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RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

SUB-COMMITTEE 3 - SURVEY OF ATTITUDES OF OCCUPANTS TO HOUSING.

MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN OPINION TO DISCUSS URBAN NATIVE HOUSING, HELD AT THE INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS ON WEDNESDAY, 14th APRIL, 1948 AT 4 p.m.

Present:

- Dr. H. Sonnabend (Chairman)
- Mr. G.I. Nel
- Mr. E. Lucke
- Dr. Ellen Hellman
- Mr. Quintin-Whyte
- Mr. A.J. Cutten
- Dr. H. Ashton
- Mr. J.D. Rheinallt-Jones
- Mrs. Twala
- Mr. P.H. Connell (Organising Secretary: Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation).

Apologies:

- Father T. Huddleston
- Mr. W. van Beijma
- Ds. Olivier
- Miss J. Marshall

In Attendance:

- Mrs. H.W. Glen.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.

Dr. Sonnabend opened the meeting by welcoming Dr. Hellman, Mr. Cutten and Mrs. Twala.

Mr. Nel said that he would prefer his suggestion that temporary houses could be built of permanent materials mentioned on page 5 of the minutes of the last meeting, to be altered to read: "temporary houses could be partly built with permanent materials".

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES.

Nil.

3. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED LIST OF HEADINGS.

Headings numbers 1 and 2 had been dealt with at the last meeting. The Committee therefore began with a discussion on heading number 3.

At the request of Mr. Cutten, Mr. Connell briefly outlined the discussion on headings 1 and 2 which had taken place at the previous meeting. The Committee had agreed that the target of 50,000 houses on the Rand for 1949 was not an impossible one, bearing in

has informed

mind the productive capacity of firms now in the field and those likely to be in production by next year. It had been concluded that it was the correct approach in a concentrated area such as the Witwatersrand to build houses by utilising industrial method wherever possible. It was agreed that there was also a place for the temporary house built either partly of permanent materials or wholly of temporary materials, and for the craft-built house erected more in the traditional manner where considered appropriate. To concentrate wholly on the building of temporary houses which would be demolished after a period of 10 years, might be considered advisable in view of the transitional nature of Native society but it had to be remembered that this would probably mean a repetition of the housing crisis when the time came for demolition. Demolition would mean the "unhousing" of people before they could be re-housed. Mr. Connell stressed the conclusions of the last meeting by reading out the underlined portions on page 5 of the previous minutes.

(a) Proposed Heading No. 4: "Reduced Standards" for Native Housing.

Mr. Connell said that the cost of native housing would have to be kept down. This could be done in two ways: either by reducing the standards of native housing below those considered the minimum for other groups, or by retaining the accepted minima and subsidising native housing.

He pointed out that although all craft-constructed dwellings are crude and cheap the space allowance is usually as good, if not better, than in permanent European-style houses. Up to the present the minimum standards of "temporary" structures had not been up to the minimum standards employed for Permanent housing. This was also true of post-war housing overseas. The following figures, taken from British practice would serve to demonstrate this fact, and might give the Committee a lead:

Minimum Overall Area for family dwellings.

Permanent Housing:	900 square feet.
Temporary Housing:	660 square feet.

Dr. Sonnabend warned the Committee that South African experience had shown that there was no "temporary" housing in the real sense of the word. What had been begun as temporary measures in various parts of the country had all tended to become permanent. In view of this trend, he felt that standards for such "temporary" housing as might be built in the future should not be lower than those for permanent housing.

Mr. Cutten expressed the general feeling of the Committee by saying that the permanent houses as provided for Natives today had already been reduced to "minimum" standards, so that temporary houses could not very well have standards still further reduced. It was agreed therefore, that so far as space standards were concerned, there should be no difference between temporary and permanent dwellings.

