

RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

Sub-Committee No. 6. (Lighting).

Minutes of the First Meeting held in the C.S.I.R. Board Room on Friday, 26th September, 1947, at 10 a.m.

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Present:

- Dr. Rennhackkamp (Chairman) National Building Research Institute.
- Mr. Connell (Organising Secretary) National Building Research Institute.
- Dr. Meaker - Department of Health.
- Mr. Roberts - S.A. Bureau of Standards.
- Dr. Strasheim - National Physical Laboratory.
- Mr. Cowin - Institute of South African Architects.

In Attendance.

- Miss S. de Beer - National Building Research Institute.

CONVENING OF MEETING.

The Organising Secretary convened the meeting, welcomed the members and introduced the Chairman, Dr. Rennhackkamp, who then took the Chair.

The Chairman then referred to the first item on the Agenda, the Introductory Statement, and asked the Organising Secretary to deliver this.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

The Convenor said that for the present the function of the Committee would be limited to considerations affecting housing only, which included all types of dwelling such as the conventional house, the maisonette, flats and any type of building which human beings used for dwelling purposes. It was a well-known fact that all over the world there existed a movement to try to better the standards of housing accommodation and to improve the legislation which governed such standards, with the object of promoting progressively higher standards of accommodation, comfort and convenience. Such legislation as existed, however, was neither uniform nor consistent, and much of it was felt to be arbitrary and out of date.

In common with the rest of the world, we in South Africa had felt dissatisfaction with the type of housing environment in which the bulk of our population lives, both in town and country, and with much of the legislation governing the minimum standards permitted. As a result, therefore, of internal arrangements in the National Building Research Institute, followed by a request from the National Housing and Planning Commission to investigate and report on certain tentative standards of accommodation proposed by the Directorate of Housing for application to all housing schemes for which State loans were to be advanced, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research set up a Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation. This Committee generally spoken of as the "Main Committee", is a permanent sub-committee of the Building Research Advisory Committee. Its function is to direct and co-ordinate research into

minimum standards of accommodation in dwellings and eventually to issue a series of recommendations, some of which may lead to new codes of practice and revised legislation. The convenor pointed out, however, that it had been ruled that the work of the Committee would be confined to conducting research and making recommendations, and that it would not undertake the drawing up of codes of legislation. The Main Committee, which meets under the Chairmanship of Mr. Norman Hanson, A.R.I.B.A., would have to consider the matter of minimum standards of housing accommodation in the widest sense; the work would not be limited to the consideration of minimum standards within the dwelling, but would cover the whole housing environment, and touch on many fundamental aspects of the housing problem. For this reason the Main Committee would be supported by nine working sub-committees, divided into three main groups, viz:-

- (a) Survey Sub-Committees (Nos. 1, 2 and 3).
- (b) Design Sub-Committees (Nos. 4 and 9).
- (c) Sub-Committees dealing with health and comfort factors.

The sub-committees were then described in detail and the scope of the work as a whole, as illustrated on the attached chart, was outlined. It was proposed to issue an interim report in June, 1948, which would deal chiefly with the Housing Commission's schedule of standards. Thereafter the work of the Committee would revert to a more fundamental consideration of the long-range problems involved in the study of accommodation standards for housing.

The task of the lighting sub-committee which falls under Category (c) above, would be to study the existing methods of providing light, both artificial and natural, in dwellings. Its findings would be reported back to the Main Committee, for incorporation in the final Recommendations. At this stage the Organising Secretary said that he wished to stress that the findings of the Committee would be published in the form of design recommendations, rather than rigid regulations. The translation of these recommendations into Codes would be carried out under the aegis of the Bureau of Standards. For the moment, however, the Lighting Sub-Committee (No. 6) along with Sub-Committees Nos. 5, 7 and 8, should be regarded as joint sub-committees serving both the Building Regulations and Codes Committee of the Bureau of Standards and the Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

For the present the work of the Committee would be confined to dwellings, though later it was possible that it might be extended to cover other types of buildings such as factories, offices, etc.

Mr. Roberts said that he presumed that the report when brought out might inspire research work, and asked whether the Building Research Advisory Committee would automatically receive Minutes of the Main Committee.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE.

The Chairman then read the draft terms which had been tabled at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Cowin asked whether the term "dwelling" was to be taken to mean a family house or whether it was to include multiple dwellings such as flats, boarding houses, hotels, etc. The Committee felt strongly that all classes of residential accommodation should be included in the term "dwelling", as this was the sense in which it was used in the Slums Act and other Acts governing standards to-day. It was agreed, however, to request the Main Committee to define the term at its next meeting.

Dr. Strasheim stressed the point that some definite standard should be used which would enable proper comparisons to be made. He suggested a measure such as the foot-candle, the only standard recognized in South Africa at present (vide Factories Act).

Mr. Connell asked whether the terms "level" and "quality" as set out in the Terms of Reference were clear. After discussion it was decided to alter the phrase to read "find ways of improving the standard of natural and artificial lighting". The following sentence "to make suggestions for improving the design and placing of windows and lighting fixtures so as to achieve this end" was felt to be too detailed, and it was accordingly decided to alter it to "to make suggestions so as to achieve this end".

Further discussion took place as to whether research should be confined to houses only - as against tenements, flats, etc. It was decided that since the problem was to be tackled from the aspect of standards of performance, the Committee should investigate all types of dwellings.

