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THE PRELIMINARY DESIGN

(a) The Architect

In the fall of 1965, the architectural firm of Webb Zerafa Menkes (now Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden) of Toronto was appointed to prepare proposals for the total development of the site and a concept design for the New Headquarters Building. By July of 1966, shortly after the revised brief was approved, they had prepared a basic proposed design solution, sketches of the exterior, typical preliminary floor layouts and a rudimentary model for presentation.

(b) The Alternatives

In considering the form that the building would take, the Architects were faced with a number of design problems, particularly the height limitation of 150 feet (approximately 10 to 12 storeys), which eliminated as a possible solution a single tower structure providing the amount of space required. Other basic concepts were considered including the pure rectangular slab form similar to the nearby Ottawa City Hall. The side court plan similar to some other Government buildings in Ottawa and the central court type plan with wings totally enclosing an inner open court were also considered; these were not felt to be suitable for the site, the purpose and the guidelines. All factors considered pointed toward the necessity for a more distinguished architectural entity than any existing in the Capital at the time.