Mr. Rheinallt-Jones said that even large houses in large building schemes offered accommodation which was far too limited for a whole family. In most cases the kitchen and living room were combined. The inhabitants object very strongly to this because the women do not like cooking where the men are talking, neither do the

men want their conversation interrupted by cooking activities. Mr. Connell pointed out that in cases where the livingroom was separate from the kitchen each of these rooms would have to be smaller than the combined living-kitchen. A living-kitchen would offer no less space than the sum of the areas of a separate kitchen and living-room because, according to the minimum standards proposed by Sub-Committee 9, the minimum aggregate area of living-space had to be adhered to, in whatever manner it was to be subdivided.

Mr. Lucke quoted Moroka where ^{up to 12} 8-roomed semi-detached houses are being built, each room being 9' by 12'. It is intended later to convert these houses into two 4-roomed semi-detached houses. Mr. Nel pointed out that this scheme should be regarded as a strictly emergency measure which had been condoned by the Directorate of Housing because of the urgency of the housing situation; it was certainly not a standard to be aimed at. Mr. Lucke replied that this scheme had been adopted because it would provide housing for 5,000 families, whereas, if ideal standards had been considered, ~~far less families~~ would have been housed. In a crisis like the present one something below the desired requirements would be forced upon those in control of Sub-economic house-construction.

Mr. Cutten pointed out the danger of building houses which were later to be converted, by quoting an example from Bloemfontein location, in which houses had been built in a block of 4 rooms with common flue stack in the centre of the block. This block accommodated 4 families but was built so that it could eventually be converted into a single house of 4 rooms, for one family. Ten years have passed since the construction of these houses and they still accommodate 4 families, because the demand is such that when one family moves out, another moves in.

Mr. Connell suggested that the cost of construction could be reduced in one of two ways:

- (i) By reducing the overall area of the house.
- (ii) By reducing the installations (sanitation, cooking and heating facilities etc.)

The minimum space standards agreed upon by Sub-Committee 9 were:

	<u>Without Built-In Cupboard.</u>	<u>With Built-In Cupboard.</u>
1st bedroom	125 sq. ft.	120 sq. ft.
2nd and 3rd bedrooms	100 sq. ft.	95 sq. ft.

Living space and Kitchen.

4 bedroomed houses	-	270 sq. ft.	
3 bedroomed houses	-	250 sq. ft.	
2 bedroomed houses	-	220 sq. ft.	
1 bedroomed houses	-	210 sq. ft.	
Bathroom	-	30 sq. ft.	- This apartment to be provided even when no bath or w.c. is to be installed in the first place.
Storage	-	21 sq. ft.	

The/.....

270
125
100
210
30
21
598
598
496

*minimum adopted by
Com 9*

The Committee agreed that these areas should not be reduced for Native Housing, of whatever type.

Installations (4(a)3 of Proposed Headings).

Heating.

Mrs. Twala stressed the fact that African Tenants do not like a stove in the living room. In the better type of house in Orlando West tenants had gone to the trouble and expense of converting one of the bedrooms into a kitchen by building a chimney &c., so that the combined living-kitchen could be used as a living room proper. Mr. Connell explained that one of the reasons for putting the stove into the living room was to provide space heating. Mrs. Twala replied that there is very little heat from the stove because the houses in Orlando are so draughty.

Mr. Cutten mentioned Naauwpoort location where 200 houses have a No. 1 Queen Stove in a corner and a recess for cooking. 60% of these stoves are used, but the others have been removed, and cooking is done over a brazier. The reason for this appeared to be two-fold:

- (i) It was a question of the stage of development of the people as suggested by Mr. Rheinallt-Jones.
- (ii) The African wants to sit in front of a fire and does not feel the heat he cannot see, as suggested by Mrs. Twala.

Dr. Ashton said there appeared to be considerable difference of opinion on this question of heating. There is so much heat from the stove in Coronationville houses for instance, that the furniture is warping. Successful heating depended on the position of the stove in a room - whether against an outside wall where the heat is dissipated or in a corner so that cooking can be partially kept from the rest of the room, and on the presence of draughts caused by badly fitting doors, the absence of doors and the absence of ceilings or adequate caulking at ridge and beamfilling.

