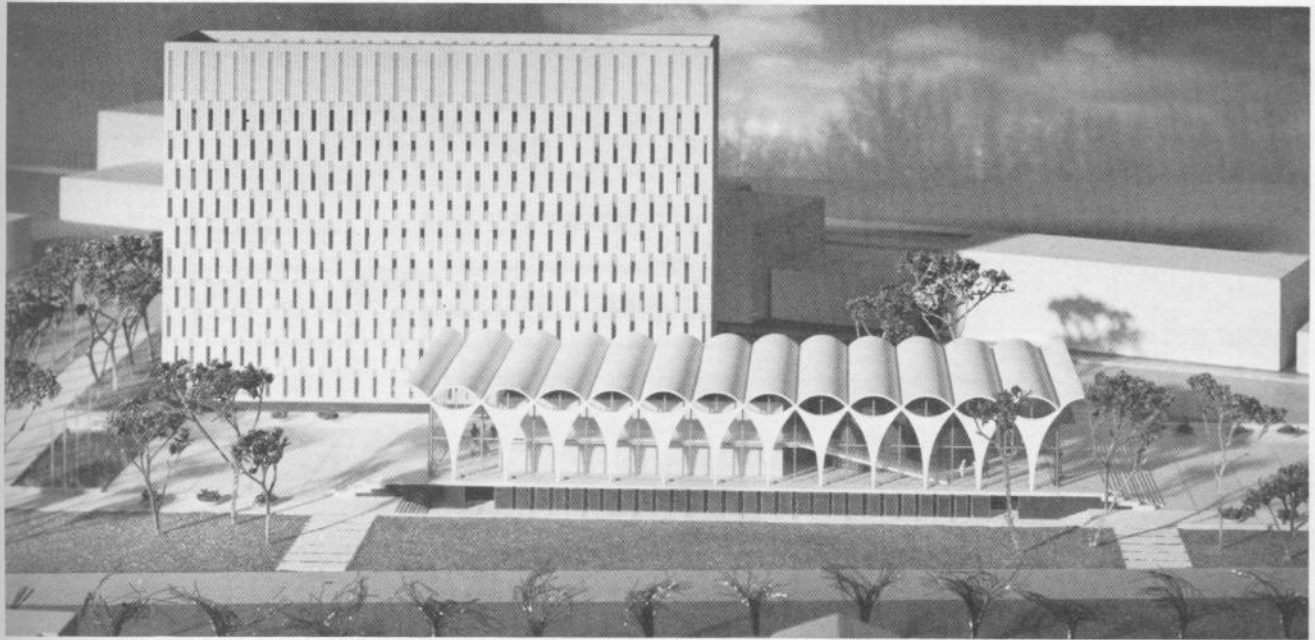


The Winnipeg City Hall Competition



HENRY KALEN

The Winning Design, by Green, Blankstein, Russell Associates, Winnipeg

Preliminary Report of the Jury December 16, 1959

During both the Preliminary and Final Judgments, the Jury was guided by the following criteria in assessing the entries:

1. The Siting—the building's relation to the site and to its surroundings having in mind particularly its relation to the Legislative Building.
2. The Planning of the Building—including the requirements for the public, legislative, administrative and service areas and their interrelationships.
3. The exteriors and interiors in terms of the appropriateness of materials, and of their overall character and scale.
4. The logic and feasibility of the structure, the economy of first cost, and the durability and maintenance of the completed building.
5. The overall concept.

In the final analysis, the Jury referred to the following description of the ideal City Hall as set down in the Conditions of the Competition: "A City Hall has been defined as 'the physical embodiment of what the City is, what it stands for, and what it aims to be.' Today it must assume the dual functions of an efficient office building and of a municipal government administration centre. Its significance in the growth of a city results from its expression of the purpose and nature of municipal government as well as from its impressive monumentality . . ."



L. J. GREEN



C. N. BLANKSTEIN



G. L. RUSSELL



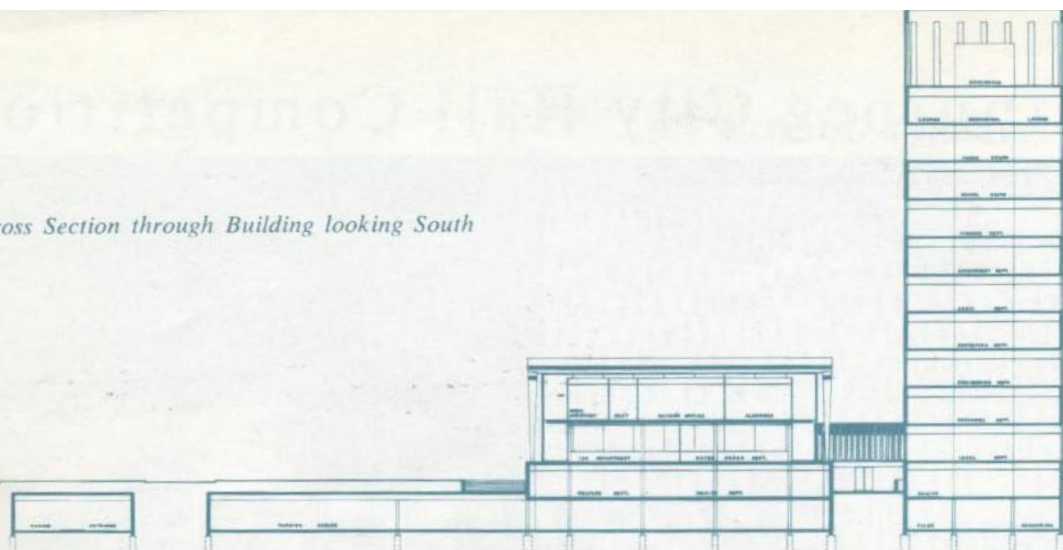
The GBR Associates design team on the final stage of the Winnipeg City Hall Competition. Left to right, David Thordarson, Walter Toporek, Donald Bittorf, Archie Nixon and Bernard Brown.