The Terms of Reference, then, were agreed upon as follows:-

"To examine the existing legislation defining the minimum standards of natural and artificial lighting permitted in dwellings and to report on the suitability and adequacy of such criteria as exist at present; to collect evidence on studies made and methods adopted in the Union and elsewhere to find ways of improving the standard of natural and artificial lighting in dwellings, to make suggestions so as to achieve this end, and to prepare a report on the Sub-Committee's findings for submission to the Main Committee".

METHODS OF WORK.

It was decided that although there was a special sub-committee to investigate legislation, it would be advisable in order to save time, for the technical sub-committees to go through such legislation as was available on their own subject; they would in any case require more detailed study than the Legislative Sub-Committee could reasonably be expected to give. After the existing legislation had been studied, the Committee could go on with research into possible improvements. It was suggested that

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before the next meeting a study might be made of a few existing buildings to see how they conform to the existing standards measured in relation to window area in foot-candles. The Committee agreed that this would serve a useful purpose, and the Chairman undertook to have this done.

ALLOCATION OF WORK.

1. The National Building Research Institute would undertake to investigate the relationship between window area and the standard of natural lighting in several rooms, to examine local authority and private regulations regarding Lighting Standards, and to study the Standards proposed by the National Housing and Planning Commission in this connection.
2. Dr. Meaker would report on the Health Act, the Slums Act, the Native (Urban Areas) Act, and the Factories Act, in connection with lighting clauses.
3. Dr. Strasheim and Mr. Roberts undertook to investigate overseas regulations for the same information.

The Organising Secretary said that he would co-ordinate information regarding what literature that various libraries had on this subject, and asked the Chairman that all correspondence should be marked through for his attention.

Dr. Strasheim asked that each member should receive definite instructions in writing of what they were to do, and the Organising Secretary agreed to send out aides-memoires.

GENERAL.

The following names were suggested as people who might be co-opted as members of the lighting sub-committee:

- Dr. Einhorn - University of Cape Town.
- Mr. Bateman - Pretoria University.
- Dr. Harper - School of Architecture, University of Cape Town.
- Dr. de Villiers - (particularly interested in solar radiation).

The date of the next meeting was fixed for 7th November, 1947 at 9 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.10 a.m.

Confirmed.

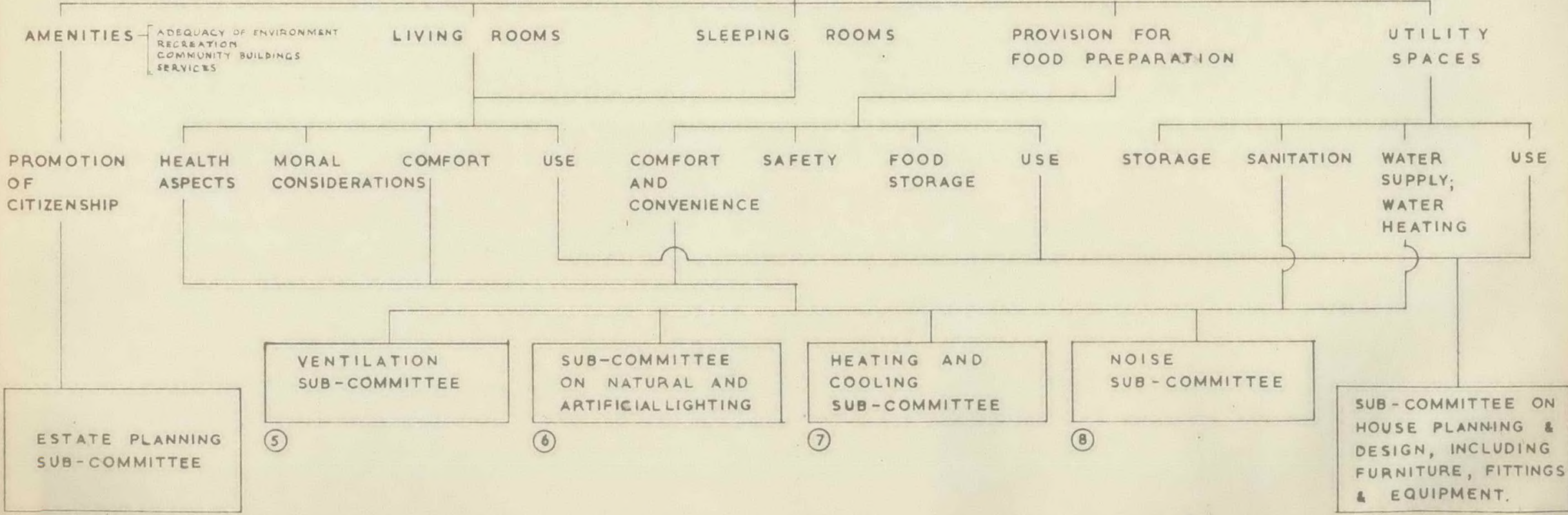
CHAIRMAN.

# RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

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SUB-COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL TRENDS, POPULATION NEEDS, FAMILY STRUCTURE & FAMILY ECONOMICS.

②  
SUB-COMMITTEE TO SURVEY EXISTING LEGISLATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

③  
SUB-COMMITTEE TO SURVEY THE ATTITUDE OF OCCUPANTS TO EXISTING HOUSING.



**Collection Number: AD1715**

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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