

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN NUCLEAR SCIENCEGENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Houses for Rutherford Laboratory Staff

Note by the Secretary

1. Owing to the rural situation of the Rutherford Laboratory and the shortage of houses in the area, the Institute will have to provide a considerable number of houses, if the necessary staff are to be obtained. According to the experience of the AERE, about one house for every three employees will have to be provided.
2. In discussion with the AEA, it has been agreed that AERE staff transferred to the Institute may remain in AERE houses, and that any such staff (except those recruited specially for the Institute) who are waiting on the AERE housing list at the time of transfer will also be housed in due course by the AERE. In both these cases if the man should vacate his AERE house it would revert to the AERE, and in any case the Institute might at some future date, with due warning, be asked to provide houses for the AERE in replacement of those thus occupied by Institute employees. The relief provided by this arrangement is therefore probably temporary.
3. The AERE have agreed to give further temporary assistance by making 10 houses available towards the need for Institute staff engaged directly or under the transitional technique, and in addition 8 houses towards the Institute's needs for university visitors. These latter 8 will be specially allocated with at least 3 months notice but without the normal requirement that the tenant must be working at Harwell before his name is entered on the housing list.
4. The staffing forecast for the Rutherford Laboratory given in NI(GP)(59)22 is of course only rough, and further, it can only be guessed at present how many of the staff will come by transfer from the AERE. However, it is necessary to make such a guess, in order to estimate housing requirements. With considerable reservation, therefore, the possible build-up of staff and housing requirements may be foreseen as follows:-

	Professional	Ancillary	Industrial	Total	Houses
Transferred from AERE	120	80	50	250	None at present
Recruited in 1-2 years	70	80	70	220	75
Recruited in 2-4 years	60	70	30	150	50

It is first necessary to deal with the estimated requirement over the next 1-2 years, and it is clear that this can be done in the knowledge that further requirements will absorb any possible exaggeration contained in this first estimate.

In considering the requirements for the next 1 - 2 years the requirement for university visitors, estimated at 8 in NI(GP)(58)9 must also be taken into consideration. The figure of 8 is now believed to be low, but the error will be small compared with the uncertainty in the number required for staff.

The estimate of houses needed in the next 1 - 2 years is therefore as follows:-

	Staff	Visitors
Total	75	8
From AERE	10	8
Still required	65	0

5. The main housing areas in the neighbourhood are Abingdon, Wantage and Didcot. Didcot is probably the easiest in which to find building land, but is the least popular with the staff. In Wantage land is extremely scarce. Abingdon is certainly the first choice of the staff. Building possibilities in Abingdon have therefore been discussed with the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Borough Housing Committee, and also with the AERE. The Borough Council will build houses for rent to our staff if we guarantee to find tenants for 20 years, and would probably agree to build to designs moderately better than their normal standards; for example up to a maximum of 999 sq.ft. compared with a normal 900 sq.ft. The Council would prefer not to build houses over 1,000 square feet for us, though they would be very pleased for us to do so, and any houses over 1,000 sq.ft. which they built would be regarded as a special project, and the rents would be calculated on an economic basis from the cost, rather than on the usual basis of the Gross Annual Value.
6. The possible sites, according to our enquiries, are listed below, approximately in order of early availability.

(a) AERE site, Rush Common (4 acres offered by AERE)

The attached note from the Chief Architect gives in brief outline a scheme for building 24 3-bedroomed houses of the design now being built for the AERE on the adjacent AERE site. It is recommended that this be put in hand.

ABINGDON BOROUGH COUNCIL SITES:-

(b) Gainsborough Green

This is part of a current development of rather cheaper council houses to the south of Abingdon in an area at present rather unfashionable. 12 houses at gross rents of about £2. 10. 0 per week could be speeded up to be available for us this year. It is recommended that this offer be accepted.

(c) Vineyard

This is a choice secluded area in the centre of Abingdon, adjacent to the AERE Fitzharry's estate. 2 acres can probably be made available to us if we ask at once (by the end of February). The Council would welcome us on this site, but only if we build ourselves. It is recommended that we should buy this site and build about 14 houses to standards comparable with the AERE Fitzharry's estate

(d) Peach Croft

This is a large site (50 acres) to the east of AERE Oxford Road and Rush Common estate. It will be developed by the Borough Council, starting within about two years. It is possible that a contract for the first houses could be let by early 1961.

It is proposed to discuss with the Council the standard of houses which they would be prepared to build for us on this site.

(e) St. Helens Precincts

The Council are re-developing the area round the parish church into blocks of flats and a few houses. This is rather good-class development and the Council will welcome any of our staff who like flats and are prepared to pay £4 per week or so. This may contribute to some extent to our future requirements.

(f) Sadler's Field

This is a site to the north of the AERE Oxford Road estate, which will be available rather later than Peach Croft, but is otherwise similar..

7. In summary, the proposals made above are as follows:-

Rush Common 24 houses built by us

Gainsborough Green 12 Council houses

Vineyard 14 possible houses built by us

Peach Croft 15 built by Council in 1961

65

According to the preliminary estimate the Rush Common proposal would cost £80,000. The Vineyard proposal would perhaps cost £50,000. The provision in estimates for "Houses hostels and flats" does not include these proposals since it was expected to have all our houses built by the local authority. It is, considered however that the expenditure on other parts of the estimate will fall short of the provision by at least this amount.

The Committee's approval is requested for the action proposed above, and in particular for the proposal to build 24 houses at Rush Common at an estimated cost of £80,000, for the proposal to buy the 2 acre Vineyard site if possible and build on it, and for the proposal to give the Abingdon Council a guarantee to find tenants for 27 houses for 20 years.

4th February, 1960.

Dr. Pickavance,

Proposed houses at Rush Common, Abingdon
for N.I.R.N.S.

1. The site which is in the ownership of U.K.A.E.A. at Rush Common, Abingdon, has been investigated and it has been found, that there is room for approximately twenty four houses on an area of 4.1 acres approximately.

This low density of six houses to the acre is due to the uneconomic shape of the site, but it may prove when a more detailed layout is prepared that the number of houses may be increased by possibly one or even two pairs, which would improve the scheme economically.

2. The order of cost for a scheme incorporating 24 houses is £70,000. This figure includes, for construction of roads and main drainage and other services, and the erection of twenty four, three bedroom houses similar in type to those in course of erection on the adjoining site.

The particular site now being considered is not good building land and allowance has been made in this estimate for the special foundations which will be needed, in other respects the estimate has been based on the existing contract making allowance for changed conditions since that was let.

3. If approval in principal is given to this scheme the more accurate assessments can be made both of the layout and of the estimated cost.
4. Any fees for architects and quantity surveyors will be assessed at the appropriate rates agreed with the professional bodies concerned, and will be included in the agency fee agreed to be charged by D. & E. Group to N.I.R.N.S. which for the purposes of Treasury submission may be taken at 15% at this stage.

G. W. Dixon

G. W. Dixon
Chief Architect, SWO.

29th January, 1960.