

Hoover's Lasting Monument: New Headquarters for FBI

Last of three articles

By Walter Pincus

Special to The Washington Post

When the Federal Bureau of Investigation's new headquarters building is completed in 1974 it will be a crowning monument to J. Edgar Hoover's 50 years as FBI director.

The huge structure is expected to be called "The J. Edgar Hoover Building." With the cost estimated at \$102.5 million, it will be the most expensive government building ever erected in Washington.

It will dominate the Pennsylvania Avenue inaugural parade route from the White House to the Capitol.

Symbolically, its eleven stories will dwarf the nearby headquarters of its bureaucratic parent, the Department of Justice, a mere seven stories high, whose boss, the Attorney General, theoretically presides over Mr. Hoover.

Since Imperial Rome embarked on its first public works spree, there has been in the Western world some relationship between the scale of official buildings and the importance of their occupants.

In this sense, perhaps, the "J. Edgar Hoover Building"—if it is called that—testifies to the extraordinary stature held by director Hoover in the esteem of Congress and American folk values.

This detailed public glimpse of the new building, was compiled from a complete set of blueprints obtained through official government

sources.

The structure will be exceeded in square footage (2.4 million gross square feet) only by the Pentagon and Rayburn Congressional Office Building. Its \$102.5 million estimated price exceeds the \$85 million Rayburn Building, cost of ten years ago. The Rayburn Building, say government officials, might have topped the FBI building's cost at current prices).

When bids for construction of the building's superstructure were opened last Thursday, only two contractors had made proposals. Low bidder, at \$68 million, was the Blake Construction Co. of Washington, which is now finishing the first basement level. (The rest of the \$102.5 million is accounted for by the cost of the huge basement, architects' fees and other items).

The Blake superstructure bid was based on completion of the building within three years, which, if accepted, would delay occupancy until 1974. At that time, director Hoover will be close to 80 years old and in his 50th year of service.

The most recently built federal office buildings approaching the size of the FBI structure, the 1.9-million-square-foot Forrestal Building finished last year, cost about 45 per cent as much.

Some of the cost and square footage will go for amenities on a par with those Congress traditional lavishes on itself: a 700-seat theater and auditorium; a complete medical center; a two-story basement gymnasium with basketball court and exercise rooms; photographic studios and laboratories for producing still and moving pictures as well

as a firm library; an in-house publishing facility capable of spewing out publications of all varieties, from the FBI'S "most wanted" posters to such pamphlets as "What Young People Should Know About Communism."

The top floors, in the "tower" section facing E Street, will house the bureau's Identification (fingerprint) Division. There are more than 200 million fingerprint cards in file, but many are repetitions.

Director Hoover, in congressional testimony released yesterday, said in March that a consolidation and pruing project would be undertaken to eliminate at least 67 million sets of cards, or about half of the noncriminal print cards on file.

Director Hoover has justified construction of such an enormous building on the ground that the bureau needed to consolidate its activities for efficiency and se-

curity reasons. He testified that FBI operations currently spread through six downtown Washington buildings.

A fact sheet issued recently by the General Services Administration also listed six locations where the FBI was said to occupy space. Included was the previously confidential six floors in the Federal Triangle Building at 9th and D Streets NW, where the sensitive domestic intelligence files are maintained.

The GSA list, however, fails to include the Bureau Annex at 215 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, just above Capitol Hill, where the FBI cryptography section now works.

It does show the bureau renting at a brownstone residential building across the street, at 203 3d Street SE. "Garage space" was the explanation given for the 1,435 square feet by Thomas Bishop, FBI press spokesman.