The Jury also placed great emphasis on the mandatory requirement that a new City Hall constructed on the Broadway site must in no way conflict

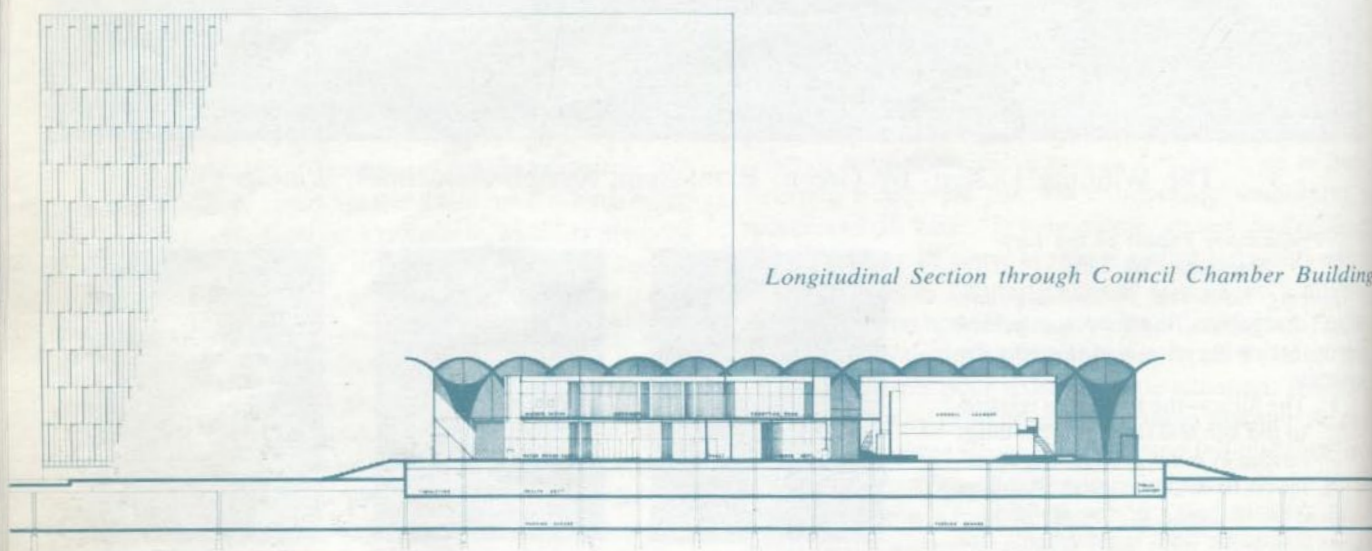
with the existing surroundings, notably the effectiveness and view of the Legislative Building as it terminates Memorial Boulevard.

(Concluded on page 34)

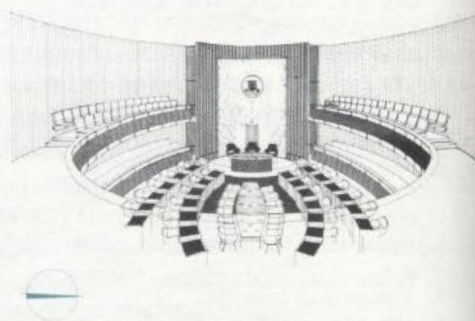
Cross Section through Building looking South



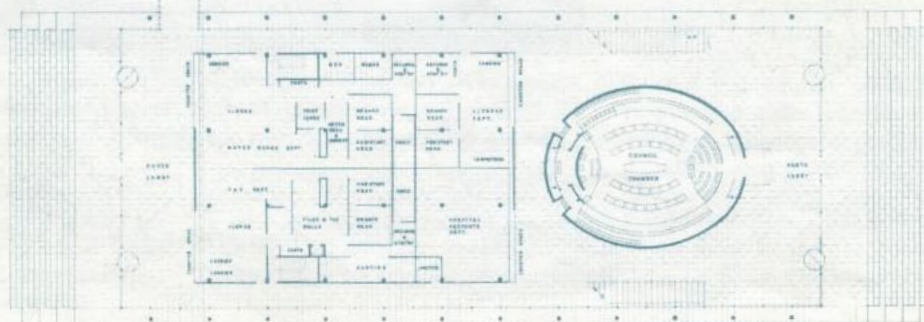
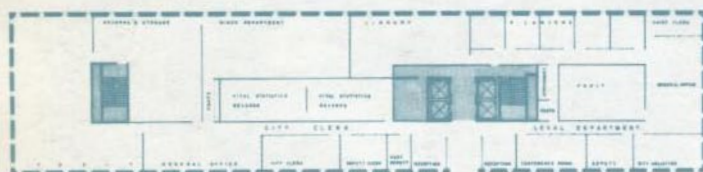
Longitudinal Section through Council Chamber Building

