage I Cost Estimate. To the Board's surprise, it was below expectations. Yet with the irregular shape of the building, its unusual construction, and the rising building costs; the estimate could not be accepted as a truly reliable measure of actual cost.

With the Board's approval of the Stage I Report, the architects proceeded with Stage II--the completed detailed

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[13]Frederick Gardiner as quoted by David Carmichael: "City Hall Ceremony Recalls Ten Year Rivalries", Toronto Globe and Mail, 11 September 1965.

[14]"City Hall Project for Toronto Hits Snag", Architectural Forum 110 (May, 1969): 9.

working drawings and exact specifications. And with the Board's approval of the Second Stage on January 20, 1961; the project was ready for tender call.

> During the period of tendering, the boldest held his breath; not the least, the Mayor, whose dream of many years would be realized or shattered by the estimate of the lowest contractor.
>
> To the obvious joy of the multitude, and the dismay of a rather vociferous, uninformed minority, the lowest bid was well under the agreed maximum figure. So unexpectedly low, indeed, was the final tender, that several worthwhile additions were made that would add enormously to the efficiency of the building and its permanence.[15]

The City could meet the low rental rates demanded by Chairman Gardiner; it could proceed with the construction of the City Hall and Square.

With the lowest bid of $24,299,722; Anglin Norcross Ontario, Lts. was given the contract for the project. The decision was approved by Council in October, 1961. Also, Council approved the proposal that the forecourt be named the Nathan Phillips Square--to honor the project's initiator and strongest supporter.

On November 7, 1961, Mayor Phillips turned the first sod on the site of the project. The following month, he was re-elected Mayor of Toronto.

In his inaugural address, "the Mayor of all the people" stated that the most significant development of his civic

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[15]Eric Arthur: The New City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square--Sidewalk Superintendent's Report # 1; City of Toronto Property Department, p. 2.

career was the breaking of ground for the City Hall:

> A fourteen year old dream of a new, dynamic, and exciting City Hall is approaching realization. It is a milestone in municipal history and points out the way for a vast and magnificent rebuilding program for the central portion of our city.... It is a symbol of the new Toronto that is emerging ... a civic center worthy of our city and our citizens. ... What we are building has been called one of the most exciting architectural achievements of our time.[16]

On November 7, 1962, Mayor Phillips laid the cornerstone. One month later, he was overwhelmingly defeated by Donald Summerville in the mayorial election, a crushing blow for Phillips.

In his inaugural address, Summerville, a youthful, vigorous, controversial figure, expressed his goal: "to break away from the cobwebs and stagnation".[17] He found Toronto's progress slow and the construction of the City Hall lagging. He hoped for expedient completion of the complex and a shift of emphasis from the construction of the city hall to the development of these areas opposite the square.

Upon Summerville's untimely death in November, 1963; his Vice Chairman, Philip G. Givens, assumed the duties of

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[16]Nathan Phillips, "Inaugural Address", Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix C, January, 1962, p. 2.

[17]Donald Summerville: "Inaugural Address", Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix C, 7 January 1963, p. 1.

the office. Construction of the complex progressed more slowly than anticipated; and the eyes of the city eagerly watched the development of the project. By summer of 1965, the complex was nearing completion. The city officials were busily preparing the ceremonies for opening day.

On September 11, 1965--one year later than the anticipated completion date--the Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square was officially open to the public. Dignitaries from all of Canada were present at the opening day ceremonies. Mayor Givens presided over the ceremonies. In his opening remarks, he stated:

> It is with feelings of great joy and deep gratitude that I welcome this assembly to the opening of Toronto's new City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square. Today the City's pride is monumental. It is an emotion shared by every citizen of this great city, and, as Mayor, it is my privilege to articulate this mood of my fellow citizens....
>
> As we survey the surroundings, we must be grateful for all time for the vision and courage--for the creativity and perserverance of so many people, from an architectural genius in far off Finland, to the humblest laborour in Canada--and above all, for the support and patience of the citizens of the City, without which this structure would never have passed the idea stage. And now it stands before us--proud and symbolic--symbolic of the vitality of the city, as international and cosmopolitan in the composition of its citizenry as the world-wide competition that gave this City Hall and Square its birth--symbolic of Toronto's transformation onto a world center of learning, industry, and commerce--a symbol of bold audacity, for it took audacity to build so untraditional a building in a city steeped in tradition.
>
> Let this day mark the beginning of a new epoch in the progress of our city. Let this building serve as the

symbol of the city's, and its citizens', dynamism.[18]

It was truly a most exciting day for Nathan Phillips, receiving distinction as initiator, promoter, and strongest supportor of the project:

> The improbable city hall is the product of two diverse talents--the political sagacity of Nathan Phillips and the imagination of Viljo Revell. Phillips successfully overcame Toronto's 131 year record of ultra-conservatism. He fought and won the "City Hall War".[19]

His victory did not go unrecognized. During the ceremonies he was presented the Civic Award of Merit, the highest honor Toronto could give a citizen.

> Many men had a hand in bringing to reality this magnificent home of Civic Government in Toronto. Many roles were played in the drama--and some of the episodes were dramatic to say the least--but none will question the one man whose courage, persistance, and vision was most responsible for giving Toronto a City Hall which is truly emblematic of its destiny as one of the world's greatest cities is the man we all affectionately knew as the "Mayor of all the People"--Nathan Phillips.
>
> To Mr. Phillips goes much of the credit for this outstanding architectural gem. It was he who championed the idea of an international competition as the technique for inspiring the best brains among the architects of the world.[20]

The one shadow on the day's events was the absence of Viljo Revell. The Finnish architect did not live to see

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[18]Philip G. Given's; "Opening Remarks: Opening Day Ceremonies for the City Hall and Square"; Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix C, September 11, 1965, p. 27.

[19]Bragg, p. 11.

[20]Givens, p. 29.

the opening of the most important work of his career. In November, 1964, he had suffered a fatal paralytic stroke, only three weeks after he had traveled to Toronto to inspect the progress of the City Hall. Revell's wife attended the ceremonies, accepting a gold charm, symbol of Toronto's gratitude for her husband--

> a man whose creative genius provided Toronto with its most dazzling architectural possession.... He left in our midst a most significant monument to his enormous talent.[21]

Also, an engraved stone memorial to Mr. Revell was unveiled inside the main entrance to the hall, as a reminder for generations to come of the man who conceived the splendid complex.

Architecturally, the finished composition well reflected Revell's original design.

> Before building started, politicians began eroding the architectural integrity of the design. Mr. Revell and his Ontario Associate, John Parkin, fought successfully to save the original concept.[22]

Though the sharp corners of the office towers were rounded to economize, and the boomerang shapes modified to more regular curves to better withstand wind loads; the basic effect of the four elements in composition was as Revell had conceived it.

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[21] Ibid., p. 31.

[22] "Designer of New City Hall dies at 54", Toronto Star, 9 November 1964.

In the most professional of the critiques written, R. H. Thom recognized the structure as the most important civic building since the war. He did criticize the inconsistencies in construction, the raw edges, the unresolved features, and the flaws in detail; yet he knew these faults would disturb only the professional, not the citizen.

> Toronto can be justly proud to have a City Hall that expresses its uniqueness by its very fabric. It is a convincing and poetic expression of the various parts of the living function it houses. This has been managed with such sureness and clarity that, like a well-turned tune, it attracts wide interest and it can be remembered.
>
> The citizen has taken the City Hall to his heart. Now it is to be lived in, left as much to the skater in the square as to the Mayor and Council and to the citizen who pays his parking fine and photographs his family against its towers.... Revell, in giving the city a strong symbol, has given it a strong building, one that accommodate all the love and abuse that can be heaped upon it in its lifetime.[23]

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[23]R. H. Thom: "Toronto City Hall: A Critique", The Canadian Architect 10 (October, 1965): 59-60.

CHAPTER II

THE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TORONTO CITY HALL

In his critique of the new City Hall, Ron Thom also commented on the interiors and furnishings. He found the interior space itself to be efficient and attractive. He elaborated on the well-organized office towers:

> The office towers are likely to be the most fully realized part of the building. The office floors are relaxed and interesting to be in with their ever-changing interior aspects and their ever-changing views of the opposite tower and the city beyond. It was a shrewd decision that put the senior offices against the back wall and secretarial space against the windows. This is indeed an office environment made as much for human beings as it is to take office machinery. It should be the envy of everybody forced to spend the bulk of their waking hours in the graph paper space we have come to regard as inevitable.[1]

He did not, however, have equal praise for the furnishings placed within this most dynamic interior:

> Though an honest attempt has been made to design furniture suitable to the building, it has not been too successful, if the concrete pedestalled desks are a sampling. They are a strange mixture of brutality and elegance that do not emerge as either elegant or as belonging to this building particularly.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 31.

[2] Ibid.

Thom was not alone in his criticism of the furnishings of the new City Hall. Comments ranged from unsightly and non-functional to crude and unfinished. Patwanth Singh, editor of Design in India, upon studying the City Hall and Square, praised the architectural composition of the complex and congratulated the city for building such a fine structure. Yet, disappointed with the furniture, he stated "Council acted strangely when it came to furnishing the building."[3]

Why should a building of such architectural acclaim be so unsuitably furnished? To answer this, one must review the entire process of selecting and contracting the interior furnishings--a process marked by political controversy. "Controversy over the furniture produced more bitterness than the original decision to build."[4]

The question of the interior firnishings was virtually ignored throughout the preliminary planning and construction of the complex. Provisions had been made in the Architects' Agreement for the built-in furnishings in the Council Chamber, including the fixed Councilmen desks, the Mayor's and Metro chairman's desks, and public seating gallery; but provision for the loose furnishings throughout the building

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[3]As quoted in "Singular Symbol for Toronto", Architectural Forum 123 (November, 1966): 23.

[4]Robert Gretton, "The Great Furniture Debate", Canadian Architect 10 (July, 1965): 53.

remained open:

> The design and planning of such furniture and furnishings is not provided for in the draft architects' agreement. If it is desired that the architects should be responsible for this work the City would be required to pay the architects and addition fee for the professional services involved and provision should be made therefor in a separate agreement.[5]

No further action was taken until the fall of 1961. At an October meeting of the City Council, Alderman Horace Brown, a strong supporter of the City Hall project, moved that:

> Whereas the new City Hall is an embodiment of much that is breathtakingly vivid and strikingly beautiful in modern architecture, and
>
> Whereas this will be the new home of the City of Toronto, and no home is complete without compatible furnishings and decor, and
>
> Whereas in the design of the new City Hall was given to architects from all over the world to submit their plans for the building, be it therefore resolved that this City Council request the Board of Control to ask the architect to report his views on how the building should be furnished and/or consider the advisability of a similar international competition among top designers, to secure the best internal and external furnishings possible, compatible with the edifice's design and structure...
>
> And if such a competition is considered advisable, to institute it with all possible speed.[6]

Brown's proposal was approved by the Council and submitted to the Board of Control for further action.

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[5]Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes. Board of Control Report No. 11, "New City Hall and Square--Architect's Agreement," 31 March 1959, p. 768.

[6]Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, "Furnishings--New City Hall", introduced by Horace Brown, 2 October 1961, p. 213.

The Board accepted the recommendation that Revell be requested to submit his design proposals. Council further recommended that the Metropolitan Corporation and the Library Board be requested to submit their views on the question of the furnishings.

Complying with Council's request, Mr. Revell sent the following memorandum dated November 30, 1961 to the Board of Control:

> With reference to the question on how the building should be furnished, it is my belief that when Toronto decided that the new City Hall would be built, based on an international competition, and then commissioned Viljo Revell-John Parkin Associates for the final design, an ordinary building was not asked for. It is now obvious that the new City Hall, not yet built, has become a "Trademark" of Toronto because of its design and form language. To fully provide what is expected of the new City Hall, it is essential that the furnishings and art decoration correspond with the building design.
>
> It is well known that especially in public building, furnishings and the building must be completely integrated to obtain a successful end result. This will be especially true of the new City Hall, not only because circular and curved spaces cannot be furnished efficiently or functionally with standard furniture but the necessity to maintain the same form language throughout the entire building, and especially in the large public spaces, which can be easily visible and overlooked from an upper level. Further, I believe it is also the only way which, in this case, leads to the expected results.
>
> In a very early stage, when discussing the Agreement between the City and the Architects, I asked to include the furnishings, at least in principle, under the Architects' Agreement. However, it was understood to be impossible at that stage because of the special circumstances of the City Hall question as to whether the City Hall was actually going to be built. But it was also understood that such a wish of the Architects would naturally be considered at a later stage,

especially if the total building costs are going to remain according to original estimates. Now, when the contract with the general contractor has been signed at considerable lower costs than expected, I cannot see why such an agreement with the Architects should not be executed.

It may be misconstrued that specially designed furnishings are more expensive than the corresponding quality of existing standard furniture. I wish to express, as my considered opinion, that it is not the fact in this case for the following reasons:

1. The exceptional conditions and form of the office space in the City Hall.

2. The relatively large repetition of units.

3. The prestige afforded the manufacturers for the supply of the Toronto City Hall furniture.

When obtained on a competititve price basis, the above points would bring the costs of specially designed pieces to an even lower than average price. It is also self-evident that the furniture committment should include ALL FURNISHINGS.

It is my firm opinion that City offices, together with Metro offices should be handled as a definite entity. The splitting of the total amount into half would, of course, affect the unit prices, etc. and in some areas, where Metro and City offices are close neighbors and visible together from an upper level, the situation would be ridiculous, if there is any difference in furniture design between the City and Metro.

It is my opinion, therefore, that the furnishings design should be handled as a direct extension of the building design and that this work should be implemented immediately in order that work may commence on the design and selection of the furnishings.[7]

As stated before, the built-in furnishings of the Council Chamber were included in the building contract. As such,

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[7]Corporation of the City of Toronto, Toronto City Council Minutes, Appendix A. Board of Control Report No. 17, "Furnishings in Toronto City Hall", 15 January 1962, pp. 1187-1189.

these furnishings were deeply integrated into the architectural design of the building. Revell felt that the loose furnishings of the Chamber, the Members' Lounge, and the gallery therefore must be designed in conjunction with the built-in units. Indeed, he felt the furnishings throughout the entire structure should be integrated with the architectural design. He found it only "logical" that the two parts of the interior furnishings--fixed and loose--be under the direction of the Architects.

He concluded his statement:

> While the foregoing are my views on the question as to how the building should be furnished, indirectly, it answers the question on the international competition for the furnishings design. I am of the opinion that there is no necessity for a competition for furnishings design and that a furnishing competition cannot be arranged intelligently.[8]

Also, in compliance with the Board's request, Mr. H. C. Campbell, Chief Librarian for the Toronto Municipal Library prepared a memorandum dated December 13, 1961, stating the Library Board's position on the furnishing question for the new City Hall Library. Referring to an earlier agreement between the Library Board and the City of Toronto--which stated that all the furnishings for the library could be furnished by the lessee, providing the selection would correspond with the architectural design of the structure as well as with the design of the furnishings chosen for the

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[8] Ibid., p. 1190.

City Hall; he stated it was the Board's intention to supply its own furnishings in accordance to the terms of that agreement:

> While the Library Board will certainly be glad to harmonize its requirements with those of Mr. Revell, you will realize that the present arrangement only requires that the Board deal with yourself and the City Architect on this matter.[9]

At this time the Board received no comment from the Metropolitan Corporation on the question of their handling of the interior furnishings.

No further action was taken until the following spring. In May, 1962, Revell and Parkin submitted to the Board of Control a more detailed Proposed Furnishings Program, indicating the scope of the work involved with the interior design and selection of furnishings for the City Hall. The need for careful coordination of the loose furnishings with the architectural interior treatment was emphasized for a completely integrated effect. And an early decision was encouraged to avoid wasting valuable time and handicapping the design process. The Proposed Furnishings Program submitted by the architects was quite comprehensive:

> Stage 1: Analysis of Requirements
> Consultation with the City to determine requirements
> Establishing items to be designed or selected
> Establishing design vocabulary--materials, colour, and finishes
> Assembly of samples, catalogues of related work and the investigation of manufacturers

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[9] Ibid., p. 1192.

