

THE NEW HOME OF THE CANADIAN METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE*

At the time of his retirement in 1959, Dr. Andrew Thomson spoke longingly of his vision of the "promised land" - where all Headquarters Divisions would be under one roof. At Dr. Patrick McTaggart-Cowan's retirement dinner in 1964, Mr. Baldwin, then Deputy Minister of Transport, announced approval for the planning of a new Headquarters for the Meteorological Branch. In the following years, the project moved slowly ahead as considerable time was devoted to discussing plans with architects, selecting and gaining approval for the site, obtaining Treasury Board authority and going to tender. Since the construction contract was let in early 1969, work on the new building has generally proceeded on schedule and completion is expected on target in the spring of 1971.

The new Headquarters is a modern four-storey structure, 430 feet by 210 feet with a gross floor area of 340,000 square feet, constructed in a squared-off figure-eight design with two courtyards. The building will be accessible from different levels and the central bays will provide natural light to interior offices and laboratories. The exterior is architectural concrete with sand-blasted and bush-hammered finishes; the same finishes being used in the spacious three-storey high entrance lobby. Tinted windows with sealed double glazing are set in well-recessed frames of dark bronze aluminum and give the building a strong horizontal character. Heating will be by gas and the entire building will be air conditioned at a comfort level of 72 degrees and 50% humidity all year round. Imaginative landscaping, using sculpture in both steel and concrete, fountains and extensive plantings of trees and shrubs, will enhance the natural setting and complement the architectural features of the Headquarters. (See Figures 1, 2 and 3).

The 15-acre site of the new Headquarters is on a fluvial terrace about 600 feet above sea level close to the West Branch of the Don River. Immediately adjacent neighbours are the Aerospace Studies Institute of the University of Toronto on the east and the University of Toronto Press (future printers of ATMOSPHERE starting in 1971) on the north. A little farther to the east are the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories while to the west are York University, only 1 1/4 miles away, and the Meteorological Research Station, at a convenient distance of 4 1/2 miles. The site is on the east side of Dufferin Street facing a developing industrial park about one-third mile south of Steeles Avenue, the present northern boundary of Metropolitan Toronto. The new building is situated approximately 9 miles north of the historic old Headquarters at 315 Bloor Street West.

*Contributed by the Office of the Administrator, Canadian Meteorological Service.

