



## Chapter 15

### Security Issues

#### Overview

- 15.1 The Inquiry heard evidence in camera in relation to matters concerned with security measures as they affect the Holyrood site. As with other aspects of this Inquiry, my primary concern was to investigate events and decisions that may have contributed to increased costs or delay but in doing so the evidence necessarily touched upon aspects of site security. It is not my intention to disclose any information on these matters that could jeopardise the security of the building or the safety of its occupants. The remarks that follow are necessarily a distillation of the main themes to emerge during the course of discussions held with security personnel and the evidence heard in private. Those who attended these evidence sessions will be familiar with the detailed information upon which my conclusions are based and, where there are lessons to be drawn, I trust that those in a position to do so will reflect carefully upon my observations.
- 15.2 Many factors appear to have impacted upon security considerations; from the geographical location of the site to the complexity of the architectural vision and the palette of materials chosen for its realisation. Security was evidently a consideration from a very early stage and was identified as such in the earliest versions of the Building User Brief in 1998. However, there patently was inadequate recognition of the imposition which security measures would

have on the delivery of the Project. It was certainly the view of one witness from the Project Team that the cost and programme implications of security measures had been underestimated by everyone, including the client. The extent to which additional and unforeseen costs can be attributed to security requirements, however, is certainly considerably less than has been suggested in some quarters. Equally, I am persuaded by the evidence that the events of 11 September 2001 were not the catalyst to a wholesale review of the security requirements on the site nor were they responsible for an escalation in the standards of protection required to meet a previously unforeseen terrorist threat.

### Security Requirements

- 15.3 The Building User Brief of November 1998 contained the security requirements envisaged for the new Parliament building. Of particular relevance were the requirements in relation to 'fabric security'. This would prove to have the greatest impact on the Project in terms of cost and effect upon the construction programme. The security information in the Brief, along with advisory material from the UK Government security services and information specific to the Holyrood site and to Queensberry House, was shared with the Design Team from the outset. Insofar as it reflects security considerations, the Brief and the advisory information from the security services have remained in force throughout the lifetime of the Project.
- 15.4 From an early stage (indeed it was a consideration of the site selection process) it was recognised that the Holyrood site's proximity to public thoroughfares would impose particular demands. Enhanced security measures have had to be implemented in certain areas of the site to reflect the propinquity of buildings to the perimeter of the site and the requirement that the external look of Queensberry House should not be altered substantively. Additional pressures arose from the need to comply with the new Parliament's watchwords of openness, accountability and accessibility and to construct a parliamentary complex where members of the public could have reasonable access to their elected representatives. Of equal significance, however, has been the unique nature of the design and the use of materials within that design. Standardisation is not a feature of the EMBT/RMJM Ltd design and consequently it has not been possible to draw upon experience elsewhere to reach conclusions as to the potential impact of blast on the structure. The Inquiry learned that the bespoke nature of the building and the use of non-traditional blast resistant materials such as natural stone and timber have necessitated an enormous task to develop a design that could be constructed to meet the blast criteria. Rather than designing to a security specification, the nature of the concept meant that a realistic assessment of the detailed security requirements could not be undertaken until the detailed design of the building had commenced. One witness described this approach to the incorporation of security requirements as "iterative". Another

spoke of it as being “virtually retrospective” and saw it as “unfortunate” but an approach which had been necessitated by the uniqueness and complexity of the building.<sup>816</sup> Undoubtedly, this process has proved time consuming and it is doubtful if the implications for the programme were adequately considered at any point until the Project was well underway.

### Security Consultants

15.5 In March 1999 Arup Security were appointed as security consultants to provide the Design Team with additional expertise on the blast requirements of the building structure and facades. The consultants were required to assist in the development of design solutions that were compliant with the guidelines of the Government security services. The lead consultant with Arup Security, Mr David Hadden, agreed to give evidence to the Inquiry and for his identity to be disclosed. The Inquiry heard detailed (and compelling) evidence on how the consultants’ task was fulfilled and I am satisfied as to the thoroughness and professionalism with which this work was undertaken by those involved. In the course of this evidence I learned that, while the extent of the blast testing of components has been comprehensive, there has been no significant failure of those components under test and consequently there was not a requirement for any dramatic redesign in this regard.

