

RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.SUB-COMMITTEE No. 4.

(Estate Planning).

Minutes of the First Meeting of the Estate Planning Sub-Committee held in the Board Room on 7th October, 1947 at 10 a.m.

Present:

Major J.C. Collings (Chairman)		National Housing and Planning Commission.
Mr. M.J. Mitchell	-	National Housing and Planning Commission.
Mr. N.L. Hanson	-	Institute of S.A. Architects.
Mr. J.E. Jennings	-	National Building Research Institute.
Mr. P.H. Connell (Organising Secretary)		National Building Research Institute.

In Attendance:

Miss S. de Beer	-	National Building Research Institute.
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Apologies were received from:

Mr. Cooper and Dr. Olckers. Mr. Hanson stated that he was acting as an interim representative of the Institute of S.A. Architects, which had not yet appointed their official representative to this sub-committee.

CONVENING OF MEETING.

The Organising Secretary convened the meeting, and asked Major Collings to take the Chair. He then suggested to the Chairman that Mr. Mitchell, who was actually Major Collings' alternate on this sub-committee, should be appointed a permanent member. The Chairman appreciated this suggestion, which was agreed.

The Chairman then asked the Organising Secretary for his Introductory Statement.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

The Organising Secretary 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/.....

and much of it was felt to be arbitrary and out of date.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 to 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 work of the sub-committee on Estate Planning was defined in the draft terms of reference to be considered lower down. Briefly the task would be to examine the external and communal aspects of residential areas in relation to their planning and development, and to make recommendations as to future practice. The Sub-Committee was free to co-opt further members to assist with the work.

The Organising Secretary stressed that the object of the research committee's work was to promote a better standard of housing accommodation and of housing environment. He said that the final report would probably take the form of a handbook for the everyday use of designers and administrators of

housing/.....

housing estates, rather than a dry set of codes and regulations; a readable, usable set of recommendations, backed up of course by solid facts. He felt that such a document would stand a good chance of being read and acted upon by the people concerned.

At this stage the exact definition of the word "dwelling" was discussed. The Chairman asked for the view of the Sub-Committee, and it was agreed that as far as this Sub-Committee was concerned, the word should be taken to mean mainly family dwelling units, which would include both individual houses and multiple dwellings such as flats. It was suggested that houses for aged and single persons which would form part of a housing estate, would be included, but that such buildings as boarding houses and hotels could be excluded as having little bearing on the work of this particular Sub-Committee.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE.

Before reading the Draft Terms of Reference which had been tabled for discussion the Chairman gave the Committee a brief account of how present standards had come into being in South Africa, and went on to suggest that the work of this Sub-Committee might be divided into 4 Main Groups, viz: Building Sites, Streets and Access Ways, Open Spaces and Non-Residential Buildings. Each of these Main Groups could be further sub-divided as the need arose.

Detailed discussion ensued, and eventually the following plan of work was agreed upon:

1. Township Development in relation to Town Planning.
2. Building Sites.
 - (a) Questions of density; sizes and shapes of plots.
 - (b) Building Lines.
 - (c) Space about buildings.
 - (d) Outbuildings.
 - (e) Use of Sites.
3. Streets and Access Ways.
 - (a) Functional Uses.
 - (b) Widths and Sections.
 - (c) Crossings.
4. Services.
 - (a) Water.
 - (b) Sewerage.
 - (c) Storm water.
 - (d) Electricity and gas.
 - (e) Refuse disposal.
 - (f) Telephones.
 - (g) Street furniture and fencing.
5. Open Spaces.
 - (a) Parks - areas set aside for small children and older people.
 - (b) Playgrounds - unorganised play.
 - (c) Playing fields - organised sport.
6. Non-Residential Buildings (i.e. Buildings for Community use).
 - (a) Schools - secondary, primary and nursery.
 - (b) Churches.

(c) Libraries/.....

- (c) Libraries, public halls, places of amusement, Government buildings.
- (d) Shops, business premises.

6. Architectural Aspects.

- (a) House Planning in relation to site.
- (b) External appearance.

Mr. Mitchell suggested that there should be a small section on Definitions, so that terms like "Building Lines", for example, could be clarified for the information of the layman. It was agreed that definitions should be clearly stated in each section of the Sub-Committee's report.

Going on to discuss the Draft Terms of Reference as tabled, the Sub-Committee finally decided on the following wording:

- (a) "To make a study of the planning and use of land in residential areas and housing schemes in South Africa; to investigate the services and amenities provided and the character of the resulting environments;
- (b) To examine site planning techniques to discover where these could with advantage be applied to the development of future residential areas in the Union;
- (c) To prepare a report on the Sub-Committee's findings for submission to the Main Committee".

METHODS OF WORK.

It was agreed that this had been largely dealt with in the table drawn up in conjunction with the Draft Terms of Reference. It was agreed however that the economic factor should be dealt with in a separate section of the report although it would be included automatically in the study of each of the sections outlined above.

The Chairman felt that the work would best be handled by distributing it among small groups, each consisting of one or two members of the Sub-Committee and other co-opted members who would be able to give specialised assistance in the various sections. This was agreed upon.

ALLOCATION OF WORK.

1. Township Development in Relation to Town Planning.

Mr. M.J. Mitchell)
Mr. Cooper) Members of Sub-Committee.
Dr. P.J. Olckers)

Mr. Darvill)
Mr. Penso) Correspondents.
Mr. Frank)

2. Building/.....

2. Building Sites.

Mr. M.J. Mitchell)
Mr. Cooper) Members of Sub-Committee.
Institute of Architects')
Representative.)