Mr. Connell mentioned the possibility of obtaining more efficient cooking appliances which could also be used for space heating. Perhaps the Wellcome-Dover stove which it was proposed to modify in order to include a water-boiler, could be modified further by having a metal plate at the back which could go through the wall to provide a radiant panel in the adjoining room. Dr. Ashton suggested another way in which a stove could be made to serve the dual-purpose of cooking and heating: The dividing wall between kitchen and living room could be made of perforated bricks through which heat could pass from the stove in the kitchen to the living room. Mr. Connell referred to certain proposals of the Heating, Cooling and Ventilation sub-committee in this regard.

Sanitation.

Mr. Rheinallt-Jones asked the Committee to stand firmly against communal latrines. It was agreed that one water closet for two families in the manner adopted at Port Elizabeth was satisfactory, but that one lavatory should not be permitted for more than two households.

Food Storage.

Mr. Rheinallt-Jones felt that every house should have a pantry or at least somewhere where food could be shielded from heat and contamination. The Committee agreed to Dr. Ashton's suggestion that since the people buy their food in small quantities a small ventilated food locker would be sufficient.

Storage.

The Committee agreed that in numerous cases the pantry or shower room was found to be used as a store room. It was agreed that every house should have a storeroom fitted with a door and lock. The recommendation of 21 square feet proposed by Sub-Committee 9 was accepted as sufficient.

*open
in future*

In many houses no provision for hanging clothes was made. If hooks were built into the walls a string could be tied from one hook to another. In Orlando the walls of concrete houses were such that the tenants could not even put in their own hooks. Mr. Nel suggested that a slab, preferably concrete since wood provides a refuge for vermin, should be put across a corner of each habitable room. A curtain could be hung round this, making a corner cupboard. It was agreed that something of this sort should be provided. Mr. Connell suggested that the area of 5 sq. ft. for built-in cupboards in the proposed minimum standards might be provided in Native houses as a recess, even though the cupboards themselves might not be put in in the first place. Cupboards could then be fitted later as the standard demanded by public opinion might require.

Adequacy of the Structure (4(a)1 of proposed headings.)

Ceiling.

Mr. Rheinallt-Jones said that the absence of a ceiling meant that a house was always cold in winter and very hot in summer. Because the cost of installing ceilings was high he felt that a roof such as asbestos-cement could be provided. Mr. Connell did not think an asbestos-cement roof would fulfil the requirements unless, perhaps, if there were two layers with an insulating material between. Mr. Cutten suggested concrete, but this was not considered advisable because of its tendency to crack and leak, its poor insulation and the fact that steel would be required for this type of roof. The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Heating, Cooling and Ventilation Sub-Committee that no roofs should be permitted without either a ceiling or an insulated lining.

Floor:

Dr. Hellman stressed the need for a floor in every house. Mrs. Twala raised objections against the quarry tile floors used in Orlando because the tiles are cold, uneven and cause lino to crack and break.

The Committee discussed the possibilities of different kinds of floors. The possible suggestions were:

No-fines/.....

- (a) No-fines base with concrete above to stop the cold from below.
- (b) Layer of Vermiculite below and concrete above.
- (c) Malthoid on concrete or on stabilised earth.
- (d) Ashcrete.
- (e) Wood.
- (f) Stabilised earth.

The objection against (a) and (b) was that the concrete topping is cold, against (c) that this has not proved effective, against (d) that this disintegrates, and against (e) that this is broken and destroyed by tenants.

The Committee discussed the stabilised earth floor at some length. The objections were:

- (i) Furniture sinks into the floor.
- (ii) Doctors find the dung-smear unhygienic.
- (iii) It is in any case not permitted in rodent-infested areas.
- (iv) When cow-dung is not obtainable as in an urban area, the floor cannot be maintained in good condition; it becomes very dusty and attracts fleas.

