

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
CITIZENS ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

ROOM 139 HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / 500 WEST TEMPLE / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / 625-3611, Ext. 64605

January 9, 1973

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**Burke Roche,**  
**Executive Secretary**

Honorable Board of Supervisors  
383, Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Gentlemen:

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION  
OF THE CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING

In answer to your Board's request to investigate the design and construction of the Criminal Courts building and report back to your Board within 30 days, the Economy and Efficiency Commission Construction Projects Task Force herewith submits its findings to the present date.

Design and Construction of Building

The Criminal Courts building is the largest and most complex facility the County has ever built. The time from first conception of the building to final completion covered a period of 15.4 years.

This project began as a \$6 million annex to be built just north of the Hall of Justice. With the rapid population growth and expansion of County government, with the increase in crime and corresponding increases in the Court load, with the increase in the workload of the District Attorney, the Public Defender, and other departments, the building requirements changed radically and were expanded to the present 19 story structure. The schematic drawings, in fact, were changed four different times.

Conduct of Study

It was not possible within the limited time available to us to make a complete evaluation of all aspects of the planning and construction of a building of this size and complexity. Cost benefit analysis, suitability of design to tenant use, convenience of the facility to the public, specialized construction and design features, and objective appraisals of unit cost and time requirements in comparison to buildings of similar size and complexity simply could not be done within the time constraints.

Without standards to assess such factors, one must necessarily focus on the individual problems which are identified by tenants and users of the facility. Accordingly, Our efforts in this review have been limited to as fair and objective reporting as possible on what the tenants and users, concerned County service departments, the architect and contractor have reported to us.

We would also like to emphasize that to attempt to determine, after a period of years, who made the decisions which led to the problems which now exist - whether it was judges or other tenant departments, whether it was the Chief Administrative Officer or the County Engineer, or whether it was the architect or the contractor - is an extremely difficult task. We have conducted over 52 interviews in gathering information on the design and construction of this building. Mr. Roche conducted most of these interviews himself, and on a number of occasions I accompanied him. I should also note that we were provided information and assistance by both the Chief Administrative Officer and the County Engineer. We have reviewed this material with our task force members, as well as with Mr. Chez and Mr. Loud, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Our commission.

Need for Organizational Changes

Before introducing Mr. Roche, I would like to emphasize one point. We are absolutely convinced that the major cause of the problems in the construction of County buildings is the lack of unified responsibility. No single individual or organization can be held accountable for providing uniform and continuous construction management. Both our report on Construction Management and the Chief Administrative Officer's report, although prepared independently of each other, concurred on major recommendations specifically directed toward this problem. Until the County establishes a single facility organization with one man responsible for all construction and with individual project managers assigned to major projects from conception to completion, these problems are bound to occur.

The Criminal Courts building illustrates the critical need for rapid implementation of your Board's action in approving the recommendations made by both the Chief Administrative Officer and the Economy and Efficiency Commission. That is the major message in our report to you today.

Very truly yours,

JERRY EPSTEIN, Chairman  
Construction Projects Task Force

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