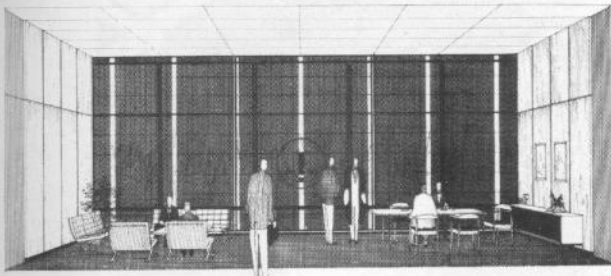


The Council Chamber

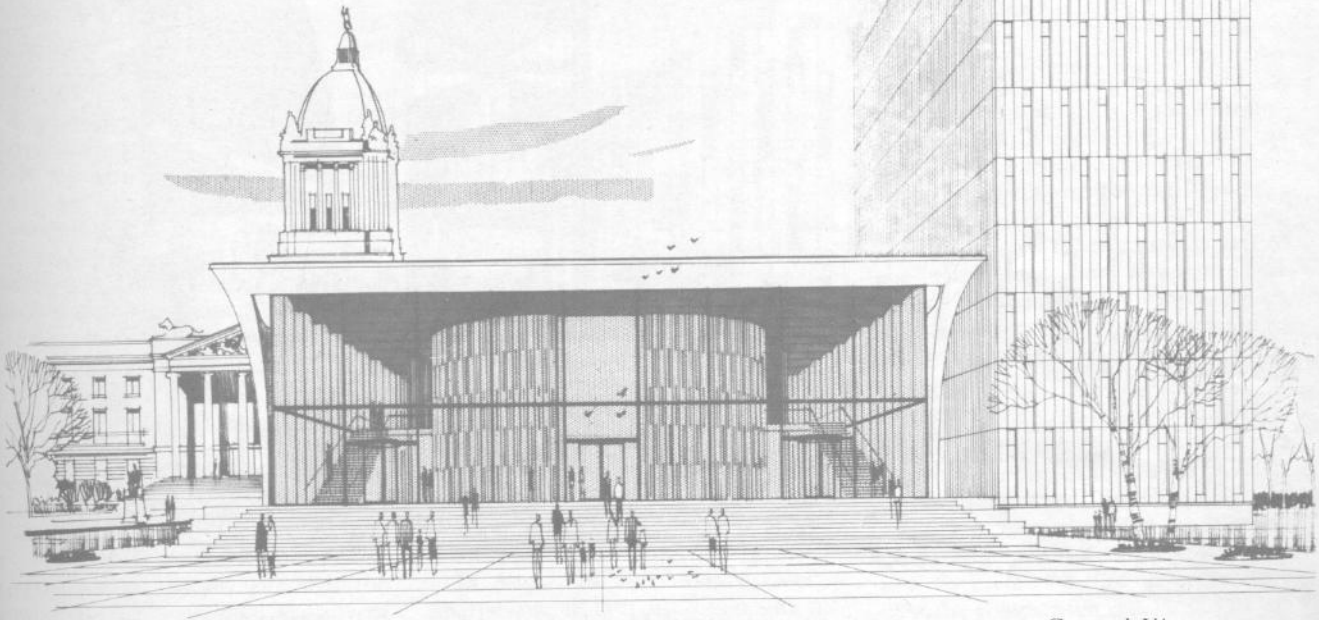


Main Floor Plan





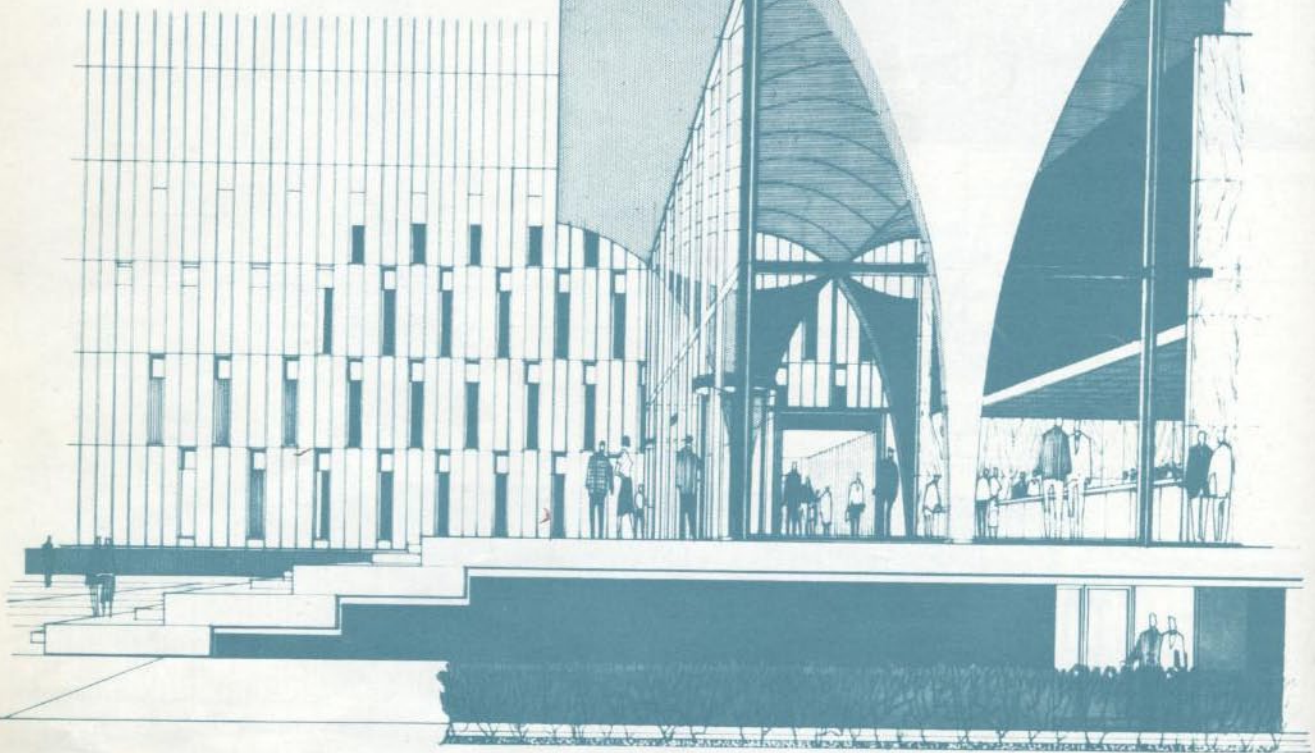
Interior of Mayor's Office



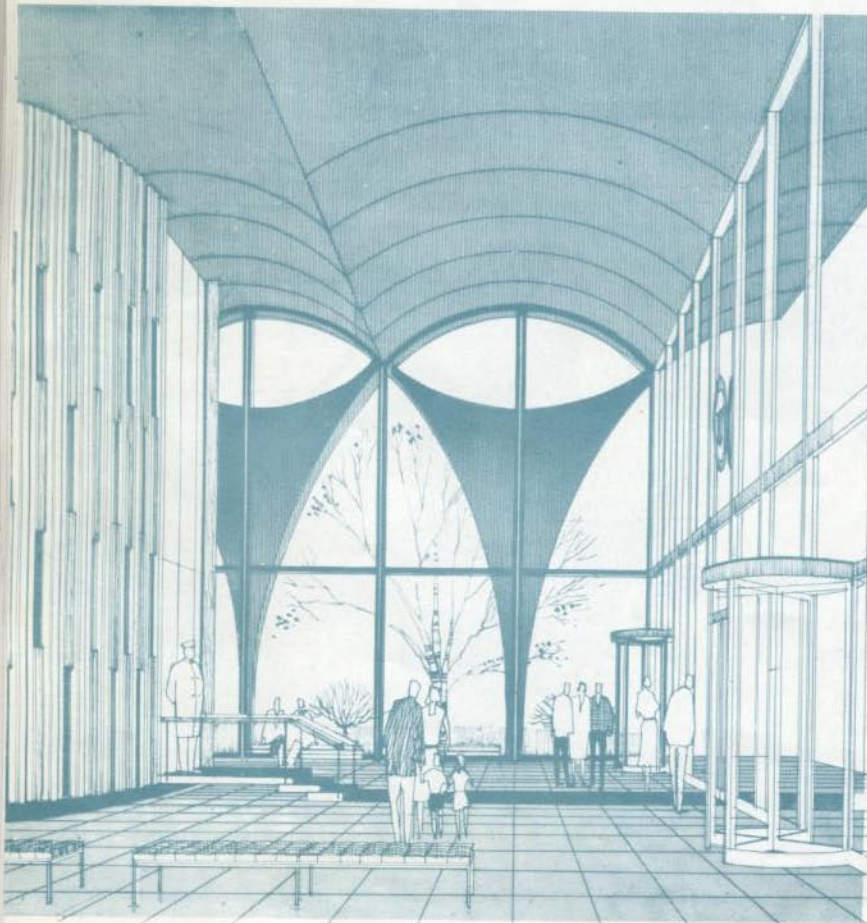
General View



Close-up of Main South Entrance



Interior of Main Lobby



(Concluded from page 31)

The Jury felt that the winning entry satisfied these requirements more fully than any other entry, that it would indeed express the dignity and friendliness of a City Hall that serves the people. It exemplifies an excellent town planning concept in terms of its siting. It forms an admirable balance of masses within the area, since its high office block will be linked visually to the Legislative Building and the new Provincial Office Building. Indeed it will complement both of these two important provincial structures.

It is a distinguished and somewhat unique concept for a City Hall as it provides separate expression to its two main functions, (1) the low unit, housing the ceremonial and public civic functions, and (2) the tall compact unit, housing the administrative departments. Furthermore the arrangement of these two structures on the site provides two fine plazas. This dual symbolism echoes effectively the newly created separation between the Provincial legislative and administrative units. This clear expression of the dual nature of a City Hall was one of the deciding factors which lead to its choice as the winner.

