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CIVIL SERVICE COLLEGE, SUNNINGDALE PARK:FACILITIES FOR THE CONFERENCENorthcote House

The Conference sessions will be held in Northcote House, the main building in the complex at Sunningdale Park. This large building was built in 1929 in a Georgian manorial style and consists of two floors with a large central lobby or well extending to the top of the building from which rooms and corridors radiate at the two levels.

At the ground floor level the following accommodation will be available:

- (1) The Conference Room which is not very large (approx. 40' x 22') with an ante-room approx 20' x 22'.
- (2) Dining Room approximately 50' x 20' (Rooms 1 and 2 overlook the parkland).
- (3) Bar approximately 22' x 16'.
- (4) Rooms off a corridor, one each to be assigned to the Alliance, SDLP and Unionist parties.
- (5) The central lobby contains comfortable armchairs arranged in several groups to facilitate informal conversations. One group is at present arranged around a large television set placed before the massive chimney piece.

At the upper level, our delegation has been assigned 6 rooms as follows with total area of 1,080 sq. ft. (see attached plan):

3 Rooms on East Side

Room No. 1	20' x 12' approx.
" " 2	16' x 10' "
" " 3	14' x 7'

3 Rooms on West side

Room No. 12	19' x 13' approx
" " 13	14' x 16' "
" " 14	19' x 12' "

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We were given Room No. 14 at our request in view of the large delegation number to be accommodated. It is suggested that Room No. 12 should be the main delegation room since it is set apart from the Registry (Room No. 4) which is next to our rooms on the East side. The Administration of the College require to have daily access to the Registry but they have agreed to limit this to one hour (11 a.m. to 12 noon) on Thursday and Friday. (The College authorities intend to continue their own administration work in the remainder of the building, - the rooms are on the North side. Staff have been issued with passes for this purpose).

The Delegation rooms could thus be assigned as follows:

Room 1: Principal Staff Room for officials

Room 2: Information Officers, TV, Radio

Room 3: Typists

Room 12: Ministers' Room

Room 13: Typists

Room 14: Secretarial, Assembly of material - Xerox etc.

The British Delegation has been assigned 6 rooms on the south side (upper level). These are, in fact, the largest and best furnished rooms, two of which are the offices of the Principal and Deputy Principal of the College, with connecting doors. These rooms are each 440 sq. ft. in area and the British Delegation with a total of 1512 sq. ft. have been allotted about 50% more space than we have been given-even with the extra room we requested. However, it would be difficult, physically, to arrange a more equitable division and the space we have now been allocated would appear to be adequate for our needs.

Bedroom Accommodation

This is being made available in two blocks of similar plain construction some 300 to 400 yards to the west of the Northcote House (the Conference Centre). Delegates will be expected to walk to and from Northcote House and provision of clothing, umbrellas etc. will be necessary to allow for weather conditions. Our delegation will be assigned rooms in the Anderson Block. (See (4) in the accommodation plan attached.) This is a 2-storey block. The bedrooms are described as

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"study-bedrooms" and consist of very plain small rooms about 12' x 10' each with a divan bed, plain desk and chair, wash-hand basin and closet. Lavatories, bathrooms and showers are combined in a central area on each floor but bath and shower facilities are very restricted. At our special request one large bedroom (20' x 10') has been provided with a sitting-room "en suite" which could be used by one of the Ministers. It is normally used by visiting lecturers and is at the end of the Anderson Block. The Northern parties could also be accommodated in the Anderson Block but the intention would be to place the majority in the other bedroom area, the Bridges Block (See (1) on the accommodation plan). It is clear that for security reasons the Northern parties will be urged to remain within the Conference complex and Ministers may wish to consider whether for both security and solidarity with the Northern delegations, they are prepared to accept the simple Spartan accommodation provided in the sleeping quarters. Although the cell-like rooms are all extremely plain, they are clean and seemed to be adequately heated.

Communications Equipment

At our request, a television set and radio will be made available in the delegation rooms at Northcote House and also in the special bedroom suite. We also requested a telex service and a Xerox copying machine for our own use. A large Xerox copier is available for all delegations in room No. 15 next door to our No.14. Newspapers (including the Irish papers) will be provided daily - the Dublin papers are expected about 10.30 a.m. Difficulty is encountered, however, in getting the Belfast papers on the day of issue. A "ticker tape" world news service will, at our request, also be sought.

Conference Sessions

In view of the relatively small dimensions of the conference room, it is unlikely that more than a few official advisers could be accommodated apart from the delegations at political level. A conference table would have a maximum seating of about 30. Present indications suggest a maximum political participation of 15 from the North, 8 from Dublin and 4 or 5 from Westminster. There would be very little space available behind those at the table, unless it were to be rather limited in width.

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It is proposed to have a verbatim shorthand record taken of all the sessions. The possibility of having the discussions taped was mentioned but we indicated serious reservations about this and said also that the Northern parties could have objections. It is proposed that the verbatim record will be undertaken by a professional firm, not by Civil Service personnel, in view of the need for expert accuracy and speedy production of the record.

Arrival arrangements

Delegations are invited to arrive in time for dinner on the evening of Wednesday, 5th December. An arrival time of 6 p.m. should allow for pre-dinner drinks. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Notification of arrival times at the Airport is desired to arrange for clearance and reception of delegates.

Security

The road (Larch Avenue) on the West side of the sleeping accommodation will be entirely blocked off throughout the period of the Conference. Entry and exit will be made only at the North end.

Press

There is a separate report on press facilities from Mr. MacConghail, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach. The press centre will be at Whitley Hall near to the delegation's sleeping accommodation but cut off from it. Members of the press will not be allowed to enter the Conference area but delegates may go to the press centre, if desired.