Stage 2: Preliminary Design
- Basic furniture units and prototypes
- Preliminary selection of furnishings
- Examples of layouts
- Presentation to the City at the completion of Stage 2.
- Approval to proceed in principle
- Establishment of a preliminary budget figure
- Typical office layouts:
  - Department Heads' Offices
  - Deputy Department Heads' Offices
  - Section Heads' Offices
  - Clerks' Offices
  - Conference Room

Stage 3: Final Design
- Final layouts
- Working drawings and specifications of the developed units, including final prototypes
- Final selection of related furnishings
- Accessories final design and selection
- Carpet final selection
- Color and finish schedules
- Co-ordinating artwork.
- Drapery final selection
- Preliminary bidding of selected items and establishing unit prices
- Establishing purchasing procedure with regard to final checking of accounts
- Presentation to the City for final approval to proceed with the tender call.

Stage 4: Tenders
- Co-ordinate with the Purchasing Department in calling of tenders for all phases of the work.
- Analyze tenders received and submit recommendations for City's consideration
- Prepare itemized contract bill of quantities for approval to proceed with purchase orders
- Approval of contract figure
- As determined by City policy: The placing of orders on behalf of the Owners and/or coordinate with City Purchasing Department on placing of orders

Stage 5: Supervision
- Checking the shop drawings
- Factory and shop production checking
- Supervision of installation
- Issuing of certificates of payment and itemized accounting of the contract
- Acceptance of the completed installation[10]

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[10] Ibid., pp. 1194-1195.

Revell-Parkin concluded the Program by reviewing the extent of the architects' responsibility: all office lay-outs; all interior space planning--including walls and partitions; the Council Chamber's furnishings--fixed and loose; all furniture design and selection; carpeting and drapery design and selection; all accessories--planters, ashtrays, nameplates, deskplates, etcetera; upholstery selection; wall-coverings; specially designed lighting fixtures; and coordination of the art work as determined by the Committee on Fine Arts.

Mr. Revell also expressed his disappointment in the Board's delay in reaching a decision on the method of implementation in the design or selection of the furnishings. Due to the importance of the project and its international recognition as an outstanding piece of architecture, Revell felt that the question of the furnishings was even more demanding than customary for civic buildings; that neither the Board of Control nor the City Council fully understood the significance of having properly designed furnishings to complement the architectural design of the new City Hall. He continued that Council did not appreciate the role and function of the furnishings in the total scheme, and instead of contemplating the furnishings as only one progressive step, the final or crowning facet, in the completion of the project; Council tended to consider the furnishings as an unrelated or foreign consideration outside the architects'

realm of responsibility. He suggested that if Council continued to ignore the design and selection of the furnishings,

> the City Hall will never become what the world-wide competition intended and what the citizens expect. If the building and furnishings are not done simultaneously, the architect cannot take the responsibility for the integrity of the entire result.[11]

Revell found Council's reticence in dealing with the furnishings and reluctance to appropriate adequate funds out of proportion with regard to the whole project. For comparison he quoted some pertinent figures concerning other city halls. For example, in Copenhagen, the furnishings for the new City Hall cost 24% of the total building fund, in Toronto, only 6%. And the Copenhagen building cost 50% of the annual city budget; Toronto's City Hall only 8% of the combined Metro and City budget.

Upon receipt of this memorandum, the Board of Control submitted a position paper to the City Council urging the City to enter into an agreement with Viljo-Revell-John B. Parkin Associates for the design of the furnishings for the new City Hall, at a fee of 10 per cent of the net cost. The Board further recommended that the City Solicitor, in conjunction with the Commissioner of City Property, be authorized to prepare such an agreement for submission to the Board of Control for approval.

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[11] Ibid., p. 1198.

When presented to the Council for final vote on June 4, 1962; the Board's recommendations were passed by a vote of nine to seven. At that time it was further recommended by Council that the furnishings purchased by the City for the new City Hall be manufactured in Canada by Canadian craftsmen. Also, it was recommended that the Metropolitan Corporation be requested to favourably consider entering into a similar agreement with the architects for the furnishings required of Metro in the new City Hall.

Mr. Revell had postponed a planned trip back to his native Finland awaiting Council's action on the furnishings question. And though pleased with Council's decision, he was concerned about the delay in taking action.

> The furniture committment has been settled, fortunately. But I am afraid that the three-quarters of a year delay has caused circumstances which indirectly never will be fully corrected.[12]

This nine month delay in making a decision was followed by another full year's delay in taking further action. The furnishings contract between the City and the Architects had been drafted by the City Solicitor. The contract stated (in part) that:

> Whereas the Client (City of Toronto) desires that the furnishings of the new City Hall correspond with the building so as to achieve a complete integration of design,

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[12]Viljo Revell, personal letter to Eric Arthur, June 25, 1962, The Toronto City Hall Files, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

> And whereas the Council approved the Board of Control's recommendation that the services of the Architect be retained for the purpose of the design and selection of the furnishings for the new City Hall in accordance with the terms and conditions within,
>
> And whereas, it is agreed that the Architects shall be jointly responsible for performance of the services, and fees be paid to the Architects in accordance with the provisions of the agreement
>
> Now therefore this agreement witnesseth that the Client and the Architects mutually convenant and agree as follows:
>
> 1. That for the purpose of this agreement, contract work shall mean the design and selection of furnishings for the following areas:
>
> a. all office space--City Departments, Board Rooms, and Representative's offices
> b. public access areas
> c. four committee rooms
> d. press, radio, and television offices and lounge
> e. council chamber and members' room
>
> 2. That the Architects shall undertake, carry out, and complete the contract work; and perform the professional services as established in the Proposed Furnishing Program.
>
> 3. The Architects will throughout the period of performance consult and liase with the Commissioner of City Property.[13]

The contract required the signatures of the Mayor of Toronto, the City Treasurer, Viljo Revell, and John Parkin. The agreement, however, was never signed.

In July, 1963, the Board of Control, under the direction of the newly elected Mayor, Donald Summerville, requested the City Solicitor to indicate to what extent the City was

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[13]"Furnishings Contract--Toronto City Hall, Third Draft," undated, City Coordinator's Files, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

committed to the Architects for the design of the furnishings and how this arrangement could be terminated.

Upon receiving the Board's request, the Solicitor wrote to Revell:

> As you are aware, the City Council has authorized you to proceed on the design of the furnishings for the new City Hall. However, I have now been instructed to report in regard to such furnishings and consequently, it would be appreciated if you would arrange to take no further action in this regard until my report has been considered.[14]

The City Solicitor reported to the Board that although some progress had been made on the Furnishing Agreement between the City and the Architects that the contract had not yet been finalized. He advised that insofar as there was not a sufficiently complete understanding between the City and the Architects so as to constitute any binding contract, that it was not likely that the City had any legal financial responsibility for any work which the Architects may have undertaken in regard to the furnishings, or any commitment to implement to their designs.

He further reported that the Library Board had reversed their earlier decision and had entered into agreement with the architects for the design, purchase, and installation of the Library's furnishings at a fee of ten per cent of the total cost, and that the Metropolitan Corporation had decided to independently furnish their general offices, the City

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[14]William R. Callow, City Solicitor, letter to Viljo Revell, 12 July 1963, City Coordinator's Records, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

Registry Office, the County of York Registry Office, and the Land Titles Office. With nearly half of the area of the new City Hall being furnished by tenants over whom the City had little control, the probability of uniform furnishings throughout the building was lessened. Despite this fact, the Solicitor advised that:

> on a major project of the scope and interest of the new Toronto City Hall, it is of utmost importance that the furnishings comply with, integrate into, and enhance the character of the building. While the furnishing form should comply with the aesthetics of the structure, the function of the furnishings must satisfy the needs of the City Hall operation.[15]

The Solicitor recommended that specially designed furniture be used in all public areas, such as the Council Chamber, Members Lounge and Ante-Room, Committee Rooms, the Public Lobbies, and the offices of the Mayor, the Board of Control, and the Aldermen. But for the departmental offices, he suggested adapting existing departmental furnishings.

November, 1963, after considerable research including conferences with "experts" in the furnishing field, the City Solicitor suggested a furnishings procedure that would "result in a more economical furnishing program for the new City Hall without detracting in any way from its character or dignity."[16]

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[15]Corporation of the City of Toronto, City of Toronto Council Minutes, Board of Control Report No. 33, November 10, 1963, Appendix B, p. 2949.

[16]Ibid., p. 2950.

The first stage of his suggested procedure was a preliminary survey of all furnishings on inventory and the removal of all items which could not be considered for use in the new City Hall. All that furniture deemed unsuitable would be transferred to City buildings or offices outside the new City Hall. Any furniture deemed unusable would be discarded.

It was then suggested that all civic department heads forward to the Co-ordinator a complete list of furnishings required for accommodation of his department in the new City Hall.

The next stage would be the City's public advertisement for furnishings contract supply companies who would be prepared to enter into a competition for the supply, delivery, and installation of all new furnishings and for the refurbishing of existing furnishings. The Solicitor recommended the qualifications necessary for the applicants to merit consideration. He further recommended that Carl J. Lochman, Director of the National Design Branch, Department of Industry, be requested to nominate an expert in the field of furnishings to be known as the Specifier, whose duties would include preparation of a schedule of furnishings required for all offices, preparation of schematic layouts of all areas involved illustrating layouts of the required furnishings, assessment of the inventory of existing furniture, and a decision on the allocation of such furnishings,

preparation of a schedule of furnishings which are to be purchased together with a schedule of existing furniture to be refurbished, and establishment of a total budget for the supply, delivery, and installation of all furnishings and refurbishings in the said schedule. The Solicitor recommended payment of $5,000 to the appointed Specifier.

He further recommended a "Furnishings Design Committee" delegated for the purposes of selecting from the applications received, no more than five contract suppliers to participate in the design competition; judging the merits of the final submissions based on the excellence of design and the quality of the furnishings and refurbishings specified; and recommending the name of the successful competitor, or as an alternative, the names of not more than two successful competitors to share the furnishings contract. Recommended to serve on this committee were Professor Eric Arthur; Carl W. Lochman; Howard D. Chapman, architect; Robin Bush, furnishing designer and former Design Director of the National Gallery; the Specifier; and Mr. Viljo Revell. It was suggested that the Board of Control and the City Council accept the final decision of the Furnishing Design Committee as binding.

The estimated cost of the proposed competition was $30,000--$5,000 for the Specifier, $5,000 for each of the unsuccessful competitors, and $5,000 for incidental costs.

The recommendations of the City Solicitor were approved by the Board of Control and, on December 9, 1963, they were submitted to the City Council for final vote. Only one Alderman--Allan Lamport--voted against the approval of the recommendations. It was further recommended by Council that a copy of the Solicitor's report be forwarded to the Metropolitan Corporation for their consideration of adopting a similar policy.

When informed of the Council's decision to open a competition for the design of the furnishings, Viljo Revell wrote:

> I am confused about the development and therefore I have the feeling that I do not know what has happened regarding the attitude of the furnishings.
>
> When I asked for a decision about the furnishings many years ago, the answer was "okay" when the final sketches are accepted.... But the agreement was not signed and we never had an official presentation of the sketches. And now I hear that a competition is going to be prepared. I hope you will understand that I am confused and cannot answer questions any more. Would it be possible to ask for some kind of explanation or otherwise inform why the client has lost his confidence in the architect?[17]

Carl W. Lochman recommended Mrs. Allison Bains to serve as Specifier. The City hired Mrs. Bains, a longtime interior designer in the Toronto area, to set the specifications of the competition, to prepare preliminary planning and space study, and to establish a budget and schedule of furnishing requirements throughout the building.

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[17]Viljo Revell, personal letter to Eric Arthur, 2 May 1964, Toronto City Hall Files, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

Mr. Lochman, however, declined his seat on the Furnishings Design Committee; recommending Budd Sugarman, Toronto interior designer, for the position. The Furnishings Design Committee then included two Toronto architects, Howard Chapman and Jack Mar, of Parkin Associates; and two designers, Robin Bush and Budd Sugarman. The Committee was chaired by Professor Arthur. Mr. Revell had been invited to serve as a member of the committee; he declined the invitation:

> As to my membership on the Furniture Committee, I consider the proposed arrangement strange not only in the fact of its existence, but even in its form.
>
> Since I am the architect of the building, I cannot understand how I could assume a position as a member of that committee. The architect's relationship to the building is different from that of all others.... You can ask his opinion, and take it into consideration or not. You can make agreements with him for further tasks. But, in my opinion, it is not right to ask him to be a member of a committee where he is in the same position as others.[18]

Early in 1964, the Metropolitan Corporation approved the recommendations of Metro Council Chairman William Allen regarding the furnishings in those areas of the City Hall to be occupied by Metro. It was agreed that Metro would take care of its own furnishings requirements for the general offices, both on the podium floors and the towers; but that the public access areas would be furnished in harmony with the City's plan. It was decided that Metro employ the same

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[18]Viljo Revell, personal letter to Eric Arthur, 4 March 1964, Toronto City Hall Files, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

Specifier as the City in regard to the furniture of those public areas, at a fee commensurate with the amount of work involved. It was agreed by Council that the Metro Corporation would make known its furnishings requirement to the City and request the City to include these requirements in the tender. It was also understood that all estimated costs of furnishings be submitted to the Metro Council before any final decisions were made.

On March 15, 1964, advertisements were placed calling for applicants for the furniture competition:

> The City of Toronto invites Contract Supply Companies from across Canada to submit their names as candidates for consideration by the Furnishings Design Committee.
>
> The Committee will select not more than five suitably qualified applicants who will compete on an equal basis for the design, manufacture, supply, and installation of all portable furnishings for the new City Hall.[19]

Also included in this advertisement were the requirements of the applicants: they must currently operate a well-established contract supply business; submit brief descriptions of five installations warranting their consideration as a qualified competitor; employ a design staff (as evidence of their ability to handle the design aspect of the contract); maintain status in the trade and enjoy the confidence of Canadian manufacturers and suppliers of furniture,

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[19]Advertisement, "Furnishings Design Competition--the New City Hall", 15 March 1964, City Hall Co-Ordinator's Files, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

carpeting, draperies, and accessories; and finally, evidence their ability to conform to the policy established by the City Council that all furnishings shall be manufactured in Canada by Canadian craftsmen. Those applications which did not show evidence of the stated requirements would be rejected.

Fifteen Canadian firms applied for consideration. After careful examination of each application, the Committee selected the five firms to participate in the competition. Four were Toronto firms: the Robert Simpson Company; Knoll International of Canada, Limited; Eaton's of Canada; and Mitchell-Houghton Limited; and one a Montreal firm, Henry Morgan and Company.

On September 14, 1964, City Council approved the Committee's decision despite the bitter objection of Alderman George Ben. Ben had prepared a memorandum setting forth his objections to the Committee's selection of qualified applicants. He referred to the preamble of the advertisement inviting applicants. Based on the words "Contract Supply Companies", which have a specific meaning in the trade as general contractors and not manufacturers; Ben contended that manufacturers were neither asked, nor qualified to tender. This would then disqualify Knoll International Canada Limited, who in their application stated: "Knoll is in fact the only organization of its type in Canada; and markets and manufactures in Canada products of its own design and the

design of others on a national basis."[20]

Quoting the first requirement of the applicants--currently operating a business of this nature (contract supply); Ben contended that Mitchell-Houghton did not satisfy this term, as evidenced in their application:

> J and J Brook, limited will be responsible and supervise the complete design aspect; Mitchell-Houghton will be responsible for the scheduling, supply, installation, and servicing of all furnishings; and Sunshine Office Equipment Limited will act as the major manufacturer of all office furnishings, all of which are designed and manufactured in Canada.[21]

Admitting the creation of a syndicate specially for the purpose of making application to the Committee for participation in the Competition, Mitchell-Houghton could not therefore qualify as a currently operating business of this nature, Ben argued that their application should therefore be rejected by the Committee.

Ben also questioned the qualifications of the Henry Morgan and Company of Montreal. He contended that the submissions of five furnishing installations made by them, were hardly of stature that would justify their consideration as a serious competitor in this contest.

The Furnishings Design Committee responded to Ben's

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[20]George Ben, Memorandum to The Board of Control, Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix A, Board of Control Report No. 27, Article 1, "Furnishings Design Committee", 14 September 1964, p. 1699.

[21]Ibid., p. 1700.

objections and reassured both the Board and the City Council that his arguments had little validity. First, the Committee's interpretation of 'Contract Design Companies' was in no way restrictive to manufacturers or to firms affiliated with manufacturers. Also, the Committee welcomed the design association of Mitchell-Houghton Limited with J and J Brook Limited and Sunshine Office Equipment Limited. Contending the Mitchell-Houghton Limited was not a well-established contractor was without basis. And finally, the Committee was more than satisfied with the Henry Morgan and Company's overall competence and their ability to meet the exacting requirements for the furnishings of the new City Hall.