The new building, accord-

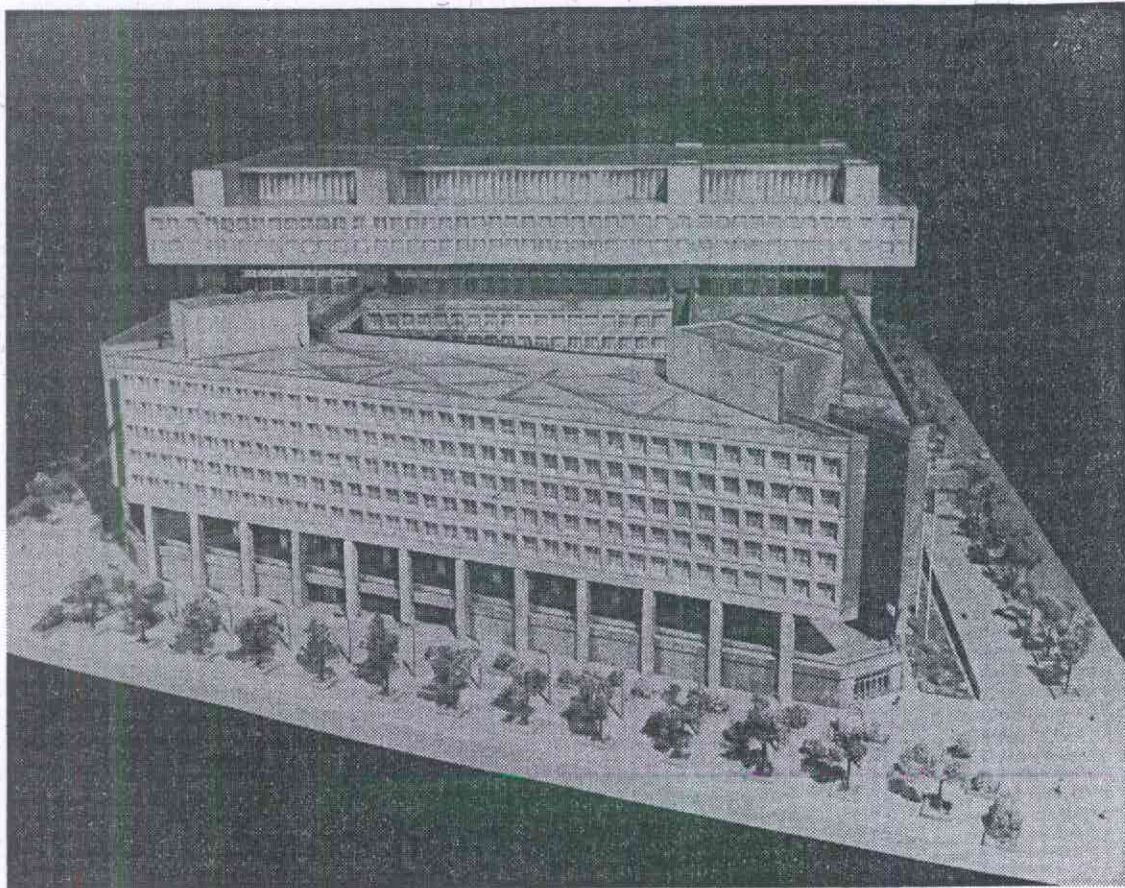
ing to SA, will have roughly 1 million square feet of usable office space.

According to SA's list, the bureau currently occupies slightly more than 700,000 square feet. Thus the new building, according to the SA fact sheet, would give the FBI about 40 per cent more space than it apparently has now.

Correction

In an article in Tuesday's editions, it was stated erroneously that the FBI was requesting funds for 1,036 new agents in the Fiscal 1972 budget now before the Congress. In fact, only 523 of the 1,036 were to be new agents; the rest represent a budget carryover from those hired as a result of the 1971 supplemental appropriation.

Thus, the bureau agent staff should total less than 9,000 at the end of Fiscal 1972, rather than 9,500 as reported yesterday. The Washington Post regrets the error.



A model of the planned FBI headquarters, expected to be called "The J. Edgar Hoover Building," as assembled

by NBC-TV. The 11-story structure will dwarf the 7-story Justice Department, to which FBI is officially responsible.