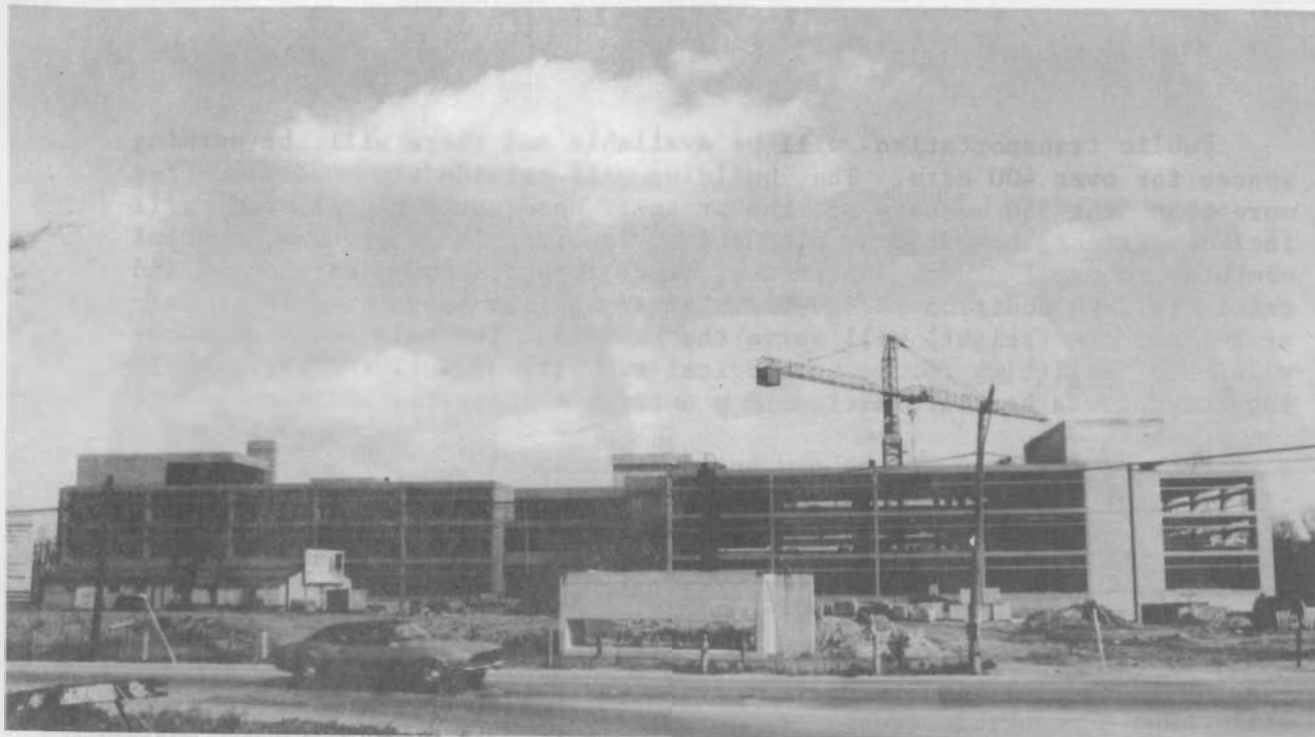


Figure 1. View of new Headquarters Building towards East
(October 17, 1970)

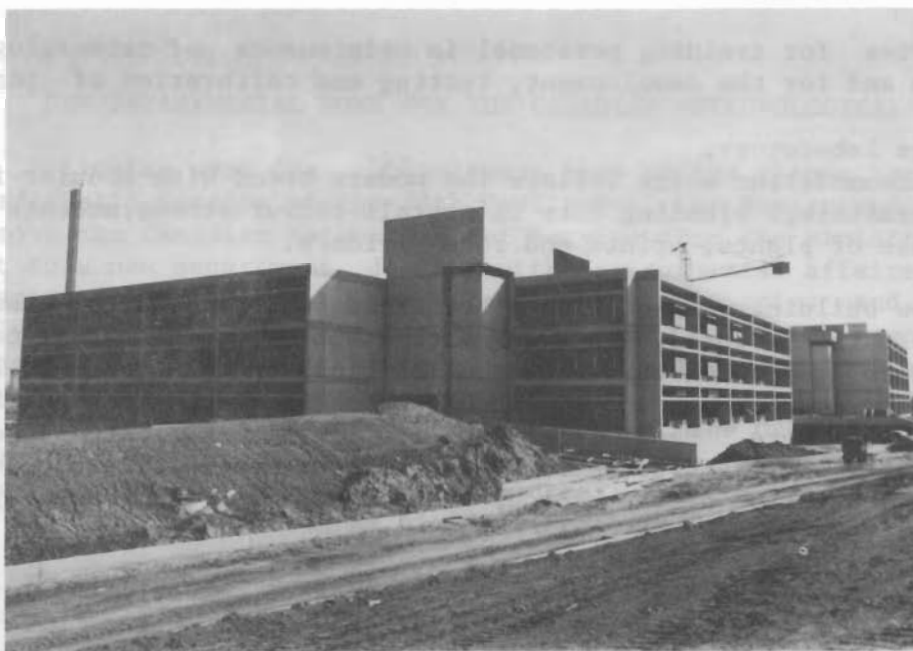


Figure 2. View towards Southeast

Public transportation will be available and there will be parking spaces for over 400 cars. The building will provide accommodation for more than the 550 members of the present Headquarters staff and will include offices, boardrooms, classrooms, laboratories, workshops, special computer rooms, library, auditorium, wind tunnel, stores warehouse and cafeteria. In addition to several stairways, four elevators (three passenger and one freight) will serve the building. The main entrance lobby will have facilities for meteorological exhibits as well as displays giving current weather information from automatic observing instruments.

Special features of the new building include:

- a 250 seat auditorium, theatre style stepped-floor design, overall decoration predominantly bronze-orange, equipped with the most modern audio visual equipment, including closed circuit TV, a public address system and facilities for simultaneous interpretation;
- an expanded library and archives with facilities for reading microfilm and microcards;
- an environmental wind tunnel, 32 feet long, housed on the first floor, will have a removable cross section 3 feet square by 6 feet long. The interior of the cross-section will be visible from the top and sides. Boundary-layer studies and instrument testing and calibration will be carried out in a controlled environment within a temperature range of 0 to 30 degrees C, wind speed 0 to 50 mph and relative humidity 20 to 95%;
- laboratories for micrometeorological, ozone and radiation studies with a small observation dome for these latter on the southern roof of the building;
- laboratories for training personnel in maintenance of meteorological instruments and for the development, testing and calibration of instruments;
- a language laboratory;
- office accommodation which follows the modern trend with modular furniture and furnishings blending into an overall colour scheme; accents by a judicious use of plants, prints and room dividers.