When Mayor Givens presented the issue to Council, he stated Alderman Ben's objections were ill-founded and warned Council of a serious delay should these objections prevent the Committee to proceed with the furnishings competition. When the mayor called for a vote of confidence in the Committee's selection of participants in the competition, the only objections were Alderman Ben's and Controller Allen Lamport's. The Committee had been given the Council's approval to proceed.

But Alderman Ben's vociferous objections were not without effect. Discouraged by the sign of a political hassle, Henry Morgan and Company withdrew from the Competition.

The four remaining participants were given the Conditions of the Competition as prepared by the Furnishings

Design Committee. The Conditions stated the expectations of the Committee and the criteria for judging the entrants as well as the schedule of specifications as established by the Specifier and the City Hall Co-ordinator.

> Toronto's New City Hall is an outstanding piece of architecture for which labels like modern or contemporary are inadequate. It is contemporary, but in its own way; and the successful competitor will be one who, in the opinion of the Furnishings Design Committee, comes most nearly to capturing the spirit of the building as conceived by its designer, Mr. Viljo Revell, the Finnish architect.... The Committee looks for a sensitive and highly imaginative approach to the furnishings in keeping with the building. Anything less will not be acceptable.
>
> It is expected that a character will be established that will be apparent on every floor, in the greater as well as the lesser rooms. For the preservation of this character, the Committee will find unacceptable any areas that appear foreign to the general scheme.[22]

The Conditions stated the opportunities for creativity--fabrics, draperies, and upholstery; floor coverings; wall coverings; and desk and work stations. It was not expected that the competitors develop custom designed chairs for the installation. The time involved for such development was not available; while many well-designed chairs of Canadian manufacture were available.

Included with the Conditions were schedules of all furnishing requirements of the City as well as those specified by Metro. Detailed instructions for presentation were

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[22]Corporation of the City of Toronto, Conditions of the Furnishings Design Competition--New City Hall, Toronto, 26 October 1964, Toronto City Hall Files, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

given. The deadline for the submissions was March 30, 1965; the date of the award of contract, April 20; and the final completion date for installation of furnishings for the podium and tower, August 15, 1965.

No budget was specified in the Conditions. It was stated that the competitors would be provided with a maximum budget including the total cost of furnishings and design at a later date.

It was not until January 19, 1965, that City Hall Co-ordinator Bell issued Bulletin Number 3 to the four competitors. This bulletin sparsely stated that the budget for the new City Hall furnishings was established at $850,000. The figure had been assessed by the Specifier. The bulletin did not state whether the budget figure was an inviolable condition of the competition or merely a guide to be used by the competitors when establishing their tender. The competitors faced a most critical decision--to adhere to the stringent budget, and in doing so perhaps produce a lesser quality product; or to use the figure only as a guide, placing the priority on quality and design, not cost.

From April 1 to April 6, the Furnishings Design Committee carefully examined and discussed the four submissions. Each submission was accompanied by a brief statement explaining the design approach.

J and J Brook, designers for the Mitchell-Houghton entry wrote:

> Toronto's new City Hall is a vigorous and dramatic statement of a civic center for the citizens and a building for their government. The public areas are self-proclaiming and welcoming. The location and extent of the administrative areas are clearly apparent.
>
> It was an early conclusion of ours that in designing the interiors of this building, the architecture had to be the prime visual statement and that all furnishings should be an extension of this statement. The furniture should avoid all flamboyancy and should not vie with the architecture for attention. This is not the type of building that should be used as a stage for the furniture designer. We did not look for a quick visual impact, but rather a restrained expression in all of the furnishings with emphasis on their compatibility with the architectural surroundings.[23]

Their choice of color reflects the Brooks' desire to achieve a restrained expression. The warm, earth tones--clay, ochre, copper, chestnut, and brick red--were felt to contrast and compliment the quiet neutrality of the architecture. Materials chosen were natural, rugged, and strongly textured. Woods chosen were teak and rosewood. The carpeting recommended was woven from natural undyed wool yarns. A natural tan leather covering was suggested as most compatible and suitable for the surface of the shell-like structure of the Council Chamber. Nearly all the furniture proposed by the Brooks had been custom designed for the City Hall.

Murray Oliver, head designer for the T. Eaton Company Limited and project director, stated:

> Toronto's new City Hall is a structure of great courage and conviction. Its powerful architectural statement imposes on the designers of the furniture a

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[23]Joanne and John Brook, "Furnishings Design Competition--Competitor Statements", Canadian Interiors (July, 1965): 34.

> respect for the elements of form and the nature of the materials which dominate it. The discipline of this building becomes the discipline of the designer.
>
> Here is a building that is visually organized through a few major statements of form; the design is direct, honest, and uncompromising....
>
> Materials in the building are boldly expressed in their natural state. Concrete and marble are accepted for their own textural qualities. Wood and metal are allowed to express their intrinsic properties.
>
> Just as the building is uncompromising in its statements, there has been no compromise in our furniture design. The building is simple; so is the furniture. Like the building, it shuns excessive refinement; it avoids being too elegant or too involved with itself. Rather it is direct in its statement, generous in its proportions, and appreciative of the human scale. Its materials are warm, textured, and natural.[24]

The emphasis of the Eaton's submission was on the materials chosen and appropriate usage of those material. All materials recommended were identical or closely related to those of the building. Steel was used in structures of concentrated stress, in all chairs, in all areas of concentrated wear; wood enclosed volumes and formed slabs; plastic laminates recommended for all hard-wearing surfaces; sturdy woven fabrics and leather for upholstery; no materials for decorative purposes only; all materials selected to age well. The materials were as close to natural expression as possible--the wood always oiled; the steel always chrome-plated; the leather, natural and unglazed; drapery and carpeting fibres natural and undyed.

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[24] Ibid., p. 34.

Structural form was also of high priority. Form elements of the furniture were felt to reflect that of the architecture, and to establish an atmosphere of strength and serene dignity.

Although concerned with color, texture, and structural materials; the approach pursued by the designers of the Simpson entry was design continuity. Gordon Forrest, David Bodrug, and Harold Murphy stated:

> In assessing the furnishing requirements for the City Hall, the dominating architectural features of the building must be taken into account. Mr. Revell created a concept which can only be described as integrated in style.... Successful furnishings in this building will therefore be an extension of the strong style and bold detail as laid down by the architect. Materials used will be monolithic in nature and utilized in static designs....
>
> We feel our approach to the interior furnishings will present a continuing statement throughout the building dramatizing and creating a continuity within the total architectural statement.[25]

The Simpson submission evidenced recurring use of similar detail throughout the building; a refined scale, but bold detail and form; a monolithic nature of all desks; and a minimized interplay of materials in each piece of furniture.

Knoll International Canada, Limited labeled the City Hall as "international" and "the first civic center of this century worthy of the name". Knoll continued:

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[25] Ibid., p. 35.

> Our approach to the problem of furnishings design therefore endeavored to keep this outstanding architectural solution in mind, by attempting to find both space and individual solutions in keeping with this most un-North American of buildings, retaining at the same time, local solutions to office planning.
>
> It was obvious that the case designs developed to a high degree in North America since the war--the A-frame or corner-post structure in tension--while eminantly suitable for a Chase Manhatten Tower in New York or a Place Ville Marie in Montreal, had no place in a building which was both sculptural and monolithic.[26]

Emphasis was placed on finding a successful solution to space organization, forming a compatible system throughout the building. The designers developed a cantilevered wedge-shaped work station for the tower floors to reduce regimentation, facilitate access, and increase usable space.

Reflecting a basic structural method employed by the architect, Knoll's case furnishings were of simple post-and-beam construction, table, desk, credenza, and cabinet designs and candid use of the same pre-cast concrete and finish as specified by Revell in his architectural interior treatment. Simple, sculptural concrete piers supported slab surfaces of white oak with a textured plastic-laminate inlays. Chairs recommended were Saarinen and Platner designs, some modified to incorporate a newly developed stainless steel swivel base.

The Furnishings Design Committee had previously established five criteria for judging the entrants' submissions:

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[26] Ibid., p. 35.

philosophy of concept (as related to the character of the building), creativity and originality; function--plan, design of rooms and furnishings, material chosen (texture, color, suitability), and quantities specified (as related to the conditions' requirements); examination of the suppliers; and competence of the designers.

The Committee presented its recommendations to the Board of Control on April 7, 1965. They had been unanimous in their selection of Knoll International as the winning entrant:

> The Conditions of the Competition stated that a "character will be established that will be apparent on every floor, in the greater as in the lesser rooms." More than any other competitor, Knoll's designers captured the spirit of the building and maintained it consistently in major as well as minor areas.[27]

The Committee's report to the Board analyzed the Knoll submission with regards to each of the pre-established criteria. They distinguished those aspects of the design which successfully met the criteria, and suggested revisions for the weaker areas of the proposed design.

In its philosophy of concept, the Knoll entry was found by the Committee to be the one that would not have been displeasing to Viljo Revell himself. The Committee felt confident that the architect's doubts about the quality of the

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[27]Report of the Furnishings Design Committee as quoted by Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Board of Control Report No. 15, Article 3, "Furnishings--New City Hall", 12 April 1965, Appendix A, p. 1008.

design in furnishings emerging from a competition would be removed by the Knoll's installation. The Committee further agreed that the Knoll submission exhibited both creativity and originality to the highest degree.

When discussing the functional success of the plan, the Committee found Knoll's to be considerably far in advance of the other competitors: highly praised were the mayor's office, the committee rooms, the council members lounge, and the tower floors. It was recommended that the reception rooms, alderman's interview area, and conference room be re-examined for possible redesign.

The furniture design was also highly praised; the desk and casegoods design displayed great ingenuity. More information was requested on typing facilities at work stations.

The proposed furnishings were found to display a wide range of materials, all of top quality. The fabrics were rated highly, as were the color and texture schemes.

All specified quantities were checked and found to be in order with the schedule requirements. Knoll's suppliers were known by the Committee and judged as most satisfactory. The competence of the designers was found to be beyond question. The Committee agreed that the designers evidenced superior skill and design knowledge.

The Committee recommended the Board approve the awarding of the furnishings contract to Knoll International, recognized winner of the competition; and not approve the

using of old furniture in the new City Hall. The Committee advised the latter action in view of the limited amount of such furniture, the limitations of its practibility in the areas contemplated, and its aesthetic incompatibility to both the building and the new furnishings.

Although the rules of the competition allowed them to do so, the Design Committee did not indicate a second choice, as the Knoll entry was found outstandingly superior to all other submissions.

The Committee's decision was one based on design. Throughout their discussions, the envelopes containing the entrants' price specifications remained unopened in a vault. On April 7, the Board of Control met to accept the recommendations of the Design Committee. At that time, the Knoll pricing entry was opened. The bid stood at $1,015,030--or $153,030 above the specified budget figure in Bulletin Number 3.

Baffled by the situation, Mayor Givens proposed that either the Board accept Knoll's entry or open the other three tenders for comparison and further discussion.

The following day the Board re-convened to open the bids of Eaton's, Mitchell-Houghton, and Simpson's. They stood at $1,049,084; $848,491; and $848,310 respectively.

Upon studying the tenders, the Controllers favored awarding the furnishings contract to the Robert Simpson Company, the lowest bidder. Mayor Givens, however, strongly

supported the Furnishings Design Committee's decision, stating:

> Design is design, and I cannot see how the amount of money would affect that.... The Knoll submission is by far the best from the point of view of design and harmony with the overall building. The $850,000 was not a firm figure; it could not be.[28]

He urged the Board to approve the awarding of the contract to Knoll International.

The Toronto press sharply criticized the Mayor's position:

> Mr. Givens' decision to ignore the ceiling price is amazing.... The ethics of Toronto politics has been put on trial of the Board of Control's decision concerning the furnishings for the new City Hall.[29]

In a written statement to the Board of Control, John Quigg, manager of Knoll International Canada, stated the firm's position. He claimed Knoll understood the competition to be a design contest, not a tender call; and the $850,000 budget figure had been established only as a guideline. He further stated that Bulletin Number 3 had been received at such a late stage in Knoll's preparation of its submission, that the designs were too far advanced for alteration. He concluded that Knoll did consider itself the winner of the competition, though an unsuccessful tenderer.

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[28]Mayor Philip Givens, as quoted by John Brooks, "Blasts Ethics of Furniture Decision", Toronto Star, 10 April 1965.

[29]Ibid., p. 22.

Knoll believed it deserved to be awarded the furnishings contract by virtue of its design submission which had been so highly recommended by the Furnishings Design Committee.

On April 12, Mr. Quigg met with Professor Arthur and City Hall Co-ordinator George Bell to discuss Knoll's price submission. It was agreed that by making minor changes--alterations in original design of clerical and secretarial desks to eliminate certain features not required; change in design of drafting stools from a specially designed model to a standard design; adjustment in the quantity of chairs; change in finish of inside of cabinets and bookcases; substituting birch for oak for the shelving; and reduction of the number of wastebaskets--the bid could be reduced by $50,000. Professor Arthur was most pleased with the results of the arbitration; the cost of Knoll's installation was lessened, yet the spirit of the design remained unchanged.

This meeting between Knoll and representatives of the City brought strong criticism from John Houghton, president of Mitchell-Houghton Limited. Declaring the meeting highly unethical, he called for a new start in the competition.

> A gross injustice is being suggested in allowing the winning design, which came in over the budget, to negotiate their prices downward. Surely the budget ceiling was an important aspect controlling the design. Otherwise all competitors would have submitted a more elaborate presentation on more expensive items, showing complete disregard for pricing and accordingly would have put themselves in a more favorable position of winning.

> Mitchell-Houghton is not just fighting for the chance of receiving the order, but rather for the principles of fair tendering ethics. Surely, the officials of our city cannot disregard the rules they themselves set up....
>
> The competition has been handled poorly and should be started over again.[30]

Thus, on April 14, the Board of Control was faced with three choices: to award the contract to Knoll International, the only acceptable design in the opinion of the Design Committee; to heed the cries of the press and keep faith with the tendering system by awarding the contract to Simpson's; or to take the advice of Houghton and recommend beginning anew. By a vote of three to one (the Mayor voting against the motion), the Board approved the awarding of the furnishings contract to Robert Simpson Company Limited.

This vote should have settled the issue. The Board of Control possessed the authority to award contracts. But at this point the Furnishings Design Committee proved it was more than a token force, reminding the City that it had been agreed earlier that the decision of the Committee would be binding. Professor Arthur submitted a report on behalf of the Committee:

> I am requested by my Furnishings Design Committee to say that it is unwilling to accept the two lowest submissions on the basis of design. It is the unanimous view of the Committee that the design concepts of these submissions, while perhaps acceptable to the

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[30]Jack Houghton, letter to City Hall Co-ordinator George Bell, as recorded in the Board of Control Report Number 15, April 12, 1965, p. 1019.

> modern office building, was not of a standard compatible with the new City Hall.
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> The Committee is aware that the Board's decision to take the lowest tender was based more on ethics than on saving money. Even so, the Committee begs to remind the Board of the famous words of Mayor Robert Shaw when he opened the present City Hall--'Why people will spend large sums of money on great buildings opens up a wide field of thought. It may, however, be roughly answered that great buildings symbolize a people's deeds and aspirations. It has been said that wherever a nation had a conscience and a mind, it recorded the evidence of its being in the highest products of this greatest of all arts.'
>
> His words, today, have a relevance in the matter under discussion because a building and its furnishings are complimentary and indivisible.
>
> May we quote also from the Conditions of the Competition for the new City Hall--'How to suggest an atmosphere about a building that suggests government, continuity of certain democratic traditions, and service to the community are the problems for the designer of the City Hall.'
>
> Equally, it is the problem of the interior designer, and if he fails, the proud symbol of civic government is reduced to the level of just another office building. It was that such a concept would emerge from a furnishings competition that haunted Viljo Revell. It is the danger that we now face.[31]

The matter of the furnishings contract was then taken to the City Council. It was suspected that the decision of the Board of Control could be easily reversed. Professor Arthur's report was read for Council's consideration. Supporting the decision of the Furnishing Design Committee, Alderman Mary Temple spoke in favor of awarding Knoll the contract:

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[31]Eric Arthur, memorandum to George Bell, 14 April 1965, City Hall Co-ordinator's Files, City Archives, Toronto.

