

HEADQUARTERS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

Explanatory Note for Use in Conjunction with the Showing of the
Film illustrating the Report of the Headquarters Commission

On 14 February 1946, the General Assembly, meeting in London, appointed a Headquarters Commission to provide information on the basis of which the General Assembly could make a final decision as to the exact size required for a permanent United Nations headquarters and its exact location, limiting the Commission's choice to the Westchester (N.Y.) and Fairfield (Conn.) Counties, that is, near New York City.

The Commission was instructed to draw up plans based on the assumption that the United Nations will require a site of approximately either 2, 5, 10, 20 or 40 square miles for its headquarters. The Commission assumed that this site should be within one and a half hours traveling time from midtown Manhattan; that it should have easy access to adequate railways and roads; and that it should be close enough to other communities, including New York City, to utilize facilities not available at the site.

The Commission instituted a study of the actual requirements of the United Nations and translated them into terms of space, both for the official buildings and for a possible community area. A medium building height of six stories, including a basement, was adopted to give future planners maximum freedom in choosing between horizontal and vertical type of architectural planning.

All requirements for the official buildings area were estimated for 7,000 permanent delegates and international personnel. Requirements for a community buildings area, containing dwellings for permanent and transient personnel and community facilities to serve them, were estimated for about 50,000 people. In the event that nearby towns could supply the needed service

personnel, this figure could be reduced to about 27,000. Space calculations were made on the basis of both assumptions. In converting these population figures into land requirements, a density factor of 20 persons per net acre, about 13,000 people per square mile, was taken.

The Commission first considered 25 potential sites and then selected 15 for closer study - 3 of each size. Advantages and disadvantages were carefully weighed. Finally one site in each group was judged to be the best for its size. The final selections are all in Westchester County.

Combining the two main lines of inquiry - the search for a suitable location and the study of space requirements - the Commission came to the following conclusions:

2 Square Mile Site

This site, the closest to New York City, lies east of White Plains and has excellent location for the official buildings and every type of necessary service is available. There is a railroad station 2 miles west, parkways and 1 mile to the north is the large Westchester County Airport. It also has natural border belts, in the form of parkways and roads which will not change its character. Only 500 persons might have to be displaced and the value of the land and property is about five and a quarter million dollars. The site would accommodate all the official buildings but would provide for only limited expansion.

5 Square Mile Site

This site is an extension, toward the east, of the 2 square mile site. Its main features are practically the same. About 1200 persons might have to be displaced. The value of the land and property is about 10,000,000 dollars. This site would accommodate all the official buildings with an allowance for expansion, delegation buildings, hotels, and residences for about 11,500 people. There would be a minimum of land for border parks.

10 Square Mile Site

This site just east of Peekskill and is surrounded completely by natural border belts formed by parkways and one reservation. This site would accommodate all the official buildings, with an allowance

for expansion, buildings for delegations, hotels, and residences for about 30,000 people. Approximately 1200 people would have to be displaced and the total value of the land and property is about eleven million dollars.

This site is relatively distant from New York and other large supporting communities. Should area proved to be too small for self-sufficiency, an alternative 10 square mile site nearer to New York - also accommodating a minimum of about 30,000 people - might be available by enlarging the 5 square mile site.

20 Square Mile Site

This site lies seven miles east of Peekskill and has a natural border belt. This site would accommodate all the official buildings with an allowance for expansion, buildings for delegations, hotels, residences for about 47,500 people or a substantially complete community, without allowance for expansion of the latter. There would be a total population displacement of about 2,600 people. The total value of the land and property is about twelve million dollars.

40 Square Mile Site

This site is an extension of the 20 square mile site towards the east. This site will accommodate all of the official buildings, and a complete community, with allowance for expansion, together with adequate land for separation zones and border parks. The total population displacement would be about 6,800 people and the value of the land and property is about twenty-seven and a half million dollars.

The smaller sites have to be close to New York and other communities which could supply housing and service facilities. The larger sites may be farther away since they can be made partly or fully self-contained.

The number of United Nations delegates and personnel requiring permanent quarters amounts to about 17,500 persons. The number of 50,000 comprising the delegates, the personnel and the total servicing population for a self-sufficient community, would be substantially reduced in case of a site nearer to existing communities providing a great part

of the necessary services.

The Commission, therefore, draws the conclusion that size and location are directly related.
