

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN NUCLEAR SCIENCE

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Family Accommodation for Visiting Scientists

Note by Dr. T. G. Pickavance

1. At the last meeting of the Committee (N.I. (GP)(59) First Meeting), Professor Wilkinson and I were invited to state a case for the provision by the Institute of family housing for visitors. This note summarises our views on this matter.
2. There will be two distinct needs for family housing near the Rutherford Laboratory. First, housing will be needed for some of the visiting research workers using the machines. Most of these visitors will make a series of relatively short visits and will be accommodated in the hostel or in hotels. There will be a few long term visitors, mainly university staff on sabbatical leave, and those who have families will normally wish to bring them. The number of families to be accommodated is difficult to estimate but will be small - probably not more than four or five at a time. The Institute will need to provide housing for some of their own staff, since housing is very difficult in the area, and we believe that the small number of long-term visitors could be accommodated without great difficulty by a slight extension of this scheme. The scheme could include convertible flats similar to those discussed at the last meeting.

Secondly, family accommodation will be needed in connection with a summer visitor programme, and this problem is more difficult.
3. The purpose of a summer visitor programme, which has been supported by the Physics Committee and endorsed by the Governing Board, is quite different from the ordinary research which universities will carry out at the Laboratory, and is to help to create the proper intellectual atmosphere by attracting suitable people from this country and abroad to spend some of their free time with us. During their visits some may take part in experiments, but this should not be a condition of their coming. Their free time will normally be in the summer, and those who stay for more than a week or two and have families will often wish to bring them. We believe they should be encouraged to do so, even in the case of those British visitors who could go home at weekends, since it has been found at Brookhaven that the community life which builds up during the summer has stimulated valuable cross-contacts ever since the scheme was started there.

Family accommodation is an even more important consideration in the case of visitors from abroad. Particularly during the early years we shall need to use all the available experience of those who have used the large machines abroad. There are other attractions for these visitors, for example CERN and Copenhagen, and they will not come to us unless we can provide them with reasonable accommodation. The district around the Rutherford Laboratory is very difficult for casual as well as long-term housing, as has been found by American and other visitors to A.E.R.E., and we are convinced that the Institute should, in their own interests, provide some housing for this seasonal need. The visitors must have arrangements made for them with the minimum inconvenience to themselves if the Laboratory is to exert a positive attraction to them.

4. The most obvious solution, namely to provide flats on a housing estate, suffers from the severe disadvantage that some flats would inevitably be empty for a large part of each year. There will always be a peak demand in the summer, no matter how we try to phase the arrival of families, probably smaller in number, of the normal visitors who wish to work for long periods on the machines.

5. I propose that, as a first attempt to solve the problem, the Chief Architect, AERE, should be asked to study a scheme for inexpensive convertible flats to be integrated with the Abingdon hostel (Cosener's House). It has already been established that the grounds of Cosener's House are suitable for an extension of the hostel accommodation. The flats should be so designed that they could be used either for hostel or family accommodation. This arrangement would make it much easier to spread the load over the whole year.

6. I believe that more hostel and family accommodation will eventually be required than can be provided at Cosener's House. The total requirement is impossible to estimate at present, but the rate of build-up will be such that the proposed arrangement would give time to make further provision elsewhere. A maximum of about 8 families might be accommodated at Cosener's House; this would probably be adequate until 1962. In later years the peak summer demand may be about 12.

7. Summary of recommendations:

- (i) That the original scheme for "convertible flats" should be examined in relation to the Institute's needs for staff housing.
- (ii) That a draft scheme should be produced for a dual-purpose extension to Cosener's House.