> I am very disturbed by the Board of Control's decision. After spending thirty million dollars on the new City Hall, it is of utmost importance that we get furniture that blends well with the design of the building.... After looking at the submissions, I feel we have no other choice. Knoll should be given the contract.[32]

Alderman Oscar Sigsworth also spoke in favor of contracting Knoll: "Considering the cost of the building it would be folly to pinch pennies on the furniture." Siding with the Board of Control, Alderman Paul Picket stated: "We have a duty to uphold city policy and watch the dollars. I will not vote for Knoll unless I hear a very good reason." And Alderman June Marks simply commented: "I don't like that ultra-modern furniture. I think the low tenderer should get the contract."[33]

When asked by Controller Dennison to explain his feelings in regards to Knoll's submission, Mayor Givens responded:

> Why I find it beautiful ... this is very hard to do. It would be like explaining love to you. It sends me, it grabs me, it moves me. The other designs are excellent, but they do not give me the charge this one does.[34]

It did not, however, "move" a majority of Council members. When the Mayor called for a vote to approve the

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[32]"Five Aldermen Favor Re-opening City Hall Furniture Contest", Toronto Star, 15 April 1965.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Philip Givens as quoted by Gretton, p. 55.

awarding of the contract to Knoll, it resulted in a ten to ten deadlock. Horace Brown moved that the firms be given another opportunity to submit designs. He was supported by five other Aldermen, an insufficient number to carry the motion. Then, the unexpected happened.

Regarding the deadlocked vote and defeated motion as an end to the furnishings issue, Alderman Ken Dear left the meeting. After Dear's departure, the Mayor called for a second vote to approve the contracting of Knoll. This time the vote was ten to nine in favor of the motion.

Alderman Dear was most upset with the outcome. "It was my mistake. I just never thought the Mayor would re-open the matter."[35] With the support of several colleagues, Dear recommended Council's reconsideration of the matter.

The Toronto press spoke sharply against the Council's decision. The Toronto Telegram asked:

> What sort of competition is this where the entrants are promised they will compete on an equal basis and the prize is given to a contestant that breaks the rules? Council must choose between aesthetics and ethics.[36]

The Star attacked Mayor Givens:

> The fast and loose way of dealing with the furnishings matter opens the way to abuses in the future. The Mayor has shown little regard for sound principles

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[35]"Rookie Alderman Goofs--New Furniture Okayed", Toronto Star, 17 April 1965.

[36]"Preserve Integrity", Toronto Telegram, 17 April 1965.

> at doing the City's business. We wish he would show the same energy and determination in every good cause as he has shown in this bad one.[37]

And Scott Young in an editorial for the Globe and Mail wrote:

> To try to get around this by suggesting that the two lowest bidders are not acceptable is political chicanery at its very worst.[38]

Architect Howard Chapman, a member of the Design Committee, criticized the press for an endless stream of misleading and inaccurate articles and reports. Emphasizing that the design competition should be regarded as such, and not as a standard tendering call, Chapman wrote:

> To criticize the City for unethical bidding procedures and to talk of awarding the contract to the lowest bidded are both irrelevant to the present situation.[39]

By the end of April, Knoll had reduced its bid to $849,000. Yet the furnishings contract remained unsigned. The Board of Control had never endorsed the decision of Council. In early May, Professor Arthur submitted a position paper to the City Hall Co-ordinator stating the Committee's views on several proposed options. That all four competitors should be given the opportunity to resubmit designs was regarded by the Committee as impractical and highly

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[37] "Mayor's Bad Precedence", Toronto Star, 19 April 1965.

[38] Scott Young, "Politics and Furniture", Globe and Mail, 22 April 1965.

[39] Howard Chapman as quoted by Gretton, p. 55.

unfair. All competitors were now too familiar with Knoll's designs not to be influenced by them. That the contract should be divided between all four competitors was denounced as a political, not a design compromise. The Committee warned that such an action would result in a contract tangle impossible to unravel. Also, it would defy the goal of compatibility of furnishings throughout the building and harmony of the furnishings with the building design. The suggestion that Knoll design the furnishings for the podium floors and Simpson's supply the furnishings for the towers would suffer the same weaknesses--incompatibility and complicated contracting.

Arthur warned that the Committee was very near to resigning. He repeated that the Committee had done what it had been assigned and that the City should recognize the Committee's decision as final.

On June 2, 1965, the Board of Control voted once again in favor of awarding the contract to Simpson's. And Mayor Givens once again strongly opposed the action, defending the decision of the Committee. The issue had reached a stalemate; it could bounce from the Board to the Council in perpetuum. Controller Orliffe aptly expressed the general mood: "We should have had a design competition, picked a winner, and then called for tenders on the basis of the winning design."[40]

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[40]Herbert Orliffe as quoted by Gretton, p. 54.

The controversy had consumed valuable time. In mid-June there seemed to be little possibility that any new furnishings could be provided by the official opening of the new City Hall set for September 13. It was generally accepted by both the Board and Council, that unless some immediate action were taken, the new City Hall would open with old furnishings.

As a compromise measure, the Board of Control proposed--despite the objections of Professor Arthur--that Knoll be contracted for the furnishings in all public areas, and Simpson's supply the furnishings for the towers. Should this not be approved, the Board would maintain its previous decision to award the contract to Simpson's.

Co-ordinator Bell wrote to the firms requesting their reactions to such a compromise. Simpson's responded that by reducing the number of units involved in the installation, the unit prices would be increased. They did, however, offer an alternative: that their contract include all general offices, on the podium floors as well as the towers; and that Knoll's contract be extended to include Commissioners offices in the towers. This would allow both firms to maintain original unit quantities and prices--Knoll would be supplying all the executive office furnishings, and Simpson's the furnishings for all the general offices.

Knoll, however, flatly refused consideration of splitting the contract, stating that to share the contract and

still maintain original unit pricing would result in a financial loss for the company.

The Board re-affirmed its decision to award the furnishings contract to Simpson's. The issue was once again taken to the Council. To reverse the decision of the Board, Council needed a two-thirds majority. Mayor Givens moved that Council not confirm the decision of the Board, and further moved that the furnishings contract be awarded to Knoll International Canada Limited at the amount of $759,719.00 (the carpeting had been sub-contracted through Anglin-Norcross and was no longer included in the furnishings contract reducing the bid by nearly $100,000).

The first vote was taken; the result, thirteen affirmative, nine negative. The motion was decided in the negative for want of a two-thirds majority. The Council was adjourned for dinner recess.

After two hours, Council reconvened. A second vote was called. Three Aldermen reversed their earlier decisions. The motion was carried by a vote of sixteen to six. It was now confirmed--despite the objections of the press, the Controllers, and the other competitors; Knoll International Canada Limited would be awarded the contract for the furnishings of the new City Hall. On July 14, 1965 that contract was signed and witnessed.

Three months had elapsed between the submission of the design and the execution of the furnishings contract. This

period of stalemate had seriously affected the designing process. With the official opening of the new City Hall set for September 13, Knoll had only forty working days to order the necessary materials, develop and test prototypes, have all plans and prototypes approved, and complete the manufacture and installation of all furnishings for the podium floors of the City Hall. And during those forty working days, many of Knoll's manufacturing concerns were closed for their summer vacation period. Indeed, considerable pressure was placed on Knoll for the completion and installation of the specified furnishings by the official opening.

As a result of this situation, many of the prototypes had to be examined at the manufacturing plants. In mid-August Professor Arthur and several colleagues visited three manufacturers to inspect the components parts of the furniture prior to its assembly. After examination of chair components, desk tops, concrete pedestals, and case goods; Professor Arthur stated he was impressed with the organization of production as well as the quality of the work being done.

Later that month, Arthur visited the principal manufacturers to review production and completed prototypes of the sofas, chairs, tables, and desk units.

By the beginning of September over 1000 units designated as the first priority for the opening of the City Hall, were complete. Nearly all the furnishings for the rotunda

were ready for installation. Furnishings were complete for the Mayor's office, the controllers' and aldermen's offices, and the committee rooms. All the Council Chamber's furnishings were ready except thirty Platner chairs for the members' lounge. The podium and first two floors of the towers would be ready for opening day. It would seem that Knoll accomplished the impossible. The question that remained was "how well?"

Critiques written after the opening day ceremonies discussed the architectural features of the city hall and plaza. Few, however, mentioned the interior furnishings. And those few that did, implied disappointment. Nathan Phillips, the "father" of the civic complex, remarked on the question of the furnishings:

> At the earlier stages, it had been understood that Revell would design the furnishings. That is the building's greatest fault, that he was not allowed to do so.[41]

Shortly after the opening of the City Hall, one reporter aptly stated: "Knoll had won the battle, but is losing the war."[42] One of the first items of business done by the City Council in its new accommodations was to confess it was out of order in awarding the furnishings contract to Knoll. This confession was followed by a series of complaints

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[41]Nathan Phillips as quoted by William Bragg, p. 11.

[42]Richard Snell, "New City Hall Furniture Fine in Pictures But...." Toronto Star, 23 September 1965.

generated by the new furnishings: the partition arrangements created awkward spaces; the desk chairs were too low; the desks were impractical and non-functional. Controller Margaret Campbell, who had voted against awarding the contract to Knoll, stated: "The furniture is surprisingly beautiful; but it is not functional."[43] Completely dissatisfied with her $800 desk, she decided to replace it with the first good second-hand desk that was found in the surplus furniture from the old City Hall. Several department heads followed her lead requisitioning old furniture for their offices.

Other executives found it necessary to order credenzas to provide needed storage lacking in their drawerless desks. Controller Dennison described his desk as "a double-sized restaurant table with a crow foot pedestal. It has two tiny drawers one inch deep where I can store a few pencils and business cards."[44]

At the following Council meeting, Dennison stated that his opposition to the contest-winning furniture was proving justified. During a heated argument with the Mayor, Dennison announced:

> You are not happy with your furniture, and Prof. Arthur is not happy either.... I see you have decided

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[43] Margaret Campbell, ibid., p. 4.

[44] Ibid., p. 4.

> to get rid of the concrete legs and replace them with more conventional furniture.[45]

Mayor Givens chided Dennison for doing "a lot of snooping around" and denied that the furniture had been replaced because he had been unhappy with it. Those pieces which had been replaced were only temporary; they had been replaced upon the completion of the originally planned furnishings.

Within a month of the opening of the City Hall, most of the general office furnishings had been installed in the towers. On October 14, the Board of Control held a special meeting to discuss the furnishings. They sharply criticized Knoll for its nonfunctional furniture and the Furnishings Design Committee for never having tested the furniture for its practibility. Most criticized were the desks: the units with the typing wells had no writing or work surface; there were too few drawers, and those that were provided were not deep enough to contain files; when used for typing, the entire unit wobbled terribly; there were no modesty panels; and the concrete pedestals ruined nylons.

Stated Controller Orliffe:

> Anyone can look at the secretaries' desks and see that they are just not practical. How anyone can overlook that, I don't know. Before she even used it, one girl took one look and said she would not be able to work at it.[46]

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[45] "Fatuous Ass, Snooper--They Cry in City Hall", Toronto Star, 6 October 1965.

[46] As quoted in "Wobbly Desks at City Hall Spark New Furniture Controversy", Toronto Globe and Mail, 14 October 1965.

In response, John Quigg, manager of Knoll International Canada Limited, stated:

> Knoll had done a wonderful job in supplying and installing the furnishings for the September opening--You are lucky to have any furniture at all. I do not know why everyone is so passionately interested in finding something wrong with the furniture. Knoll is interested in making the necessary adjustments and corrections--We have handled major clients around the world and we have a fine reputation for making adjustments; but we expect to be told quickly what needs correcting. We have not had any of your complaints brought to our attention.[47]

The Board then proceeded to verbally attack City Hall Co-ordinator George Bell for not having contacted Knoll of the various deficiencies in the furnishings. Bell responded:

> If I listened to everyone around here about the furniture, I would go crazy. Everyone from the office boy up is talking about the furniture.... I cannot ask to redesign this and that....[48]

The following day Bell resigned as the City Hall Co-ordinator. Feeling his supervising duties were now complete, he stated:

> A person gets a bit fed up with the constant criticism of the design of the furniture. I am tired and fed up with the job.[49]

Several days later at a Metro Executive Council meeting; as a member leaned back on his new Knoll chair, the chair

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[47]"Furniture Row is on Again at the City Hall", Toronto Star, 14 October 1965.

[48]As quoted in "Bell Quits After Row Over Desks", Toronto Telegram, 15 October 1965.

[49]Ibid., p. 2.

collapsed throwing the reeve to the floor. It set the stage for more criticism and jokes of the Knoll furniture. As Chairman Allen pounded his gavel to call the assembly to order; it broke, Allen quipped: "It too must be made by Knoll."

It was recommended at this meeting that the Metropolitan Corporation not pay Knoll until each area specified to be done by Knoll had been fully furnished and in good working order. Both the City and the Metropolitan Councils approved the recommendation, basing their decision on the Contractor's Responsibility Clause of the Furnishings Contract.

> The Contractor agrees that he will carry out the work of this contract at his own risk until the same is fully completed and accepted; and will in the case of any accident, destruction, or injury to the work and/or materials before its final completion and acceptance repair or replace forthwith the work or material so injured, damaged, or destroyed at its own expense and to the acceptance of the City Hall Co-ordinator.[50]

In December, the architectural drafting tables were installed. These bore no resemblance to those tables originally requested, and proved to be completely impractical for use by the draftsmen. Each table was removed and later replaced by a more functional model. When Knoll asked the City to absorb half the cost; the City refused, basing their

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[50]Furnishings Contract between the City of Toronto and Knoll International Canada Limited, 14 July 1965, Article 27, City Hall Co-ordinator's Files, City Archives, Toronto.

decision on the Contractor's Responsibility Clause and claiming that Knoll should have submitted the altered design before its production and installation.

By January, 1966, three-quarters of the furnishings had been installed, yet Knoll had received no monies. There were many re-adjustments to the original specifications, contributing to the dragging furnishings process. Civic Departments had been expanded, requiring furniture not included in the original contract; other pieces, no longer needed, were deleted from the specifications. The newly appointed City Hall Co-ordinator was given the authority to proceed with the purchase and supply of new furnishings and deletion of those not required.

Bremner requested that all department heads submit a report evaluating their accommodations and furnishing needs. Also, they were to report any damages or deficiencies in their furnishings. He further recommended that Knoll receive a portion of their payment commensurate with the portion of the work satisfactorily completed:

> It is my opinion that Knoll International Limited is fulfilling the spirit in terms of the contract; particularly in view of the fact that the supply of furnishings was required of Knoll under pressure.[51]

On February 16, 1966, Knoll received payment of $300,000. The City would pay the balance upon final completion and acceptance of the furnishing installation.

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[51]David Bremner, report to the Board of Control, 15 January 1965, Co-ordinator Files, City Archives, Toronto.

Early spring, Bremner submitted a revised schedule of furnishing requirements based upon the evaluations of each department. Also submitted was a six-page report listing damaged or deficient furnishings as supplied by Knoll. Included were such defects as warped desks, checked veneers, chipped finishes, split seams, worn upholstery, inoperative swivel bases, and unsanded shelving--to name only a few.

Knoll supplied the newly specified furnishings and attended to the specified defects and deficiencies. By the spring of 1967, the City finally recognized the furnishings contract to be satisfactorily executed by Knoll.

> The supply and installation of the furnishings have now been completed in accordance with the terms of the contract between Knoll International Canada and the City of Toronto.... The total value of the contract amounted to $782,481.00.[52]

The City chose to maintain an open contract with Knoll for the maintenance of installed furnishings as well as the supply of any new furnishings deemed necessary. The responsibility for all furnishings--requests for new or changes in present installations must be processed through the Property Commissioner.

In 1971, Alderman Sewell had moved that new furnishings be considered for the lobby, and plants and pictures placed throughout the building:

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[52]City Hall Co-ordinator's Report to the Board of Control, Board of Control Report Number 21, April 8, 1968, Article 13, "Furnishings Contract", City Council Minutes, Appendix A, p. 889.

> There is nowhere to sit in the lobby except a few benches leading to the cafeteria.... The whole building is so void of plants and pictures which would add visual excitement.... It is as though the architecture is allowed to dominate the fact that the City Hall is, above all, a people building.[53]

The item had been deferred until the next Council meeting. It has yet to appear on a Council agenda for further consideration.

Little is said of the furnishings today. Workers when asked about their furnishing usually express dismay, not with the design, but the function. Persons touring the City Hall usually remark on the scarcity of the furnishings in public areas. The recorder for the Property Commissioner who had been working in the City Hall since its opening, briefly summed up the situation:

> Well, you don't hear the complaints anymore. Most persons have just learned to adapt to the furnishings. For myself, I am considered one of the lucky few given an aged surplus desk from the old City Hall.[54]

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[53] "Toronto Alderman wants to Brighten up Interior", Toronto Star, 17 September 1971.