The Jury liked the fact that this entry succeeded in expressing both the majestic scale required for an appropriate symbol of civic government and the human scale that welcomes the citizen in a democratic manner. ♡

The Saga of the City Hall

By John A. Russell,

Professional Adviser,

Winnipeg City Hall Competition

In 1875, two years after its incorporation as a city, Winnipeg laid the cornerstone of its first City Hall. By 1882 this structure had to be abandoned because of cracking walls and the collapse of an arch. The following year plans were invited for a new City Hall and the firm of Barber and Barber received the commission. The outcome was the present City Hall, completed in 1886 at a cost of \$80,000.

By 1911 the "City of the Rivers" had outgrown this Victorian edifice and a money by-law was presented to the ratepayers for the purpose of erecting a new City Hall. In spite of the defeat of this by-law, the City Council decided in 1913 to hold an architectural competition for its design; although the competition was completed, the advent of the World War and the attendant economic situation forced the City to abandon this project as well as several other plans for municipal development and improvement.

Although the need for a new City Hall was mentioned frequently in civic circles, no positive action was taken until 1947 when City Council requested the Town Planning Commission to select and analyze possible sites and to recommend thereon. During the next two years eight sites were carefully considered on the basis of a seven-point evaluation scale and were rated accordingly. With location, accessibility, size, surroundings and possible benefits thereto, availability, cost, and co-ordination with existing public buildings as the criteria, the site of United College, the Broadway site, and the site of the old City Hall were chosen as the three most desirable locations and were rated in that order.

In 1954 City Council renewed its interest in the site question and appointed a special sub-committee to study the question. Its conclusion and recommendation were that the present site was the most suitable one. However, two years later Council turned once again to the Town Planning Commission for a recommendation. After reappraisal of the factors to be considered, it concluded that the following

were the most important ones to consider in determining a site: location near the centre of gravity of city population; location near central business district; location with maximum accessibility from public transit routes; location in area of existing civic and government building for mutual benefits and for consolidation of open spaces and parking facilities. It is recognized that the effect on traffic and the cost of acquisition were also important, but should not necessarily be determining factors. With the United College site no longer available, the Commission rated the Broadway site as the most desirable, the present City Hall site second.

In August of 1956 Mayor George Sharpe entered into discussion with the Provincial Government as to the availability of the Broadway site, since it was owned and occupied by the Government's temporary office accommodation. On October 18 Premier Douglas Campbell wrote Mayor Sharpe stating that "if this site is chosen, (the Government) will make the property available to the City without cost".

By the following summer, the City Engineering Department had analyzed and reported to the City's Special Committee on the new City Hall (at its request) on the relative costs of

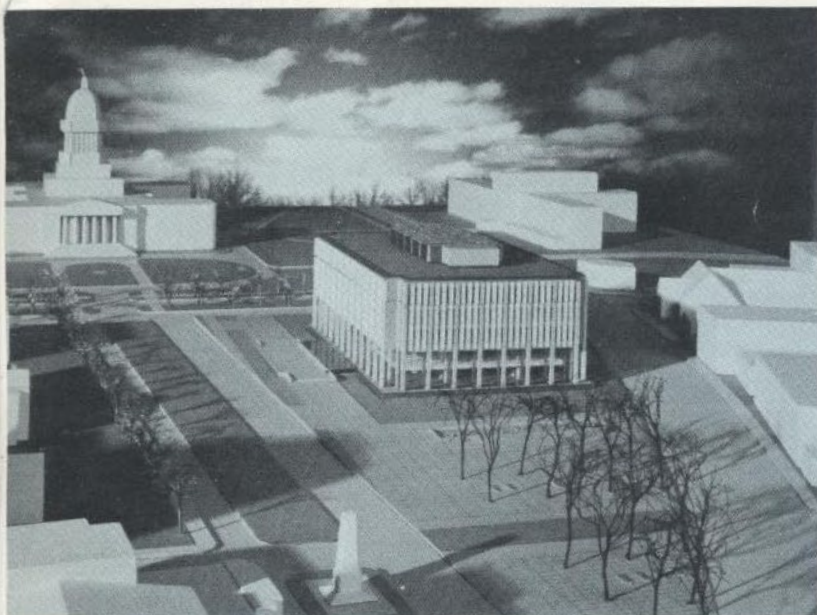
building a City Hall on the present site expanded and on the proposed Broadway site. On October 23, 1957, the site question was submitted to public plebiscite and preference for the Broadway site over the old site was expressed conclusively by a 79% vote in favour. At the same time, the ratepayers approved a money by-law providing six million dollars for the construction of a new City Hall.

Shortly thereafter, the President of the Manitoba Association of Architects, Norman C. H. Russell, presented a brief from the Council of that Association to the City Council urging that a national competition for the selection of an architect and the design of the new City Hall be held in accordance with the competition regulations of the RAIC. As a result, on November 18, 1957, the City Council authorized such a national competition for "the design of the new City Hall that will be erected on the site provided by the Government on the northeast corner of Broadway at Osborne Street", and I had the honour to be appointed Professional Adviser to prepare the Conditions and conduct the Competition. For the record, Premier Campbell reiterated in a letter to Mayor Stephen Juba the availability of the Broadway site to the City "for the purpose of building a new City Hall thereon".

