

TELEPHONE OXFORD 59291

*? housing  
universities UK  
or well-known*

THE CLARENDON LABORATORY  
PARKS ROAD  
OXFORD

FROM THE PROFESSOR OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS:  
D. H. WILKINSON, F.R.S.

21st May 1959

Dr T.G. Pickavance,  
A.E.R.E.,  
Harwell,  
Didcot, Berks

Dear Gerry,

*as flat of  
course*

In my view the question of providing family housing breaks into two clear cases. The first is ordinary research at the machine as part of the everyday use that the Universities are going to make of it. For this purpose we must certainly arrange that accommodation is adequate and easily reserved and so on, and that transport facilities are adequate, but I do not believe that we need seriously consider catering for families. There will we hope, be the odd man who will come to the Institute for his sabbatical year and then he should be provided with a house. I cannot guess how many such people there are likely to be, but it will probably not be more than four or five at a time. The other part of the problem is the summer visitor programme which, as you know, I think to be very important for the reasons I set out in my paper that was accepted by the Physics Committee and by the Board. This I conceive as something which is quite apart from the ordinary research which Universities will be carrying out at the Institute. True it is, that many of the people who come during the summer will want to use the machine, but these are certainly a minority and we must not in any way make it a condition of their coming that they actually do an experiment. This of course, is patently obvious for theoreticians. I believe that everything possible should be done to encourage this vigorous summer

visitor programme, but men are not going to come for two months or so in the summer unless they as a rule, can bring their families. I conceive of this therefore as a very seasonal demand made on housing, but one that must be met if the National Institute is to become the intellectual centre of high energy physics in the country rather than just a place where one goes to do an experiment. On the national scale I believe it to be most important that the former function should be served. Guessing numbers of course, is very difficult and I cannot do better than I did in my paper, namely 15-20. Since England is relatively small a proportion of these will probably leave their families behind and visit them at week-ends or every fortnight. I believe that we should discourage this since Brookhaven experience shows that it is the (admittedly rather artificial) community life that builds up during the summer that is so conducive to the cross contacts that have been very profitable ever since the scheme started. These contacts of course, are if anything more likely to take place over week ends than they are during the week. I should hope therefore that about a dozen families would want to come during the summer and that we should encourage more. This, together with the few sabbatical leave men will probably add up to the 15-20 region.

A quite separate consideration is visitors from abroad. Particularly in the early years of the Laboratory we shall want to use absolutely every scrap of experience that we can of people who have used this sort of machine for many years. They are not going to come unless we can provide them with decent accommodation. This is already showing in the American visitors to A.E.R.E. who have been here in some numbers for the first time this year and who have been somewhat unhappily impressed at having to do most of their own house hunting. I very much hope that the Institute will not be bound by Authority rules in this sort of thing and that we shall be able to have a number of places for such birds of passage. I think the numbers may well be quite large and should hope that at least half-a-dozen such people with their families would be here in the early years. For a proof of this simply look at the present position in CERN or in Copenhagen. This then in my mind, adds up to a need to find perhaps a dozen family homes throughout the year with a doubling of that load during the summer. If the Institute works

as well as we all hope these figures will be very moderate and may well have to be increased quite considerably.

The timing of all this depends on how quickly the summer visitor spirit is to be launched. It is probably easiest to work backwards and say that these full requirements ought to be met by the summer of 1963, but a very sizeable amount be available by the previous summer when we shall be particularly anxious to have foreign experts helping with the beam engineering and winding-up of the experimental facilities and all that.

I think it most important to exercise a positive attraction on people by providing them with easy housing. This is just the sort of thing that makes the difference to a man between coming and not coming, and it could well make the difference to the spirit in the University Laboratories of the country between full and active participation and the luke-warm use of the Institute's facilities as simple facilities.

Yours ever,

Demp