[54] Harold Starling as quoted from interview, November 30, 1973.

CHAPTER III

THE ART WORK CONTROVERSY

Certainly an important part of any interior space--and especially that of public areas--is the art work that embellishes that space. In the case of the Toronto City Hall, a controversy closely paralleling the selection of the furnishings surrounded the choosing of "proper" works of art.

It had been decided by the architect in the early planning stages of the City Hall that the forty-foot wall off the main entrance into the lobby be reserved for a mural. This mural, as well as other works of art to be exhibited, would play a most vital role in creating an interior atmosphere of the rotunda. Realizing this, the Board of Control had recommended the establishment of an Art Advisory Committee for the new City Hall. In June, 1964, the City Council approved this recommendation and appointed Professor Eric Arthur to chair the committee of nine including artists, art collectors, and art gallery directors. Also on the committee were John C. Parkin, representing Mr. Revell; Aldermen Oscar Sigsworth and Horace Brown, and Controller William Dennison, representing the City. The goal of the committee was to select a mural and other works of art which

were in harmony with the form and spirit of the building itself.

Professor Arthur emphasized the need for the Art Advisory Committee to carefully study the interior spaces of the City Hall:

> This is no ordinary building.... We are dealing with one of the greatest buildings of the world. My first two visits there have convinced me of the need for a thorough understanding of the various areas where murals, paintings, and sculpture would be appropriate.[1]

He further stated that the budget allotment for the art work should not be determined on a percentage basis, but upon need. Such a budget could be established after a serious study of the interior space.

August, 1965, the Committee submitted a budget proposal for the art work as well as for the operating expenses of the Committee--$125,000 and $7,000 respectively. Both the Board and the Council approved the proposed budget. In a separate report, the Committee recommended the guidelines for a City Hall Mural Competition. Three artists would be invited to study the building and submit design sketches. Each artist would be paid $1500 for his sketch--to be submitted no later than March 1, 1966. Judging of the sketches would take place within one week; and the winner, if any, would be

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[1]Board of Control Report No. 21, Article 1, "Establishment of Art Selection Committee," June 8, 1964, Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix A, p. 1131.

announced. It was a condition of the competition that an award need not be made.

On October 6, 1965, the Board of Control met to discuss the Committee recommendations. The meeting was among the most bitter in the history of the City. Controller Dennison strongly objected to the Committee's proposal to invite only three artists to compete. He took the position that many artists of varied schools of thought should be invited to submit designs. He complained that the Committee was trying to force an abstract mural on the City. As the lone committee member preferring a traditional, representational mural; Dennison stated:

> I did not go on the Committee to be a rubber stamp and I did not expect to approve all the Committee's decisions.... I hope Council will not go along meekly with the so-called experts, but will use their own common sense.[2]

Alderman Horace Brown, appalled by Dennison's referring to the Committee as 'so-called experts', demanded an apology. He further accused Dennison of undermining the Committee and suggested his resignation. Dennison, losing his temper, shouted to Brown: "You are a fatuous ass. I have never heard of anything so ridiculous. I will not resign."[3]

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[2] "Fatuous Ass, Snooper They Cry in City Hall", Toronto Telegram, 6 October 1965.

[3] "Name-calling, Shouts, Gavel Pounding and Giggles Sparked by City Hall Mural", Globe and Mail, 6 October, 1965.

Mayor Givens, a modern-art lover, supported the position of the Art Advisory Committee and accused Dennison of having "~~Neantherdal~~ tastes".

> I poked my head into Dennison's office for a few seconds and saw those paint-by-number sets. (A series of six landscapes painted by Dennison's wife.) To me they represent the past, not the future we should be building for.[4]

Alderman Sigsworth, a member of the Committee, agreed with his colleagues that the modern tone of the building set the tone for the work. Four lady aldermen, although personally favoring traditional art, were willing to trust the Committee's decision concerning the mural.

> I know what I like, but I am no art critic (Alderman Mary Temple).... I think the mural must be done in a modern way to be in keeping with the building, but it should mean something to the public (Alderman Alice Summerville).... I am not a lover of abstract art, but traditional art is not adaptable to the new City Hall (Alderman Helen Johnson).... My personal preference would be traditional, but we have to consider the next generation (Alderman June Marks).[5]

Controller Dennison had recommended earlier that the City establish a theme for the mural competition, but the Art Committee had voted eight to one in favor of free expression. Alderman Fred Beavis supported Dennison's recommendation:

> The mural artist must be told what the City wants so he does not go off on a tangent and produce some

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[4] "Dennison and Mayor Blaze Away", Toronto Telegram, 7 October 1965.

[5] Ibid., p. 14.

mystifying mess the average guy cannot understand.[6]

Also supporting Dennison was Alderman Harold Menzies: "I would hate to see some of the trash I have seen around that is labeled art."[7] Alderman Ken Dear simply stated "I can feel another furniture hassle coming."[8] His remark sparked a bitter exchange about the furnishings. Controller Margaret Campbell pleaded for an end to the "childish" arguments:

> I would like to look at myself in the mirror someday and feel I was rising to the ideals embodied in this new and wonderful building.[9]

The meeting was adjourned. It had been decided that no further action be taken on the question of the mural. The issue of the nature and rules of the Mural Competition was referred back to the Art Advisory Committee for further consideration.

The following day, Professor Arthur submitted a letter to the Mayor stating the position of his Committee:

> I am sure you will agree with me that the Art Advisory Committee for the City Hall has been placed in an extremely difficult position....
>
> No member of the Advisory Committee would question the right of one of its members to disagree with a majority

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] "Name Calling, Shouts, Gavel Pounding, and Giggles Sparked by City Hall Mural".

> recommendation--especially in Committee discussions, when disagreement is normal and desirable. But the Committee's authority is seriously undermined when a dissenting member publicly attacks the reputation and judgment of his colleagues....
>
> As you know, your Committee is made up of persons distinguished in the arts, and persons equally distinguished in their professional fields, and well-known for their interest in the arts and their knowledge of international culture. Indeed, the Board of Control could not find more knowledgeable people without recruiting top experts from abroad....
>
> The work of the Advisory Committee is aesthetic, not political. Its recommendations will be discussed and, we hope, approved by Council and the Board of Control; but approval should surely mean that Council is confident about the authority of its committee of judges.
>
> The vital question, then, is whether Council and the Board believe that they can find better-qualified persons to serve on the Advisory Committee. I have been requested to ask whether the Board of Control may wish to review the membership of the Committee so that it may undertake its future duties with order and dignity, and the knowledge that it has the complete confidence of the civic governors.[10]

On October 8, Controller Dennison did apologize to the Committee for his slur on their reputations. He did not, however alter his position:

> I do not believe the Committee has any right to impose their taste on the public against its will.... The average person will freely admit he knows little about art. The Art Advisory Committee obviously does, but it is still their job only to advise, not dictate....
>
> I cannot imagine the people of this city being satisfied with something dull, austere, or completely non-representational. I think they want something

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[10]Eric Arthur, letter to Mayor Philip Givens, 7 October 1965, City Hall Co-ordinator's Files, City Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

> monumental, historical--something to lift the spirits of the taxpayer as he enters the building.[11]

Late November, the Art Advisory Committee submitted a more comprehensive proposal for the mural competition for the approval of the Board of Control. Three possibilities had been explored: a competition by invitation, limited to three artists; a competition by invitation, widened to fifteen artists; an open competition. It was the goal of the competition that "the mural chosen for the new City Hall be compatible with and complement the edifice."[12]

In evaluating the various methods of competition, the Committee concluded that the advantages to both the open competition and invitation of fifteen artists--widening the scope of entries to represent varying theories of art--was outweighed by the disadvantages--no guarantee that the best artists would compete, amateur entries, more jury time required in the judging, and considerably greater overall cost. The advantages of the competition by invitation of only three artists--freedom of the Committee to select artists best-suited to the work and lower operating costs of the competition--were felt to overcome the disadvantage of a limited range of entry. Thus, having examined all possibilities, the Art Advisory Committee firmly supported its original

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[11]"Dennison Apologizes for Slur on Art Committee", Toronto Star, 8 October 1965.

[12]Board of Control Report No. 45, Article 2, 8 December 1965, Corporation of the City of Toronto, Council Minutes, Appendix A, p. 3032.

recommendation of a competition by invitation of three selected artists. However, should this recommendation be denied by the Board, the Committee advised that it was willing to accept, as an alternative, a competition of fifteen artists by invitation.

On November 8, the Board of Control met to discuss the Art Committee's recommendations. Controversy was eminent. Controllers Archer and Campbell suggested abandoning all plans for a mural competition until the Board was without controversy. Controller Orliffe commented that there was no sense in waiting: "We are always going to have conflicts; there is no use in avoiding this one."[13] Controller Dennison again voiced strong opposition to the proposal that only three artists be invited to compete. He did, however, agree that the invitation of fifteen artists was a reasonable and acceptable compromise. By a vote of three to two, the Board recommended that the competition for the City Hall mural be held among fifteen artists selected by the Art Advisory Committee, each artist being paid $1000 for his design sketch. The Board further recommended, as suggested by Dennison, that any other artist would be permitted to submit a sketch for consideration by the Art Committee, though no compensation would be paid.

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[13]"Art Committee Ordered to Widen Contest", Toronto Globe and Mail, 9 November 1965.

The Board submitted its recommendations to the City Council for approval. The issue was floored at the Council meeting held December 8, 1965. Despite Mayor Given's plea for positive action, the Council voted twelve to eight to postpone any decision on the mural competition until March, 1967. The vote had been taken on the motion by Controller Archer to delay the decision. "The furniture fiasco would seem like play acting compared to the stage being set for the selection of a City Hall mural."[14]

Alderman Brown found Council's indecision an insult to the Art Advisory Committee. Mayor Givens, perhaps the most disappointed by the vote, scolded Council for its indecision and addressed it as a "Council of Despair". "I had hoped this Council would show the same imagination as its predecessor had in choosing such a dynamic new City Hall."[15] He warned that the City Hall would remain sterile until filled with objects of beauty and intelligence.

In the summer of 1966, Controller Dennison announced his candidacy for Mayor of Toronto opposing incumbent Givens. Among the major campaign issues was the selection of the art work and mural for the City Hall. Mayor Givens continued to advocate modern art: "The past is wonderful; but it is the stimulus and challenge of facing the new that can make us a

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[14]"Mural Put Off to 1967", Globe and Mail, 8 December 1965.

[15]"The Mayor and the Controller", Toronto Star, 16 October 1966.

great city, help us know ourselves through our public art."[16] Dennison stood firmly in favor of traditional art:

> ... I don't like to see representational artists being pushed aside by the establishment just because taste-makers at the moment are running wild in some particular field of abstract art.... When artists can do better work, I see no point in turning out abstract work that requires less skill. The day of impressionism is not gone, and I would hate to see the artist abandon the real, and drop the substance of reality, so to speak, to pursue the shadow.... The public will always prefer the real.[17]

William Dennison won the election by less than 5,000 votes.

In February, 1967, the Art Advisory Committee met for the first time in fourteen months. Realizing that their recommendations had little chance for approval by Mayor Dennison's Council, they proposed a temporary alternate solution to the mural competition--a program of painting and sculpture exhibitions in the space designated for the mural. These works would be on loan from the various Toronto art galleries, and exhibited on a rotating basis changing monthly. All works to be exhibited would require the approval of the Committee.

This recommendation was approved by both the Board of Control (March 9) and the City Council (May 10); and was instituted June, 1967. The program would extend until August, 1968. Once again the matter of the mural competition was postponed.

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

The Art Committee, however, was not inactive. In addition to approving the monthly painting and sculpture exhibitions, the Committee also was responsible for the disposition of all paintings which had been exhibited in the old City Hall, the placing of paintings in the committee rooms, the production of a proposed City Hall flag, and the establishment of a policy for accepting objects, or the donation of monies to purchase objects, given to the City for the new City Hall.

Yet at a Board of Control meeting held February 14, 1968, Controller Fred Beavis moved that the City Hall Art Advisory Committee be dissolved:

> Whereas the Art Advisory Committee was established for the purpose of making recommendations respecting placing of works of art, etc. in the new City Hall ... and whereas it would appear that the Committee has fulfilled its objectives and the Administration can now handle any further matters of this nature itself; Therefore be it resolved that the Art Advisory Committee be disbanded and that His Worship the Mayor be requested to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the members of the Committee are suitably recognized for their very capable work and for the generous manner in which they devoted their time to this work.[18]

No immediate action was taken on the motion; it was referred to the Commissioner of City Property for consideration. Upon the Board's request Property Commissioner Harry Rogers submitted a report considering Beavis' proposal:

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[18]Board of Control Report Number 26, Article 3, 14 February 1968, Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix A, p. 399.

> The wisdom in appointing an Art Advisory Committee cannot be denied. Professor Arthur as chairman was intimately acquainted with the late Viljo Revell, and was in an ideal position to interpret the design conception as desired by the architect. His zeal and spirit in preserving the architect's beauty of design, free from inappropriate accoutrements has materially assisted in making the City Hall a world reknown architectural masterpiece....
>
> Now I am requested to answer the question as to whether there is any need for the Art Advisory Committee in connection with the Nathan Phillips Square and City Hall. An answer would be difficult to furnish for the reason that the Committee was appointed by the City Council within their sole discretion, and its discontinuance would be a matter of policy. I would however venture to say that as all members of the Committee are very busy persons within their own line of endeavor, they may not be adverse to being relieved of their duties on the Committee.[19]

The Committee members when asked, however, expressed the desire to continue their work. They felt their objectives had not all been realized and that their dismissal at this time would be premature and detrimental to the artwork development of the City Hall.

The Board of Control received several strong objections to the dismissal of the Art Committee from concerned citizens:

> A city is more than garbage collection, expropriation, and the paving of roads; and it is time our civic leaders realized this. Every visitor to Toronto sees the beauty and grace of our City Hall and every citizen is justifiably proud of this structure. Give us also the pride of knowing that the art hanging in this building is worthy of it. The Art Advisory Committee

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[19]Board of Control Report Number 3, Article 48, 10 May 1968, The Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix A, p. 101.

> is willing to work towards this end without costing the people one penny of tax money. How can our elected leaders refuse this? Reconsider your decision and you will be helping the City to take its rightful place as a centre where artistic growth is of prime concern.... Mrs. D. Vanek, Willowdale.
>
> Toronto has one of the great city halls of all times. It would be a sad state of affairs if future decisions about artistic matters were dealt with by others than an unprejudiced, competent art committee such as we have had.... Mrs. Kathleen Graham, Toronto.
>
> Toronto is now a major centre of the Arts. Everyone who visits Toronto knows of the beauty and grandeur of our City Hall. Toronto's maturity in the art world should be apparent in this setting. The members of the Art Advisory Committee could contribute enormously to achieving this impression. We sincerely hope that the City Council will invite the Committee to continue its work, and thus benefit our city artistically.... H. R. Sanders, President, Patrons of Canadian Art, Toronto.[20]

Also protesting the dismissal of the Art Advisory Committee was Mrs. Harry Davidson, a member of the Committee and the director of the program of monthly art work exhibitions. She warned that the dismissal of the Committee meant the end to the painting and sculpture exhibitions, for there would be no properly qualified body to approve the works to be exhibited.

> I can no longer perform the service required of me. Further, the Art Dealers of Canada are in full agreement of my considered opinion ... and they join me in disassociating themselves from any future participation in the programme.[21]

On May 23, 1968, the Board of Control once again recommended disbanding the present art committee, and suggested

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[20] Ibid., p. 102.

[21] Ibid., p. 104.

the formation of a new advisory committee. This proposed committee would include representatives of Art Societies and would advise and assist the Commissioner of City Property in placing works of art in the City Hall. These resolutions were endorsed by the Board, awaiting Council approval. Controller June Marks was the sole member of the Board to object to the formation of a new committee.

At a December City Council meeting, she moved that the present Art Advisory Committee be invited to continue functioning within its present structure. The motion, however, was decided in the negative by a vote of eight to twelve.

January, 1969, the Board submitted its proposal for the formation of a new advisory committee to the Council. The proposal was approved. A new Art Advisory Committee would be established under the chairmanship of Commissioner of City Property.