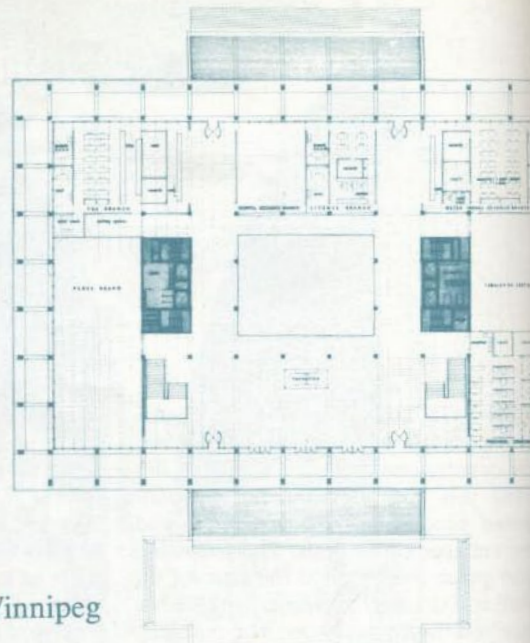
For the next six months my very able assistant, James Palmer Lewis, and I reviewed the existing and future requirements of each of the departments of civic government with their respective chairmen in order to determine the program of area requirements, their interrelationships and their projected future expansion. Much valuable information had already been collected by the City Engineering Department two years earlier when consideration had been given to a proposal that the City purchase a vacant office building to augment its badly crowded office facilities. With the enthusiastic co-operation of all the City's departments, and with Eric Arthur's enlightened leadership as Professional Adviser for the Toronto City Hall and Square



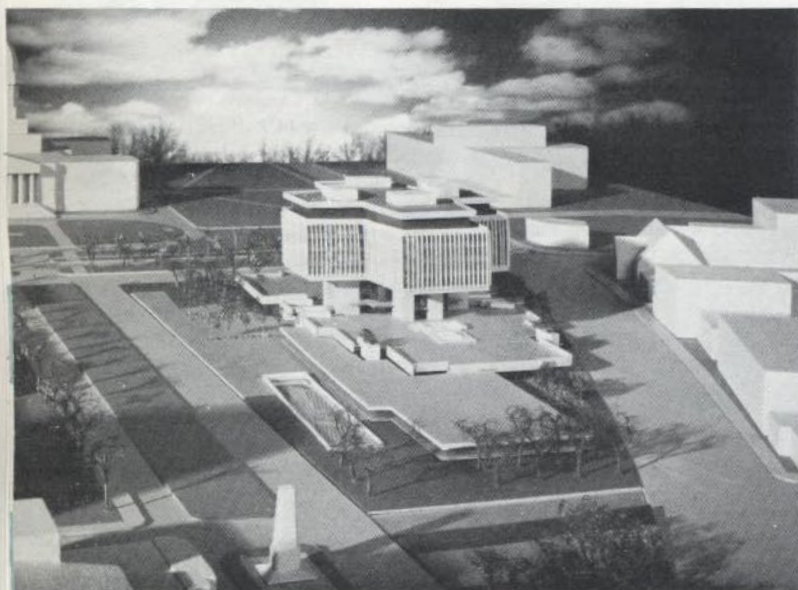
Winnipeg's City Hall, architects, Barber and Barber, completed in 1886.



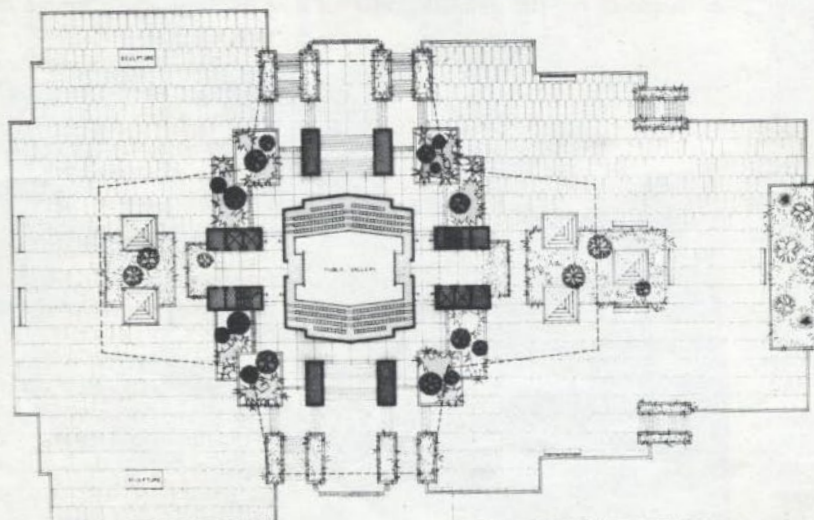
Smith, Carter, Searle Associates, Winnipeg



