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27 March 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Support

SUBJECT : Furnishings for New Building

1. I believe that planning for improved furnishings and equipment for our new building, including planning for interior arrangements to permit most efficient operation with these improved furnishings, should proceed simultaneously with plans for the building itself, regardless of the degree to which we anticipate budgetary limits may prevent full implementation of furnishing plans by the time we move in.

2. So far as I can determine, there now exists no line of furnishings planned specifically for work with classified materials. As one example, we continue to use at all levels desks that have changed little in the last fifty years, providing ample drawer space for clippings and waste paper and none at all for classified materials. Our safe-files are designed basically to protect paper against burning rather than sensitive documents against compromise. Various firms offer lines providing more suitable flat working surfaces, but none are directed to the handling of classified materials.

3. The five-drawer non-insulated security-type cabinet planned by GSA on specifications of the Federal Committee on Security Equipment appears a step in the right direction. But we also need provision, more convenient than built-in concrete vaults, for storage of outside and bulk material impossible or difficult to store in file drawers, and for a smaller secure file that will fit compactly with the worker's flat surface. It should be possible to design a series of working surfaces, of various sizes and shapes, to be used with various pedestals, of which the secure file would be one. Also it may well be possible to design partial, screen-type partitions more suited to our needs than any of the lines now available.

4. It is normal procedure for a firm expert in interior design to be associated with the architectural firm on important projects. As an example, the part played and methods used by Knoll Associates in assisting on the Connecticut General Life Insurance building at Hartford have produced interested comment in architectural and management periodicals. It is entirely likely that Harrison and Abramovitz would have valuable suggestions on this matter.

5. I therefore recommend that the Steering Committee for the new building at its next meeting give careful consideration to the idea of arranging for a firm expert in interior design to be associated with Harrison and Abramovitz in the work on our new building, and that the views of Harrison and Abramovitz as to suitable firms be obtained.

ROBERT AMORY, JR.
Deputy Director/Intelligence