Twelve art societies were invited by the Council to send representatives. Only four accepted; many had declined on principle, stating "the Board of Control and the City Council had done the City and the arts and the City Hall a disservice in abolishing the first Arts Advisory Committee."[22]

Mayor Dennison, extremely pleased with Council's approval of a new Art Committee, felt that four was a

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[22]Parks, Recreation, and City Property, Report Number 10, Article 2, "City Hall Art Advisory Committee", Corporation of the City of Toronto, City Council Minutes, Appendix A, p. 3091.

sufficient number for an effective advising body. The new Art Advisory Committee was officially inaugurated March 5, 1969.

Within one year the Committee had grown to seven representatives. Regaining the cooperation of Toronto art galleries, the Committee had re-instituted the monthly painting and sculpture exhibitions. The issue of a mural was never approached.

In 1971, it was recommended that the Committee be further expanded:

> The Committee has been doing a diligent and useful job under Mr. Rogers' chairmanship. But it is not representative of most major professional and other interests in Toronto's visual arts commmunities; such as the leading private art galleries, the art critics, major art collectors, and almost all of Toronto's leading professional artists.[23]

The recommendation was approved; and six new members were invited. This action did result in a more well-rounded committee, representing varied interests in the arts thus contributing meaningfully to the decisions of the committee.

Today the Art Advisory Committee continues to function, but solely in an advisory capacity. The mural which had been proposed by the architect and the competition planned by the first Art Committee have never been realized. The mural no longer is an issue; it remains only as a vague memory in the minds of those men who had fought the mural "battle", but had lost.

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[23] Ibid., p. 3092.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

"Theoretically, the cycle of public design is assumed to develop in a particular, logical way. Political initiation to meet public demands, administrative support followed by the allocation of design resources, then design. However, it does not always work out that way."[1]

Indeed, practice can differ from theory. In the case of the Toronto City Hall, the design cycle did progress differently, at least in the earlier stages. The initial demand for the City Hall came not from the public, but from a strong administrator, Nathan Phillips. He proceeded to gain political support of the Council, who then took the issue to the public. The original citizen response for the appropriation of funds for the project was negative. Mayor Phillips refused to recognize this ballot as final; he did not abandon his plan. Once again he gained the support of Council. And upon taking the issue once again to the public, he gained citizen approval. Then came the matter of design--

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[1]John Page, "Planning and Protest," in Design Participation, ed: Nigel Cross (London: Academy Editions, 1972), p. 114.

and the most extensive architectural competition the world has ever known. Throughout the planning of the project, Mayor Phillips maintained a dominant role. His re-election as mayor was not only a victory for Phillips, but also for the unique, yet distinctive design of Viljo Revell for the new City Hall. Phillips had overwhelmingly won the support of the citizens of Toronto--those taxpayers willing to finance the project, although the revised cost of Revell's design was $6,000,000 over the earlier approved appropriation. Indeed it was a great victory.

But like so many great victories, it was not without sacrifice. When presented the Architects' revised cost estimate, Mayor Phillips knew the figure was too high for Council approval. To reduce the cost estimate and subsequent tender, adjustments had to be made. Included in this cost estimate was $1,000,000 for loose furnishings to be designed by the architect. One such adjustment was the elimination of this provision from the original architectural contract. It was not that the Mayor opposed Revell's designing the furnishings for the City Hall; he only felt that it would be better to consider appropriation for the furnishings as a separate issue at a later date. Throughout the planning and early construction stages, though no formal commitment had been discussed, the Mayor "understood" that Revell would design the furnishings for his interiors.

Mr. Revell, however, wanted more than an "understanding". Displeased with Council's apathetic attitude, he urged an immediate action on his furnishings proposal. He emphasized the necessity for the building and furnishings to be done simultaneously to achieve an integrated end result.

The furnishing program established by Revell was an excellently designed, comprehensive approach. From an analysis of the City requirements, throughout the preliminary and final design stages, the tendering process, and the supervision of prototypes and production, to the final installation, Revell's program evidenced concern for furnishings which not only harmonized with the structure and spirit of the building, but also fulfilled the needs of City Executives and staff. Every phase of design had been considered; the end result, an integrated, unified whole.

In June, 1962, Council approved the Board's recommendation that the City enter into agreement with the Architects for the design of the furnishings at a fee of ten per cent of the net cost. This decision should have settled the question of the furnishings. A contract, as requested, was drafted by the Property Commissioner; however, it was never signed.

In December, 1962, after eight years of administrative dominancy, Nathan Phillips was defeated by Donald Summerville in the mayorial campaign. Had Phillips not been defeated, Viljo Revell would have continued with his furnishings

program. Phillips had strongly supported an integrated design approach; Summerville questioned if such an approach warranted a ten per cent architect's fee. His doubts were strengthened by a letter from Jack Houghton, president of Mitchell-Houghton Limited, dated June 1963:

> It appears to us that the taxpayers of Toronto are going to pay dearly for a new city hall if we allow an architect to charge a 10% design fee on furniture....
>
> Why our Board of Control has ever allowed any type of contract to be agreed upon with an architect for a special design fee does not to us seem reasonable....
>
> I fail to understand the reasoning of some of our executive officers at City Hall and quite frankly have become disillusioned and disappointed in the whole manner in which the City has gone about erecting the so-called "architectural wonder".[2]

One month after receipt of this letter, the City requested Revell to cease any further plans for the furnishings; and the possibility of a furnishings design competition was explored. December, 1963, Council reversed its earlier decision--the furnishings for the new city hall would not be designed by the architect, but determined by a national design competition. Council's decision was labeled as economical, not political. The ten per cent architects' fee was judged by Council as unwarranted and unnecessary. The ethics of Council's reversing an earlier decision was never questioned.

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[2]J. M. Houghton, personal letter, 17 June 1963, City Hall Co-ordinator's Files, City Archives, Toronto.

Most disappointed by the action was Viljo Revell. Confused and frustrated, Mr. Revell stated:

> I cannot believe that this kind of solution (a design competition) will lead to a cheaper result; but I am convinced that it will lead to a worse entirety....
>
> I have lost my confidence in the Council's ability to make decisions in architectural and design matters.[3]

Revell declined the invitation to serve as a member of the Furnishings Design Selection Committee.

Philip Givens, appointed Mayor upon Summerville's untimely death, claimed "wrangling about the furnishings and other details of the City Hall led to Revell's fatal heart attack."[4] The Toronto press seemingly agreed:

> The City politicians' final blow came last year when they refused to allow Mr. Revell to design the furniture for his new building.[5]

Revell himself had attributed an earlier heart attack to the mental stress caused by the project:

> If I were able to keep the City Hall out of my mind, I feel my collapse in Mexico might not have happened at all.[6]

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[3]Viljo Revell, personal letters to George Bell and Eric Arthur, dated March 6, 1964 and March 4, 1964, City Hall Coordinator's Files, City Hall Files, City Archives, Toronto.

[4]"Insanity Tag in Furniture Row," Toronto Globe and Mail, 26 June 1965.

[5]"Designer of New City Hall, Viljo Revell, Dies at 54," Toronto Star, 9 November 1964.

[6]Viljo Revell, letter to Eric Arthur, 4 March 1964.

Despite his doctor's warnings that such a trip could be risky, Revell had come to Toronto in October, 1964, to inspect the progress of the City Hall. Less than two weeks after his return to Helsinki, Revell suffered a fatal heart attack.

One questions here the ease by which the original decision of Council was reversed. Had a more structured framework for decision-making been recognized, the original decision may have been more binding. And had this original decision been enforced--had politics not entered into the design process; Revell would have continued with his proposed furnishings program. The reversal of the decision and the subsequent Furnishing Design Competition gave birth to the "great furniture debate" and, perhaps, rendered death to Revell. Without question, it destroyed an integrated design approach. The architect, offended by the actions of the City politicians, had refused to serve as a judge on the Selection Committee. Political intervention had severed the lines of communication between architect and designer, and destroyed the chances for collaboration.

Interior design in the context of the total design concept can be defined as

> the shaping and design of the interior space, including furnishings and finishing ... creating the essential spirit, mood, and character of that space.
>
> The architect, in shaping the space, establishes a program, analyzes internal relationships, and then

> assembles and molds shape as a result of his findings. The aspect of embellishing this space with furniture, fabrics, colors, and coverings, enhances and heightens the design concept and brings it to its conclusion. This phase, done by an appropriate design consultant working together with the architect in a close relationship, achieves the goal of design unity.[7]

Viljo Revell did successfully shape the interior space of the City Hall. He had done so with imagination and sensitivity. But he was denied the opportunity to complete the total design process. Council had decided that the winner of a competition--a stranger to Revell and to the City Hall--would be given the responsibility for the furnishings. Yet at the time of the decision, Council was seemingly unconcerned, or perhaps unaware, of the effect of the action upon the total design process. Council had never realized the inherent weaknesses of such a decision; Viljo Revell had. He predicted that the furnishings resulting from such a competition would not be suitable.

Revell believed the architect had a responsibility to carry his design concept into the building; that successful design could result only from an integrated approach. In Europe, the total design concept was more widely accepted and practiced. Interior furnishings were considered as a vital part of the total design process; architects and designers collaborated to achieve an integrated design. Revell,

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[7]J. Gordon Carr and John Field Kelsey, quoted by Thomas H. Creighton in "The Architecture of Interiors," Progressive Architecture 44 (October, 1962): 151.

together with a team of design associates, had designed the interiors for most of his architectural projects--luxury villas, housing and apartment complexes, office buildings, schools, and factories. His interiors reflected the sculptural simplicity of his architecture. His design process evidenced his "eye for a practical solution, a propensity for systematic thought, and a talent for organization."[8] There can be little wonder why such a man would be so disturbed by the cursory, unpredictable decision-making policies of Council.

The question of the furnishings should have been settled at the very outset of the planning process; a firm policy should have been established and accepted. But Council was reluctant to act; Council seemingly did not understand the complexities of an integrated design approach nor the importance of an appropriate furnishings program. Revell encouraged Council not to ignore the issue; he emphasized the need for an early decision supporting an integrated approach. His words fell upon deaf ears. Perhaps Council, limited in its design knowledge, should have established an advisory committee at the start of the City Hall project to study the possible alternatives, and to establish the most feasible furnishings program. This would have placed the responsibility for design decision-making in professional, not political,

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[8]Kyosti Alander, "Viljo Revell", Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture (New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1964).

hands. Perhaps this advisory committee would have recognized one feasible alternative that was overlooked by Council: that Revell collaborate with Ontario designers for the design and installation of the furnishings for the City Hall. Just as the City had required Revell to have architectural associates from Ontario, it could have required him to have local interior design associates. This alternative would have allowed an integrated approach; involved Canadian professionals; and lessened the controversial architect's fee (presumably a consulting/collaborating fee would be less than ten per cent). Certainly it would have been a reasonable compromise solution worthy of investigation.

In addition to determining the best design program, the committee could also have been responsible for establishing guidelines for the implementation and continuity of the program. Council seemingly needed such guidelines. For although a policy had been established (that Revell be awarded the furnishings contract); no provision was made to implement the policy, no date was specified for the signing of the contract. As a result, a year had elapsed before the contract was drafted and ready for signing. During that year, there had been a change in administration and a subsequent change in policy. The furnishing contract between the City and the Architect was never finalized.

That this change in policy was entirely an economical decision is questionable. Certainly it is sad that a City willing to pay nearly $30,000,000 for a distinctive City Hall would object to paying $1,000,000 for the proper furnishings. (In fact it was not the $900,000 appropriated for the furnishings per se, but rather the nearly $100,000 architect's fee that was debated.) The City had earlier financed the most expensive architectural competition of the century for the design of the City Hall; then refused to pay $100,000 for the design of the furnishings. Donald Summerville, in the mayorial campaign in which he defeated incumbent Phillips, argued that the City had invested too much time and money into the City Hall; and that it was time to re-channel City funds into more vital demands--better city transportation systems, improved housing conditions, downtown redevelopment. Certainly his interest in funding these projects was worthy; but it is questionable that $100,000 would have made any great difference in realizing these goals. As Philip Givens later implied that perhaps the decision was more political than economic:

> Revell had very definite opinions regarding the furnishings of the new City Hall ... but the furniture issue became a conflict of political personalities and there was nothing we could do....[9]

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[9]"Designer of New City Hall Dies at 54", Toronto Star, 9 November 1964.

To prevent a "conflict of political personalities" in the Furnishings Design Competition, the City entrusted a qualified committee of design professionals with judging the submissions and selecting the winning design concept. It was agreed that the decision of the committee would be final:

> The City's sole influence in the competition initially was to say that the decision of the Furnishings Design Committee would be binding.... The Mayor had set up the committee to take the furnishings choice out of the hands of the politicians.[10]

Unfortunately this decision of Council was readily forgotten. Despite the noble efforts of Mayor Givens, the selection of the furnishings did fall into political hands. Heated political controversy ensued.

The Furnishings Design Committee had unanimously agreed that the Knoll submission was not only the best design concept, but also the only acceptable approach. Knoll, the Committee's choice as winner of the competition, should have been awarded the furnishings contract. But the process was not this simple; a major complication had arisen.

The design competition had suffered one major, irreparable weakness: Bulletin number 9, establishing the $850,000 budget figure, failed to distinguish whether the figure was an inviolable ceiling price for the furnishings or merely a guideline estimate. Interpretation of the

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[10]"Toronto City Hall Competition: What the Experts Say", Canadian Interiors 10 (June, 1965): 29.

bulletin varied. Simpson's and Mitchell-Houghton respected the figure as a budget limit; Eaton's and Knoll regarded it as an estimate. To further complicate matters, the Controllers supported the former interpretation; the Mayor the latter; and the Council remained undecided. The ensuing controversy was a battle between ethics ("the rules of a competition cannot be broken"[11]) and aesthetics ("Design is the guts of the situation, otherwise we could have ordered from a catalogue"[12]).

The Controllers, respecting the tendering process, awarded the contract to the lowest bidder. The Mayor, despite strong criticism, supported the decision of the Committee and pleaded with Council to award the contract to Knoll. Council, after a controversial second vote, approved Givens' plea. The Board refused to recognize the decision of Council. The furnishings issue was at a stalemate; political hassling rendered an impasse. The citizens of Toronto began to question the competence of the city politicians. "The man on the street thinks there is collective insanity in City Hall."[13] One concerned Torontonian aptly remarked:

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[11]Margaret Campbell, Gretton, p. 54.

[12]Philip Givens, ibid., p. 54.

[13]"Insanity Tag in Furniture Row".

> The late Viljo Revell's masterly City Hall concept has survived all obstacles unimpaired until now. The small-minded, penny-pinching antics of our administrators have turned the choice of appropriate furnishings into an embarassing farce. We seem to have a penchant in this city for bungling bold ideas at the last minute, sometimes through short-sighted budgeting; always through lack of care.[14]

And a Toronto designer found it to be

> a sad and sobering fact that a city courageous enough to produce a superb building by international competition seemed incapable of establishing empathy with the design concept when it came to selecting furniture. Good honest servants of the City have been unable to arrange a system whereby the level of design for the structure could be carried into the building. What should have been a challenge for any talented designer diminished into a maelstrom of aesthetic nit-picking and pious demands to protect the bidding system.[15]

Another disappointed citizen simply asked, "I wonder if those members voting for cheaper furnishings would also order a Cadillac with burlap upholstery?"[16] (This is a most apt analogy for Simpson's submission was indeed too rustic, too over-stuffed for the sculptural, sophisticated simplicity of Revell's building.)

It has been written that "many persons make decisions, or fail to make decisions, that affect the end result of the building design process."[17] Certainly in the case of the

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[14]Derek Fuller, Letter to the Editor, Toronto Globe and Mail, 28 June 1965.

[15]Gretton, p. 55.

[16]Jack Budgell, Letter to the Editor, Toronto Star, 28 June 1965.

[17]"Building in Flux ... Changing Procedures, Changing Roles", Construction 44 (April, 1968): 98.

Toronto City Hall, it was failure to make a decision that affected the resulting interiors. Indeed, most damaging to the furnishing process was not the controversy itself (for in the end Knoll had lowered its bid and was awarded the contract); but the time consumed by that controversy. Had Council accepted the decision of the Design Committee at the time it was announced, the resulting furnishings may have been more successful. But, after a three month political impasse, Knoll had only forty working days to supply and install the furnishings. Even the best of furnishing programs would weaken under such conditions.

One questions here if indeed Knoll's was the best design program for the City Hall. It had been unanimously agreed by the Committee that it alone had captured the spirit of the architect; it was the only concept Revell would not have found displeasing. But was Knoll's approach comparable to Revell's proposals? Certainly this is a most difficult question to answer. The furnishing program submitted by Revell would suggest that his was a more comprehensive approach than Knoll's. Revell's concern for detail in every stage of his program was commendable. Furthermore, Revell would have had more time to successfully execute his program. He would have had the time to test the prototypes of his designs, perhaps eliminating the functional difficulties experienced by Knoll. Surely Revell's designs would have captured the dynamic spirit of his architecture.