MAIN FLOOR PLAN



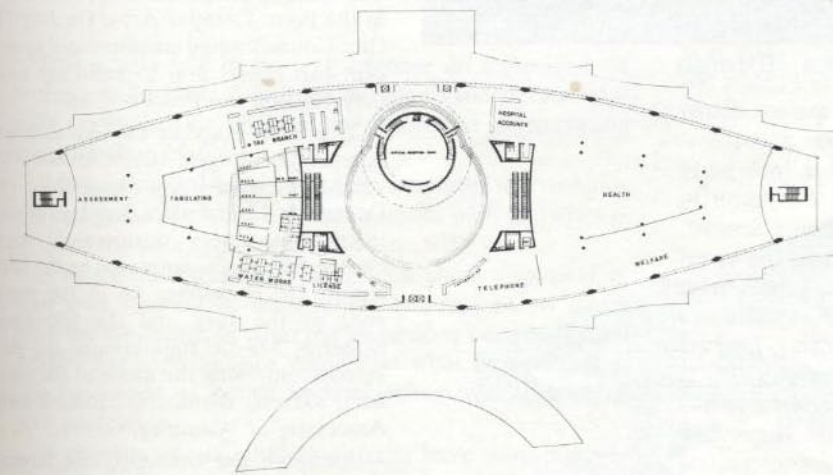
J. M. Dayton and R. Jessiman, Vancouver



Competition, I was able to have the Conditions of Competition ready for distribution to the architects of Canada on June 17. An announcement of the Competition and an invitation to participate therein had already been mailed to each member of the RAIC on June 2 through the kind assistance of the secretarial staff of the Institute, who had addressed all the envelopes. On August 4, when registration closed, 263 architects from Nova Scotia to British Columbia had registered in the Competition. Of this number 91 submitted entries in the Preliminary Stage which closed on December 8.

Gerald Robinson, Toronto

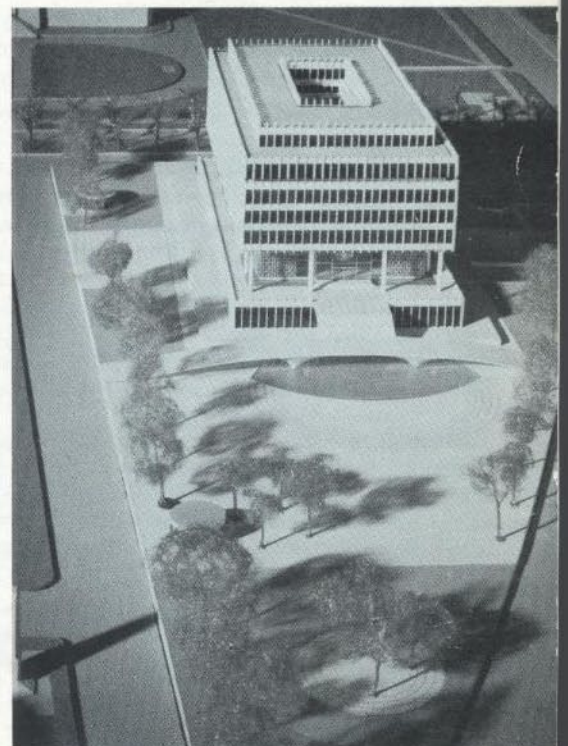
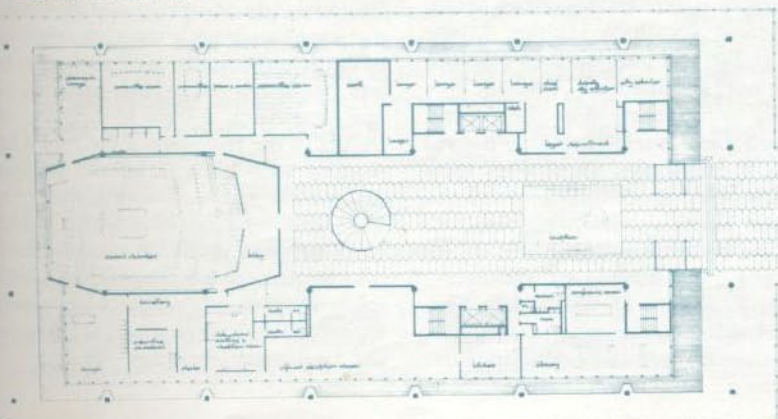
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

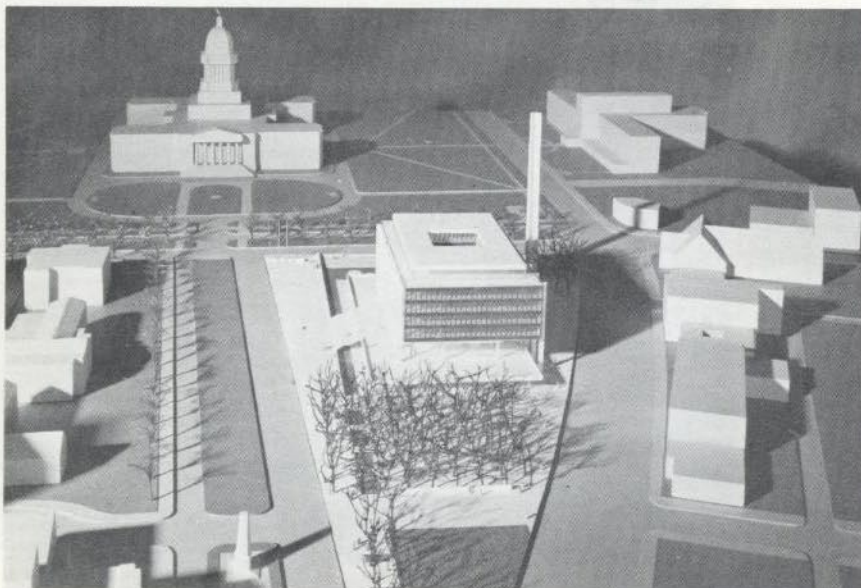


On January 3, 1958, the Jury commenced its exhaustive analysis of these submissions. The Jury consisted of five distinguished architects whose training and extensive experience made them eminently qualified to serve in this capacity: Pietro Belluschi, FAIA, a famous American architect who is also Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ralph Rapson, AIA, an equally eminent American architect who heads the School of Architecture at the University of Minnesota; Alfred Roth, Architekt, a distinguished Swiss architect, educator and writer, who is