Mr. Nel suggested investigating a flooring material patented by a Mr. Coaker of Ladybrand, which consists of a saw-dust tile with the impurities removed. It should make a warm floor. The cost is about 6/- per square yard, i.e. 1/- more than granolithic flooring.

It was agreed that stabilised earth is a suitable flooring material in rural areas but that a suitable floor would have to be found for urban houses. Mr. Connell thought that the National Building Research Institute would investigate Mr. Cutten's suggestion that a suitable covering might be found for stabilised earth floors to prevent wear.

Doors.

In order that the children should not be kept awake until late at night the Committee agreed that there should be doors dividing one room from another. If doors could not be fitted owing to the cost, then at least the doorways should be designed so that the tenants can put in their own doors. Walls should also reach to the soffit of the ceiling or roof covering.

Beds.

Mr. Rheinallt-Jones thought it would be a good thing to fit concrete ledges on which two-tier beds could be put. Although this was not advisable in hostels it was agreed that this would permit the more efficient utilisation of space within the dwelling.

Adequacy of Planning (4(a)2 of Proposed Headings).

Dr. Hellman pointed out that a greater variety of housing was needed. There should be a certain proportion of 2-roomed houses for young married couples and so on. She stressed the need for more correlation between the size of the house and the size of the family. There would have to be more efficient housing management to ensure that a family of 4, for instance, does not live in a 2-roomed house meant for 2, and to provide check against such practices as the conversion of one bedroom into a smart parlour, and the sub-letting of rooms by poorer tenants.

To relate the different sizes of house to different size of family there would first have to be a survey to find out the percentages of the various family types. Dr. Hellman suggested that the census would give a fair indication of the proportion of different-sized families. Dr. Ashton thought that this information could be obtained quite easily from the waiting-lists of applicants for housing accommodation. Mr. Rheinallt-Jones said care would have to be taken to differentiate between families and households because, when a census of 100 squatters in the O.F.S. was made, it was found that there were families of 10 or more, and further additional investigations had to be made to clear up this point.

It was agreed that there should be separate rooms for adolescents, but with this there would have to be a system of differential rents; otherwise the head of a large family (i.e. the group most in need of large houses) would not be able to afford the rent of a large house.

Mr. Nel pointed out that the differential renting system was impracticable because local authorities would have to bear larger losses than in the past; at present the income of tenants was at rock-bottom and so also were the rents. He pointed out that the differential renting system had not been a success in Britain either.

Mr. Cutten disagreed with individual houses having only 2 rooms. From a housing point of view, individual structures which would function for eating, sleeping and living should not be below 3 rooms. From the building point of view it is also the most economical size of house. Unmarried people, and couples with no children should be housed in combined dwellings of one sort or another.

Mr. Cutten suggested that a verandah under the main roof was a waste of space. It was agreed that the space occupied by the verandah would be more useful if thrown into the overall living-space of the home. For this reason it was agreed not to require verandahs as a minimum standard. It was agreed further that guttering to the roof and a concrete slab or other canopy should be provided over the front door to protect the house from rain.

4. GENERAL.

The question of combined dwellings and further installations would be left over until the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in the Board Room of the Institute of Race Relations, Stienen's Street, Johannesburg, on Thursday, 29th April, 1948, at 4 p.m.

The meeting ended at 6 p.m.

Confirmed,

CHAIRMAN.



no upstairs under sink

Vent. restricts & ^{has} compactness

Hooks

Plated houses with own ground. 2 rooms, 3 rooms, etc

The more you can combine the cheaper the best

greater density desirable to reduce area. increase communal spirit

~~two~~ rooms must semi-detached or under ^{other} combined roof

One top floor house & one in garden automatic steps

Stop water problems
adequacy of main sewage.

Communal attention & clothes washing.

~~Bath not essential~~ Privacy essential - bath not essential

Effect of
noise
on security

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