His interiors evidence masterful integration of glass, wood, and concrete; it could be assumed his furnishings would reflect the same. But these are only assumptions. How can one honestly compare what may have been to what is? It is interesting to note, however, that the interiors of the City Hall library designed by Revell and his associates are quite successful, and the furniture was never subjected to criticism. It had been agreed that Knoll's was the best of the four designs submitted. But was it an outstanding design concept? Was it worthy of the City Hall? One leading Toronto designer suggested that it was not:

> I do not think that the standard is as good as the impression given of it. I do not consider Knoll's an exceptionaly good furniture scheme. The City Hall deserves something better.... Knoll is good, but it is not exceptional. The design has merit, but it does not go far enough. Knoll has humor, but lacks excitement. It is 200% or 300% better than the next competitor and stands far ahead of all the rest by a long way.... It should have been a difficult task to select the very best furniture design. In this case, the good one was picked from a mediocre selection. I would like to see Knoll told to go away and come back with something better.[18]

Perhaps this was a worthy suggestion (as evidenced by the installed furnishings), but unfortunately, an impractical one. There simply was no time for Knoll to "go away and come back with something better."

Time, unquestionably, was the major factor in transforming designs, which on paper were generally praised, into

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[18]Allan Moody, "What the Experts Say," p. 30.

actual furnishings, which in use were highly criticized. Time, or rather the lack of it, eliminated a most crucial step in the furnishings process: people-testing the furniture prototypes. Although Professor Arthur and his colleagues did inspect the prototypes on the production sites; they did not have the opportunity to test the pieces for functional suitability. And no furniture, regardless of its aesthetic finepoints, when found non-functional can be considered successful.

Seemingly, many of the criticisms and complaints, especially of the office furniture, should have been eliminated by common sense. It should have been recognized that concrete pedestals would snag nylons; that most secretaries prefer the presence of modesty panels and require a writing as well as a typing surface; and that it is only the rare executive who needs no drawer storage in his desk. It is surprising, and rather disappointing, that a contract furniture firm with such a fine reputation in office furnishings could overlook such obvious considerations. One questions whether the fault lay with the design, the specifications, or the production itself. Wherever the weaknesses lay, if the prototypes had been tested by actual users, most likely the deficiencies would have been discovered and corrected. Frankly, that Knoll produced as many units as they had in the brief time allotted was amazing; that all these units would be perfectly constructed and finished was hardly

possible (workers still complain of rough edges and loose screws). The irony is that those councillors complaining most about the furnishings, never realized that they themselves were in part responsible for the situation, simply by their reluctance to act earlier. Their indecision had cut production time in half. The furnishings controversy was a political football between the Council and the Board of Control; and neither realized the cost of such a "game".

Poorly defined policy and political controversy had caused a serious delay in the furnishings process. Unfortunately, Council's policies in the mural issue were no stronger. Once again political indecision ensued, this time with even more serious consequences. The program was not merely delayed, but completely abandoned.

Realizing that only art work of the highest caliber should be exhibited in the City Hall, and recognizing its own naive artistic sense; Council had appointed a professional Art Advisory Committee. A major responsibility of this committee was to establish a competition for the City Hall Mural; and later to act as jury in judging the competition. Yet when the Committee submitted its proposals for the competition to the City; it met with strong political opposition. Controller Dennison, an outspoken traditionalist in both the furnishings and art work issues, blatantly disapproved of the Committee's intent to invite only three artists to submit sketches in the mural competition.

Knowing the preferences of the committee, he feared that all three designs would be too abstract to be understood, or appreciated by the Toronto citizen. Though the only member to favor a representational, traditional mural for the City Hall, Dennison made his preference known, and not without effect:

> Controller Dennison is a professional politician; he is also a member of the Art Advisory Committee. So are Aldermen Brown and Sigsworth, eleven architects, artists, academics, gallery directors, and patrons of the arts. The whole is chaired by Professor Arthur of the University of Toronto School of Architecture. In the matter of deciding how a competition for the mural in the entrance hall should be held, Professor Arthur carries a majority opinion within the Committee. Controller Dennison airs his minority opinion in the Council Chamber; and so far the result has been acrimony and inaction.[19]

Council had delayed the decision on the mural competition for eighteen months. By the time the issue was re-examined, William Dennison had been elected Mayor, and the Committee realized the futility in resubmitting its original proposals for the mural competition. A major issue in the mayorial campaign between Givens and Dennison had been the art work and mural controversy. The Committee had interpreted Dennison's victory as a victory for traditional, representational art; yet realized that such an approach was inappropriate for the City Hall. As a temporary alternative to the mural competition; the Committee proposed a program of monthly painting and sculpture exhibitions in the entrance

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[19]Barrie Hale, "Our Artless Council", Toronto Telegram, 10 September 1966.

hall area. This alternative was recognized by the Mayor and his Council as an acceptable compromise. The issue of the mural was again postponed. Later, with the dismissal of the original Art Advisory Committee, an act encouraged by Mayor Dennison, the mural issue was abandoned altogether. Patrons of the arts questioned and criticized the disbanding of the Art Committee. One might assume that the Mayor, remembering past controversies, no longer could tolerate the "so-called experts". The role of his new Art Committee was reduced to purely advisory activities.

There are two major issues here. First, that the exhibited art work and City Hall mural should compliment Revell's design; and secondly, who is the more qualified to decide what does best reflect the architectural design: the professional politician or the professional artist-designer? Council, admitting it was not an expert in the fine arts, had appointed an Advisory Committee to make decisions in the matter of the arts. Certainly this was a wise, and commendable, approach. Yet, when this advice was given, it was ignored. Once again, Council had assigned the responsibility for a decision, but delegated no authority for the execution of that decision. One wonders why advisory committees are established if their advice is only to be ignored; especially when their decisions are knowledgeable and well-founded. The City Hall had been built to awake the City to the twentieth century; why exhibit nineteenth century art?

A traditional mural hardly reflects the unique, imagination approach of the architect. The Committee was right to realize that no mural would be better than a traditional, representational one. The entire mural issue leads one to ask if indeed the City Hall had awakened the City to cultural demands of the latter third of the twentieth century. Had it established a climate for contemporary visual arts? Seemingly not, as evidenced by the overwhelming public support of William Dennison and his conservative artistic views. Seemingly the distinctive design of the City Hall was "a magnificant accident, grafted on a Nineteenth Century City, whose inhabitants still see space and form and movement with Victorian eyes."[19]

Revell had changed the City's architectural vision. Torontoians were proud and boastful of their distinctive City Hall. Similarly, the Arts Committee wanted to change the City's anachrononistic artistic vision. They had been appointed to select the art work that best reflected Revell's designs; yet upon doing so, they were ignored, and later dismissed. Disappointed with the City's handling of both the furnishing and art work issues, one Toronto reporter aptly wrote:

> Surely it is time our Councillors do what one assumes they are elected to do--let themselves be advised by the advisors they themselves had freely chosen.[20]

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[19] Ibid., p. 4.

[20] Ibid.

Perhaps it is time for all governments to study the decision-making policies and design processes necessary for successful public design--architectural and interior--and to define roles, assign responsibilities, and establish policies to achieve that end.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

"No problem is more momentous for the modern democratic state than its capacity to develop rational, responsible, goal-oriented policy."[1]

This was not only the problem faced by the City of Toronto in the designing processes for the new City Hall; but by any town, city, state, or nation undertaking a building program. It has often been said that one can learn from past mistakes. This study has been done that future public design participants can learn from the mistakes of the City of Toronto. Its purpose has not been to criticize controversial furnishings or an "artless council", but rather to evidence the need for a more structured framework for responsible public design decision-making and policy.

The major weaknesses plaguing the design processes for the City Halls furnishings, including the selection of proper works of art were: 1) conflict in decision-making and subsequent political indecision, 2) poorly defined design policies that were susceptible to political intervention,

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[1]Norton Long, "Public Policy and Administration," in Administrative Questions and Political Answers, edited by Claude Hawley and Ruth Weintraub (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1966), p. 275.

and 3) failure to recognize the importance of the interior furnishings as an integral part of the total-design concept and the need for an integrated design approach.

Thus, in structuring a public design framework, it must be recognized that only well-defined objectives can reduce conflict in decision-making; that responsible decisions are essential for effective policy; and that only well-defined policy can eliminate political controversy and establish an integrated design approach.

By defining goals and objectives at the very outset of the project, public design participants can enjoy a greater competence and a lesser fear in decision-making. The reluctance to make a decision is universal:

> The making of a decision is a burdensome task. Offsetting the exhiliaration that may result from a correct and successful decision, and the relief that follows the terminating of a struggle to determine issues, is the depression that comes from the failure or error of decision and the frustration that ensues from uncertainty.[2]

This reluctance to render a decision, combined with an effort to pass the responsibility onto someone else is especially inherent in bureaucratic or political structures.

In any democratic society, one maintains certain concepts concerning the role of the politician. Certainly, it is recognized that the politician plays a vital role in decision-making processes for any public design project.

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[2]Chester I. Barnard, quoted by Felix A. Nigro, in Modern Public Administration (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), p. 182.

The politician is the link between the public and the designer. In this position, he may experience conflict between his political sense and his design sense. The greater the conflict, the more difficult the decision, and the more reluctant he is to render a decision.

In the past, disinterest or disregard for good design "has permitted too much to grow up in our environment which is the essence of the mediocre and the shoddy."[3] When the responsibility for public design is placed solely in the hands of the apathetic or design-ignorant politician; mediocrity can result. It is therefore, the responsibility of all architects and designers to educate political decision-makers that good design should be an inherent objective of any civic building project; and that with care in planning, good design need cost no more tax dollars than mediocre, or poor design. It must be recognized that civic design should "elevate the standard of public taste ... lift the spirits and stimulate imagination."[4] Good public design can erase environmental apathy and create civic pride.

Once these goals are accepted by the government undertaking the building project; once good design is established as a foremost objective of the building program, each political decision-maker would need to recognize that "design

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[3] "The New City Hall", Toronto Globe and Mail, 27 September 1958.

[4] Ibid.

must be inherent at every stage of the decision-making ladder. If design is not recognized by the decision-makers, or if it is left until too late, its creative potential is lost."[5]

The acceptance of the forementioned goals of good civic design would give more direction to decision-making. Design would be considered a determinant in all responsible decisions; the policies resulting from such decisions would encourage, not eliminate creative design potential.

Should the political participants feel incompetent in rendering responsible design decisions, they must willingly assign the responsibility for the decision to those more qualified.

> The responsibility for decisions must be so allocated that all decisions requiring a certain expertise can be made by persons possessing that expertise.[6]

The more knowledgeable the decision-maker; the more responsible is the decision.

Decision-making can be defined as "the rational process of defining a problem, identifying the alternatives, selecting the most appropriate; and translating it into a course of action."[7] Responsible decision-making involves careful

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[5]John Lindsay, "Public Servant Looks at Design", AIA Journal 48 (August, 1967): 52.

[6]Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 10.

[7]C. E. Dimock and G. G. Dimock, Public Administration (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1969), p. 22.

analysis of the problem; studying all the alternatives and the impact of each; selecting that alternative which most effectively would achieve predetermined objectives; and providing the mechanism by which the decision can be implemented. Responsible decision-making determines not only the most effective policy, but also the most effective administration of that policy; it assures policy continuity and concrete results. On the other hand, rash or unknowledgeable decisions can result in poorly defined policy susceptible to criticism and reversal. Unfortunately, this is a characteristic of many political decisions:

> Municipal Councils are known for their ability to reverse decisions, even those previously arrived at by unanimous consent.... Municipal governments lack political responsibility ... and policy continuity.[8]

Only more responsible decision-making and better defined policy can overcome this threat of reversal. In public design programs, Councils' assigning the responsibility of design decisions to design professionals assures a more knowledgeable decision and more comprehensive policy. However, responsibility without authority is meaningless. Council must also delegate the authority necessary to execute the policy. This delegated power would give design policies sufficient weight to withstand shifts in political Councils and administration. It would insure policy continuity

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[8]Raymond Peringer, "How Parties Can Come to the Aid of City Hall", Toronto Globe and Mail, 21 September 1966.

throughout the life of the project. This delegation of responsibility and authority should be written as a law, a by-law, or a contract condition. To guarantee its irreversibility, it must be recognized as legally binding. (If during the process of administration, weaknesses in the policy are discovered; it could be amended through the proper political channels.)

Once goals have been stated, responsible decisions made, well-defined policies established; design participants must determine a framework of roles and responsibilities for the successful administration of those policies. "Only when objectives, directions, and roles are clear to everyone; is there a maximum chance of securing desired goals."[9] The assigning of roles and responsibilities is a crucial factor for a successful design program.

In delegating responsibilities, all design participants should be considered--administrators, councillors, executive boards, architects, designers, artists, advisory committees, and the electorate. For each stage of the proposed program, the participants would be hierarchially ranked and responsibilities assigned. Dominant and subordinate roles once determined would be respected by all participants. This hierarchial structure would maximize the chance of policy continuity by minimizing the threat of political intervention

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[9] Dimock and Dimock, p. 404.

and ensuing controversy. It would be understood at the outset of each design program who held the dominant position, who was responsible for the final design decision and resulting policy. Assumably, the most dominant role would be enjoyed by the person or persons most qualified to make responsible decisions. For example, in matters of preliminary planning policy requiring knowledge of governmental budgeting, funding allocations, and public approval of program appropriations; the elected politician would be responsible. Once the program has been approved and funds allocated; a committee of qualified professionals would be responsible for selecting a good architectural design. In architectural matters, the architect and his associates would have the dominant responsibility. And so it would continue throughout the entire designing process. By determining roles and responsibilities at the outset of the program; the necessary importance can be given to the furnishings and art work programs. As in the case of the Toronto City Hall; these programs are all too often neglected until the final stages of building process. Establishing a time framework as well as a hierarchial structure would further insure the success of these programs. Throughout the design process this structure would encourage architect, designer, and artist collaboration. All design participants would work together towards a unified, integrated whole.

Developing a hierarchy of public design decision-making roles and responsibilities, and setting this into a practical time framework, is a most formidable task. But it is not an impossibility: "We can restructure our government operations to make design a more important part of our decision-making processes."[10] Such structuring would require intensive research not only in the designing processes, but also in public administration, political responsibility, and policy planning. Certainly it is a project worthy of further research and investigation. Development of such a structure would be a major breakthrough in coping with the many irresolutions in public design.

Good public design should be a goal of all responsible design participants. And only through a total awareness of the advantages of an integrated design approach, and a structured framework of decision-making roles and policy responsibilities encouraging such an approach; will this goal ever be fully realized.

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[10]Lindsay, p. 50.