Mr. R.C.C. Bennett)
Mr. Penso) Correspondents.
Dr. E.J. Hamlin)
Mr. Sholto-Douglas)

3. Streets and Access Ways.

Mr. M.J. Mitchell)
Mr. Cooper) Members of Sub-Committee.

Mr. Sholto-Douglas)
Mr. Dowsett)
Mr. Scott) Correspondents.
Mr. P.R. Anderson)
Mr. Burt)

4. Services.

Mr. M.J. Mitchell)
Mr. Cooper) Members of Sub-Committee.

Dr. Hamlin)
Mr. de Vaal)
Mr. Lunn) Correspondents.
Mr. Usher)
Mr. Smith)
Mr. Burt)

5. Open Spaces.

Mr. M.J. Mitchell)
Mr. Cooper)
Dr. P.J. Olckers) Members of Sub-Committee.
Institute of Architects')
Representative)

Professor L.W. Thornton White)
Mr. Law)
Mr. R.C.C. Bennett)
Mr. Fassler) Correspondents.
Mr. Thorrington-Smith)
Association of Housing Mana-)
geresses' Representative)

6. Non-Residential Buildings.

Institute of Architects')
Representative) Members of Sub-Committee.
Dr. P.J. Olckers)

Representative of Housing)
Manageresses Association) Correspondent.

7. Architectural/.....

7. Architectural Aspects.

Institute of Architects' Representative)	Member of Sub-Committee.
Professor Thorton White)	Correspondents.
Mr. Kantorowitch)	
Mr. R.C.C. Bennett)	
Mr. Fassler)	
Mr. Frank)	

8. Economic Factor.

It was agreed that the National Building Research Institute be responsible for the section of the Sub-Committee's report dealing with this aspect, and that the city treasurers of Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town be asked to assist.

Correspondence.

In order to centralise all outgoing correspondence relating to the Research Committee's work, it was agreed that all outgoing correspondence should be handled by the National Building Research Institute through the organising secretary, and incoming correspondence should be marked for his attention. Invitations should be sent out to all members whom it was proposed to co-opt, giving them an account of the whole scheme and copies of the Minutes of the first meeting of this sub-committee.

GENERAL.

It was felt that Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Cooper were already overloaded with work and for this reason it was suggested that the Town Planning Institute should be invited to send another member to represent them on this Sub-Committee. This was agreed.

The date for the next meeting was fixed as 19th December, 1947, at 9.30 a.m. in the C.S.I.R. Board Room.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.

Confirmed.

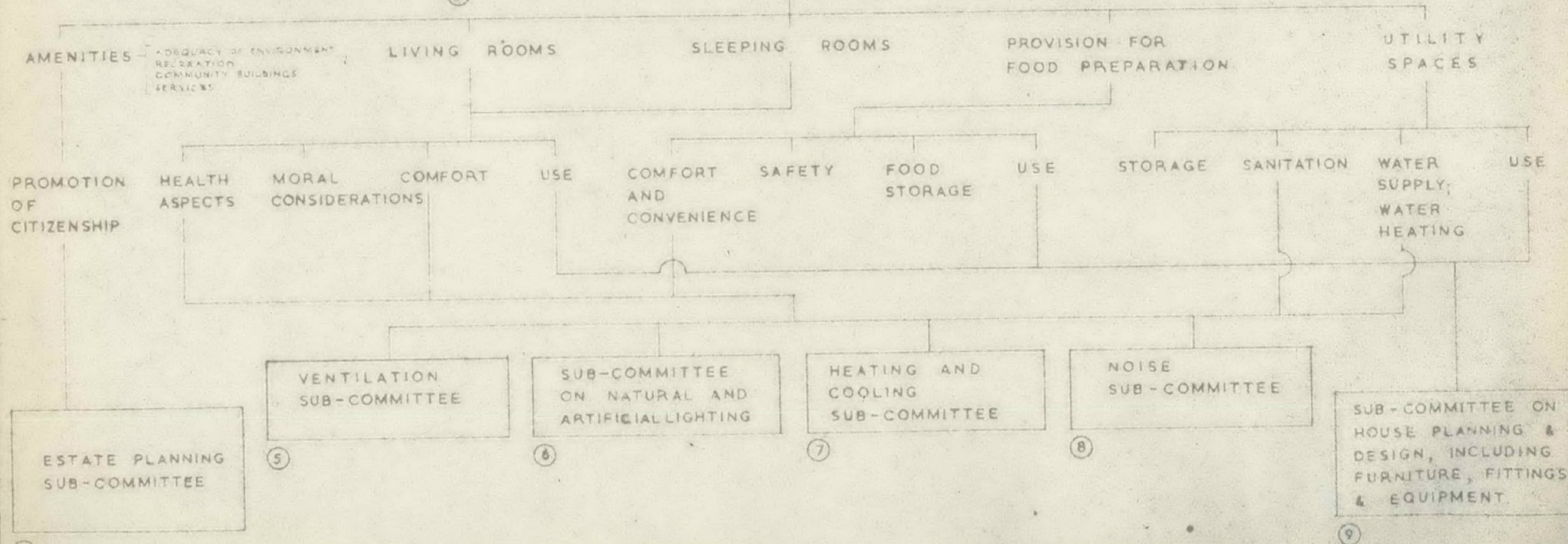
CHAIRMAN.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

①
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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