The new building will provide a Meteorological Headquarters ranking with the best in the world. All Headquarters activities presently centred in the Toronto area, with the exceptions of those at the Upper Air Training School in Scarborough and at the Research Station near Woodbridge, will be located there. Headquarters staff will, at long last, enjoy a common facility and the frustrations and difficulties which arose through the forced separation of the various components over the past 25 years will hopefully belong to the past.

Work will continue during the winter months to complete the interior of the building. It is expected that all Headquarters units will move into their new accommodation by midsummer 1971. Plans are being made for an official opening in the fall of that year when it is hoped that an international symposium in meteorology will high-light the happy event.

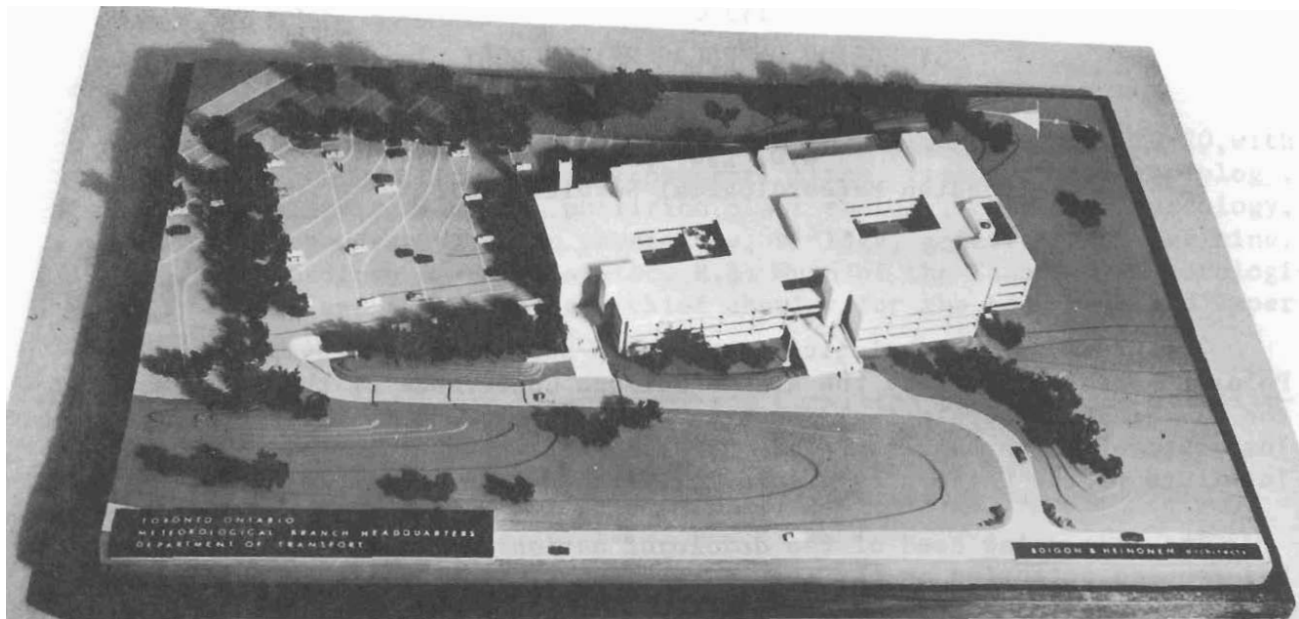


Figure 3. Consulting Architects' model of new building

NEW DEPARTMENTAL HOME FOR THE CANADIAN METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE

Following upon the announcement made in the Throne Speech for the Third (Fall) Session of the 28th Parliament, the Government has decided to move the Canadian Meteorological Service from the Ministry of Transport to a new department dealing with environmental affairs. This new department is based on the Department of Fisheries and Forestry as nucleus with Mr. Jack Davis as Minister, and will bring together all the principal governmental activities bearing on environmental quality.

Other agencies affected are: sections of the Department of National Health and Welfare dealing with air pollution; the water sector of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources; and the Wildlife Service of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The future course of the Canadian Meteorological Service in the activities of the new department is as yet uncharted (as of November, 1970). No dates for the move have been settled, but a high priority will ensure that it will be effected swiftly.