

M E M O R A N D U M

BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NATAL

RE

ACCOMMODATION AND LAND REQUIREMENTS FOR
A NON-EUROPEAN COLLEGE AT WENTWORTH.

1. The Natal University College has at present the largest single group of non-Europeans receiving higher education in South Africa. The number of non-European students taking courses for B.A., B.A. Social Science, and B. Com. degrees increased as follows during the last seven years :-

1942	..	90
1943	..	142
1944	..	159
1945	..	191
1946	..	250
1947	..	320
1948	..	333
2. Though these non-European students receive instruction from the same professors and lecturers as lecture to the Europeans, sit for the same examinations and receive the same certificates and degrees as the Europeans, we segregate them as regards class-room and social amenities. At the present moment they are - through the courtesy of the Natal Education Department - being accommodated in the backyard of Sastri College, which is an Indian High School. This accommodation has become totally inadequate, and the lack of class-room accommodation and the absence of any hostel facilities have been serious factors limiting the number of non-Europeans, particularly Bantu, receiving higher education.
3. It is totally impossible to obtain land within Durban itself on which to erect college buildings for non-Europeans. The only available site within reasonable distance from Durban on which a college for non-Europeans could be established, is on the vacant land at the bottom end of the Wentworth Camp, in the vicinity of the Torpedo School erected during the war by the Imperial authorities. This is about a mile away from the Wentworth ex-soldier village and about five miles from the centre of the city.
4. The purpose of this memorandum is to request the Government to allocate this site to the University of Natal for a Non-European College. By virtue of the fact that -
 - (a) the non-European students will be served largely by the same staff as are teaching the European students (at Howard College and the other University buildings in the city), and
 - (b) the non-European medical students cannot live too far away from King Edward VIII (non-European) Hospital,
 such a site must be as near as possible to the rest of the University.
5. The available land at Wentworth consists of two portions -
 - A 32 acres, and
 - B about 50 to 60 acres,
 together constituting roughly an L-shaped campus. (See diagram).

Area A

Area A is on a steeply sloping hillside and suitable only for the erection of instructional buildings and hostels. This area is quite unsuitable for playing fields, as heavy excavations would be required to provide these facilities. Area B, on the other hand, is flat and swampy in the rainy season, which incidentally is the summer season. The erection of instructional buildings and hostels in this area would prove anything but satisfactory for staff and students on account of its position. It is a flat tract of ground between two hills, and it becomes intolerably hot during the summer months. It might, however, prove satisfactory for the development of sports fields. This portion will, in time, accommodate the very necessary recreational facilities for non-Europeans who at present have no such amenities.

6. When this campus has been developed it will constitute a very useful buffer between the non-European residential area extending southwards to Isipingo, and the European area which extends northwards from the Wentworth village towards Durban. The location, therefore, of a university institution in that area will be favourable from a general town planning point of view.

7. When the Mayor and prominent city councillors were consulted about the suitability of this site for a non-European college, they indicated that they would not oppose its being located there.

8. The Government has recently decided that a medical school should be established in Durban, primarily for non-Europeans, in connection with the University of Natal. This would involve not only medical training but also pre-medical training for non-Europeans. It is intended to start with the pre-medical work at Wentworth in 1949. We must, therefore, immediately take steps to provide a Chemistry laboratory, a Physics laboratory, a Zoology laboratory, a Botany laboratory, lecture theatres and hostels for the medical students as well as for the students in the other fields of university training, e.g. teaching, social work, etc.

9. In addition to the above, we require -

- (a) a hostel for native men, and another for native women;
- (b) administrative offices and a library;
- (c) a residence for the superintendent of the non-European college;
- (d) a common room and refectory for day students;
- (e) servants' quarters.

These are our immediate requirements.

10. In view, however, of the urgency of our requirements and the great difficulty of putting up new buildings, I am requesting that the Torpedo School be allocated for this work until such time as we can erect permanent buildings. The Torpedo School consists of a group of huts and storerooms. These could as a temporary measure be converted into laboratories, lecture rooms, hostels, kitchens, etc., as required, at a cost of about £15,000 to £20,000. For this conversion the University will have to be responsible.

11. In view of future developments a campus of 90 - 100 acres is none too large. It must be realised that this site will have to meet the requirements brought about by the pressure of over 3,000,000 non-Europeans living at the present time within a 200 mile radius of Durban. In considering land we must visualise what the educational requirements will be of these people in fifty and even a hundred years' time. There is a rapidly increasing output of non-European pupils - especially Bantu - from their High Schools

throughout

throughout South Africa. Once we can provide hostel accommodation for the Bantu, it is likely that within 10 years' time the number of non-European university students will exceed that of the European students in Durban. A considerable number of students will be coming from the territories north of the Union. In fact, we shall be serving the whole African sub-continent.

12. Lest it be considered that this land provision is too generous, it should be noted that the site of Potchefstroom University College comprises 122 acres, that of Bloemfontein 93 acres, of Stellenbosch 211 acres, of Cape Town 200 acres, and of Witwatersrand 90 acres. These and other university grounds have already proved too small. The present campus at Pietermaritzburg of 44 acres, which forty years ago was considered so ample, has already been found to be totally inadequate to accommodate 600 students. An additional 47 acres had to be acquired in order to provide for the Agriculture Faculty, the men's residences and additional sports fields. In this matter, therefore, of land provision, we must look ahead so as not to face posterity with an impossible situation when in a hundred years' time they will be grappling with the problem of providing higher education for an emancipated Native population.

13. The provision of proper facilities for the higher education of non-Europeans is not only of national but also of international importance. Rightly or wrongly, South Africa has recently had to run the gauntlet of criticism at U.N.O. for its treatment of the non-European. It is submitted that the granting by the Government of a site of land adequate to provide for future development of proper university facilities for the non-European will serve as a concrete gesture indicative of a progressive policy towards the non-European's uplift and development. It may thus do something towards rehabilitating South Africa's prestige in the eyes of the world.

14. There is considerable urgency about this matter. Through the institution at Wentworth under the University of Natal, we shall serve not only the interests of the 3,000,000 non-Europeans living in the immediate vicinity, but we shall also be performing a national service. It is our duty to provide the Bantu with advanced professional training in health, administration and social services so that they can adequately serve their own people.

15. NOTE:

The application for land at Wentworth was originally made by the Natal University College in a letter to the Secretary for Public Works, dated the 8th of October, 1946. The Prime Minister showed considerable interest in this request, as was evidenced by the letter dated 25th January, 1947, addressed by Mr. Lawrence to Mr. Mushet, the Minister of Public Works. This was followed up by interviews with various ministers, including the Prime Minister. The case was again put up in letters dated 19th December, 1946, 10th June 1947, 23rd June 1947, 14th August 1947, and 10th January 1948, directed to the Secretaries for Public Works and Union Education.

The minute of the Natal District Representative of the Public Works Department, dated 14th January, 1948, to the Secretary for Public Works also refers.

16. SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS:

(a) Land: about 80 to 90 acres as per diagram (see paragraph 5).

(b) All the hutments in the Torpedo School for conversion

into

into laboratories, hostels, etc., until permanent buildings can be erected. A few of these hutments are still being used temporarily for storing jute bags. Apart from this, the Public Works Department has no immediate use for the Torpedo School.

(Sgd.) E. G. Malherbe.

PRINCIPAL.

20th May, 1948.

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