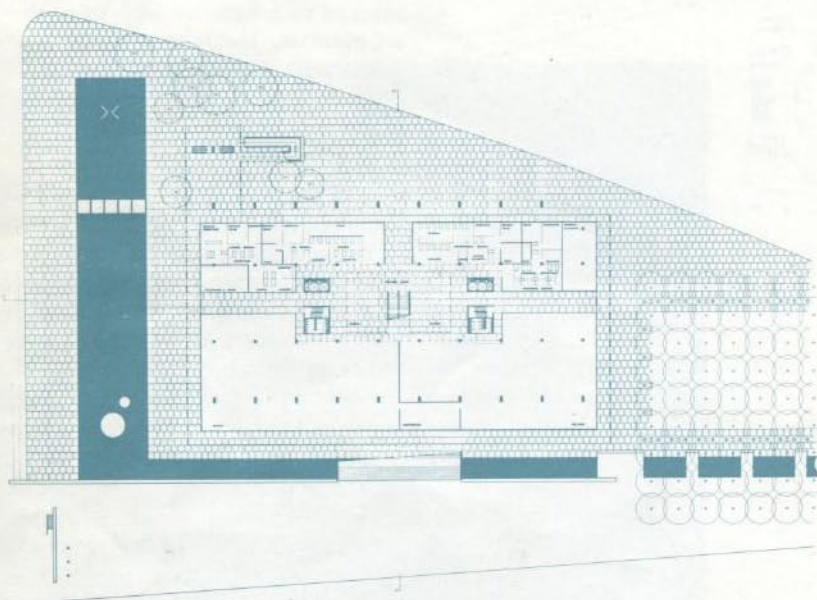
George S. Abram, Toronto

SECOND FLOOR PLAN





Michael M. Kopsa, Toronto



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

now Dean of the School of Architecture at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich; Peter M. Thornton, a prominent Vancouver architect who was trained at the Architectural Association in London; Eric W. Thrift, a native of Winnipeg who, after graduation from The University of Manitoba and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been Director of the Metropolitan Planning Commission of Greater Winnipeg for the past 15 years. Each juror brought to the judgment his individual philosophy of design; yet collectively the jurors displayed a remarkable unanimity of emphasis.

Following a preliminary study of each entry, the Jury considered each model placed in the master model

of the Broadway site and its environs. Elimination of entries commenced with this consideration of siting and environmental relationships in terms of mass, exterior spaces, vistas, scale, etc. Consideration of the general planning of public and reception areas, department locations, future extensions, traffic and parking then resulted in further eliminations. For the remaining group, each juror thoroughly analyzed each entry, recording his reactions pro and con. These were then fully discussed by the entire group before the jurors voted on six finalists. The first ballot was conclusive in its choice of the following six architects: George S. Abram of Willowdale, Ontario; J. M. Dayton and R. Jessiman of Vancouver; Green, Blankstein, Rus-

sel and Associates of Winnipeg; Michael M. Kopsa of Toronto; Gerald Robinson of Toronto; Smith, Carter, Searle Associates of Winnipeg.

Just prior to the close of the Preliminary Stage of the Competition, Premier Duff Roblin proposed to the City that the Point Douglas area be considered as the site for the new City Hall thereby making it a nucleus for an urban renewal and rehabilitation scheme. As a result, the Final Stage of the Competition had to be postponed pending consideration of this proposal. A three-man panel, composed of Anthony Adamson, Toronto, H. H. G. Moody and Eric W. Thrift of Winnipeg, was appointed to study the proposal, and recommended on June 5 that the City Hall should not be located in the Point Douglas Area. On July 13 City Council voted unanimously to accept this report and to build the new City Hall on the Broadway site.

The Final Stage of the Competition commenced August 10 and closed November 30. The Jury reassembled on December 13 and after two days of deliberation, entry number 31 was chosen by a unanimous vote on the first ballot. On December 16 in the presence of the Jury and the television cameras, Mayor Juba opened the envelope containing the name of the winners, Green, Blankstein, Russell and Associates of Winnipeg.

Although the challenge, the labour and the honour now belong to the winning architects, I wish to pay tribute to the 90 other architects of Canada who, by their participation in the Competition, contributed many excellent schemes whose calibre, variety and thoroughness stimulated the Jury in the first instance to choose six finalists whose entries showed definite promise of producing the finest possible City Hall on the Broadway site. As for the five finalists who did not win, the Jury commended their competence and distinction as revealed by the high standard achieved in their submissions.

It was a great honour indeed for me to have the privilege of serving as Professional Adviser. From start to finish, my experience with the City officials, with the contestants, with my assistant and his helpers was both harmonious and gratifying. I wish to pay special tribute to the members of the Jury who worked with such diligence, wisdom and insight and who, with one accord, were seeking a building which would be truly good architecture and would take its place as an integral part of the total complex of buildings and open spaces which surround and focus upon the Legislative Buildings. ❖