APPENDIX

ILLUSTRATIONS

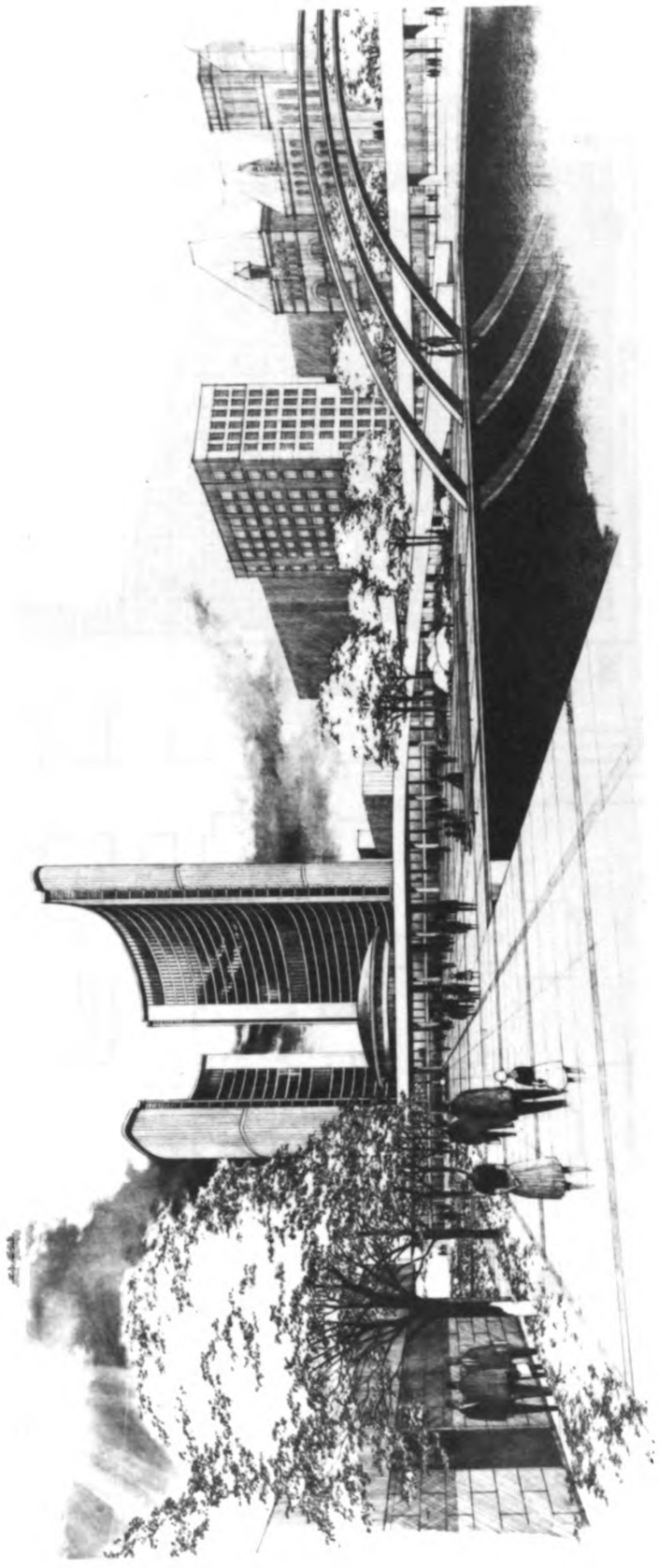

Figure 1. Architect's Rendering: Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square.

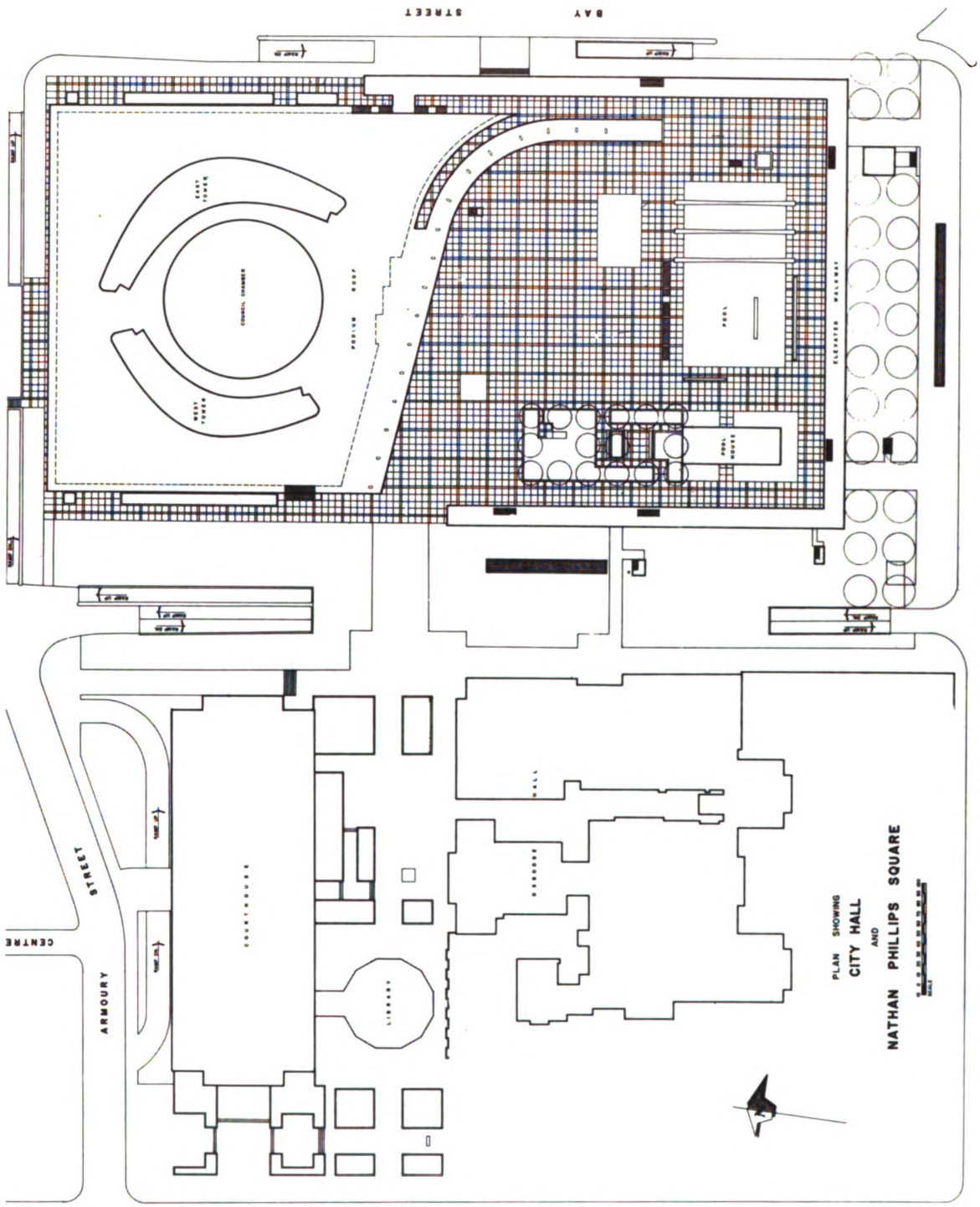

Figure 2. Architect's Plan.

Figure 3. City Hall and Square: Opening Day, September 13, 1965.

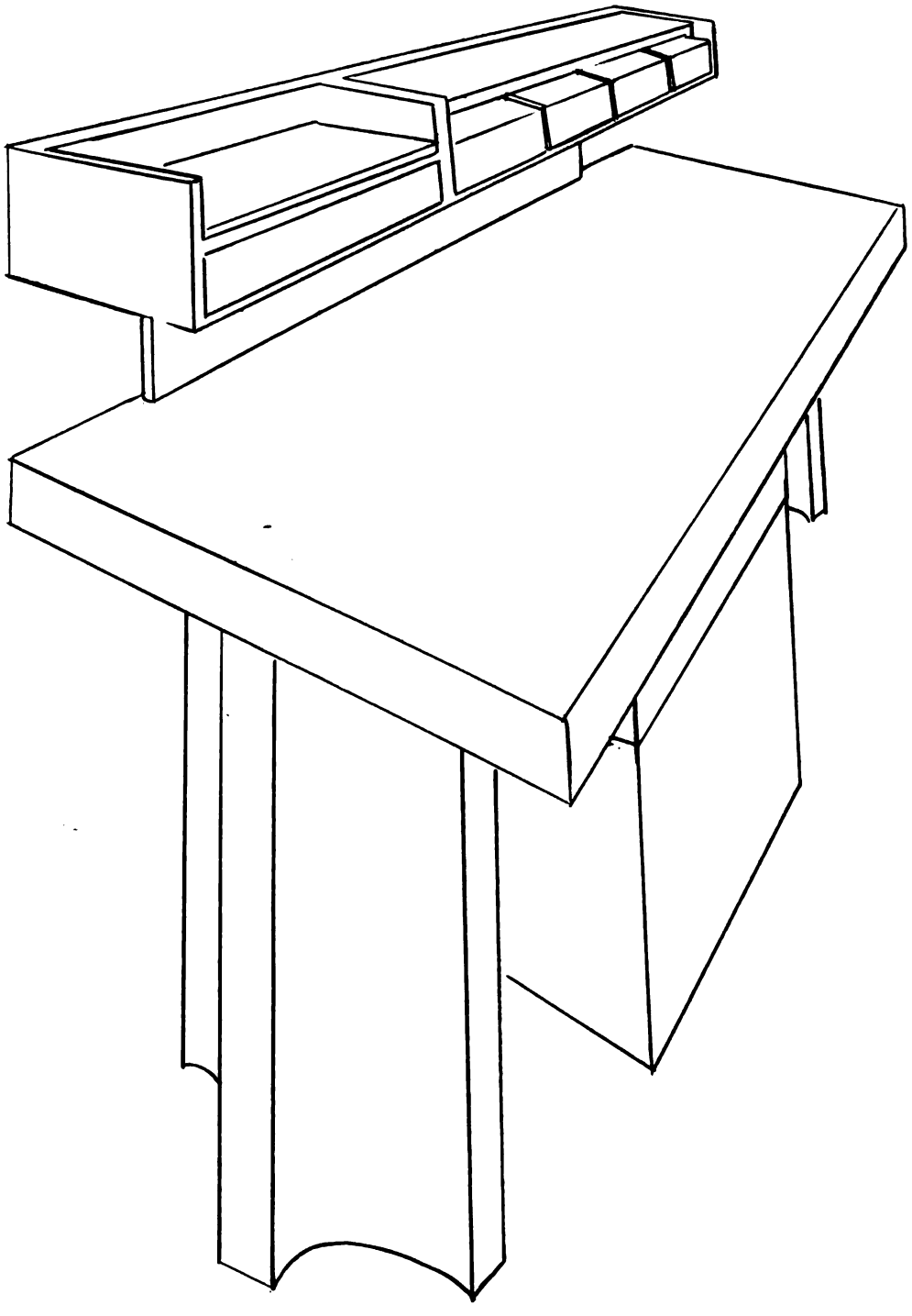

Figure 4. Knoll's Desk Design. Base is precast concrete; top is teak (executive) or Formica white oak (clerical).

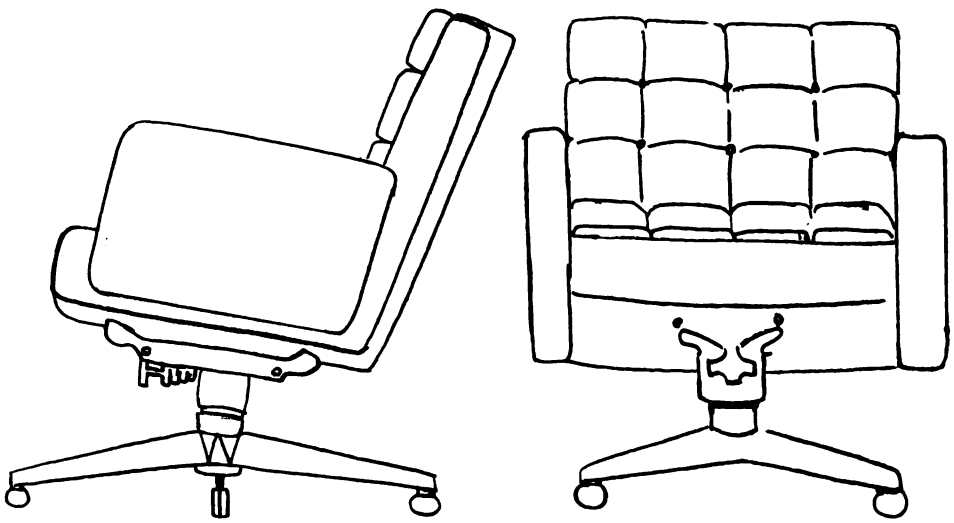

Figure 5. Knoll's Mayor's and Controllers' Swivel Chair. Leather or fabric upholstery; sleeved stainless steel base.

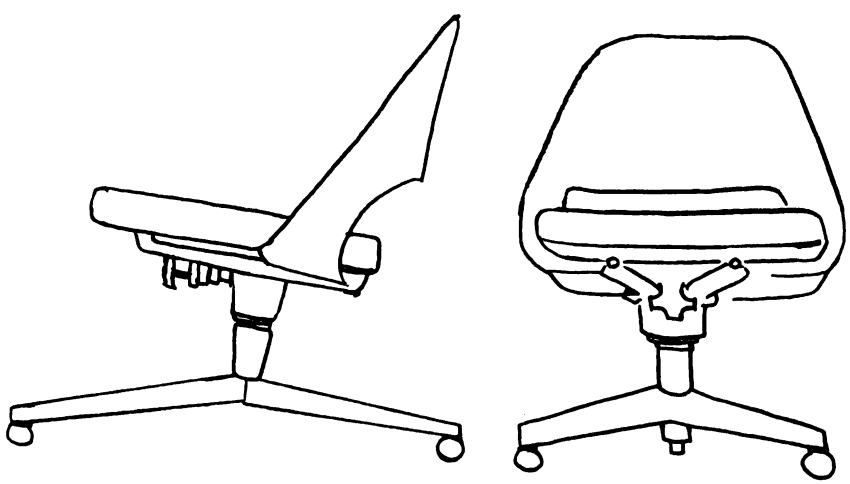

Figure 6. Knoll's Clerical Swivel Chair. Naugahyde back, fabric seat, sleeved stainless steel base.

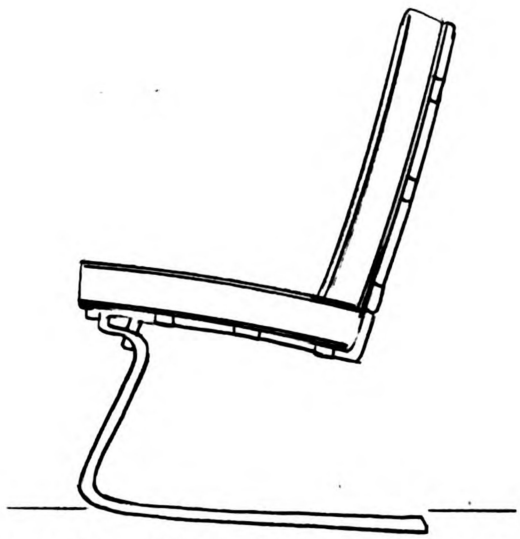

Figure 7. Lounge Chair, Mayor's Office.

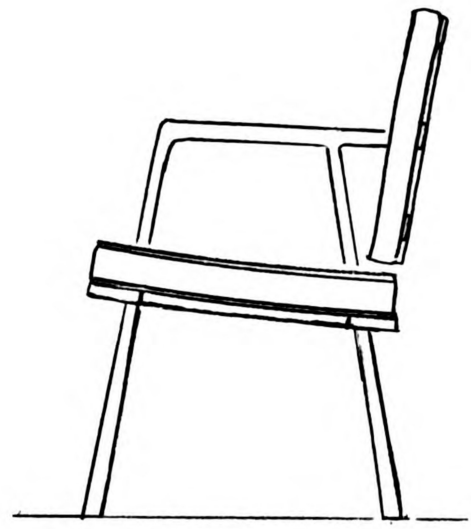

Figure 8. Chair, Committee Room.

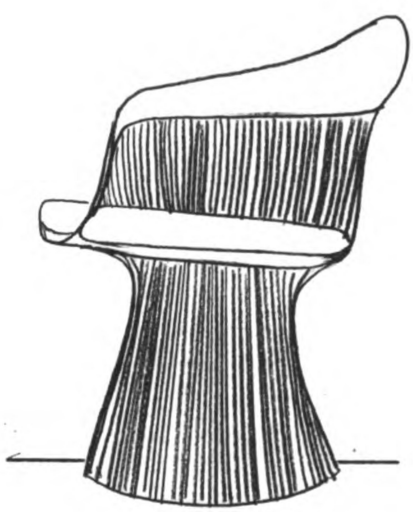

Figure 9. Reading Chair, Council Lounge (William Platner Design).

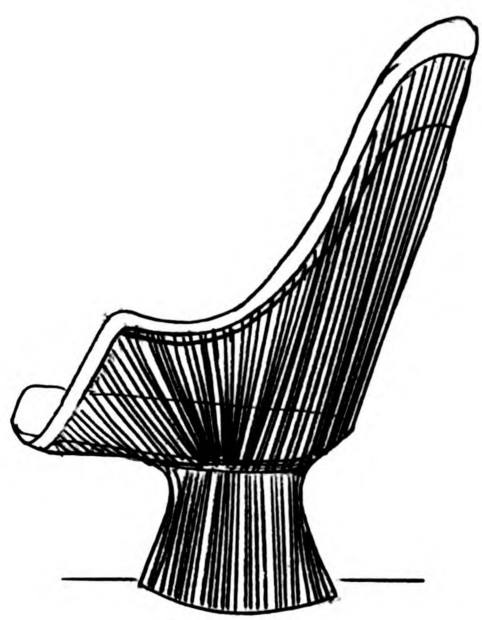

Figure 10. Lounge Chair, Council Lounge (William Platner Design).

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