### Impact of Events of 11 September 2001

15.6 A number of witnesses were questioned as to whether there had been any changes to the security guidance applicable to the building in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001. All confirmed the guidelines remained unchanged but that there had been greater attention paid to their implementation than might have been the case earlier. Where relaxation might have been considered in the past, after 11 September 2001 this was no longer permitted. This approach was succinctly if rather clumsily captured in a minute of a meeting in October 2002 where it was noted that “the impact of 9/11 was not to introduce any new measures or guidelines but to make all the measures recommended over the past five years more mandatory.” The concept of guidelines being “more mandatory” is one to which all have subscribed and effectively it debunks the myth that enhanced security requirements is a very recent phenomenon.

15.7 As the guidelines on security have remained unchanged at least since the appointment of the Architect in mid-1998, it has to be questioned why the full implications of security measures were not much clearer at the outset. Although it is understandable that the compliance of individual aspects of the design could not be known until such time as that design had developed to a state in which it could be assessed, one would have expected that the

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<sup>816</sup> Evidence of Dr John Gibbons on 6 May 2004, Para 556

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implications of the need to take account of security considerations would have been acknowledged at a much earlier stage than appears to have been the case. An examination of the DLE Risk Register<sup>817</sup> from its inception in August 1998 reveals that it is not until late 2001 that there is any acknowledgement that security considerations could have other than a minimal impact upon design and it is not until May 2002 that this becomes a genuine concern. The earlier cost estimates and ambitious programmes appear to have had a myopic approach to the security issue. I have seen little evidence to suggest that its full implications were foreseen by either the client, the Design Team or their advisers. As I have intimated in paragraph 9.16 the true extent of the implications of security and blast requirements was clearly not appreciated at the time when the Project was handed over by the Scottish Office to the Scottish Parliament.

### Costs

- 15.8 It has been suggested that the full extent of the additional costs attributable to security may have amounted to as much as £100 million. It has also been speculated that the understandable but not fully understood requirements of “security” were a convenient scapegoat for uncomfortable cost rises. In the course of this investigation I have sought to gain an understanding of the true extent of costs attributable to the security measures required for the Parliament building. In doing so, I rest upon the evidence of Mr Fisher who set out, in my view, the clearest expression of these matters that has been presented to me.
- 15.9 The figures presented by Mr Fisher suggest that a total of £29.11 million is attributable to the changes in design that were necessary to meet the interpretations placed on the anti-blast requirements as they stood.<sup>818</sup> This figure is comprised of two elements. A sum of £17.54 million was identified as the net additional cost of the consequences of the design of anti-blast measures i.e. the cost of the increased specification of materials and components required to meet security requirements over the cost of the equivalent conventional materials. It is arguable that this cost would have been incurred in any event but it is beyond debate that this level of provision should have been identified at a much earlier stage than was the case. The second element in Mr Fisher’s total figure is a sum of £11.57 million attributable to the cost of delay associated with blast. This encompasses the consequences of blast-related disruption and includes *inter alia* re-sequencing, re-programming, loss of productivity and the introduction of multiple shift working. Although the evidence on this point was less than conclusive, and in many respects the difficulties echo those faced in relation to non-blast issues, I have to question whether the disruption caused by the need to incorporate blast was managed as

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<sup>817</sup> The Risk Register is compiled by DLE in consultation with the client, the Design Team and the Construction Manager

<sup>818</sup> Evidence of Mr Hugh Fisher on 29 March 2004, Paras 469 to 482

effectively as it could have been and whether all possible steps were taken to minimise the cost consequential of this disruption. I am not persuaded that the client was particularly well served in the professional advice it received on how to manage this persistent problem but neither am I convinced that the client's management systems were adequate to retain a sufficient grasp of the true extent of disruption and its cost. It is tempting to suspect that for long periods there was no more than a resigned approach to managing the security issue.

- 15.10 The evidence has persuaded me that suggestions that the cost of security measures for the Holyrood building could amount to £100 million were wholly inaccurate. While this suggestion appears to have risen initially in the press, it was given some credibility in comments made by Robert Brown to the Finance Committee on 23 September 2003, when he appeared on behalf of the SPCB. While I accept that Mr Brown was speculating in the absence of accurate cost information, I have to reject his subsequent assertion that 'resolution of the bomb blast issue was the biggest single factor affecting both programme and cost' over the last 5 years.<sup>819</sup> As I have sought to demonstrate elsewhere in this Report, that is evidently not the case.

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<sup>819</sup> Letter from Robert Brown to the Holyrood Inquiry, 6 May 2004, available at the Inquiry website under Supplementary Evidence