

PRIME MINISTER

RICHMOND YARD

I understand that you want to discuss the future of Richmond Yard at a meeting. Shall we confine the meeting to the Foreign Secretary and the Environment Secretary? Or do you want the issue to go to the new Ministerial Committee of the Lord President, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Chancellor or Chief Secretary, Defence Secretary, Lord Privy Seal and the Environment Secretary?

I hope that you can agree that this should go to the smaller group.

Agree?

N.L.W.

N. L. Wicks

26 September 1986

No - more people  
than this are involved  
Ed - for Dennis  
and also  
Dunby  
Chancellor - the  
we must open  
up wider issues  
not



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Sir Patrick Wright KCMG  
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

19 September 1986

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

CABINET OFFICE

*De Rour.*

RICHMOND YARD

1. When we last discussed Richmond Yard, you mentioned that there had been some suggestion that the FCO had been guilty of extravagance and delay in refurbishing parts of the Old Public Offices, and that we might be asked to pay rent for the whole of the Old Public Offices.

2. If, as you suggested to me on 18 September, there is to be another Ministerial meeting to discuss Richmond Yard, I suppose that alleged FCO misuse of the Old Public Offices may be mentioned again. In that case, the Foreign Secretary and I thought it might be helpful for you to have a private copy of the attached note by the Chief Clerk. It will of course form part of the Foreign Secretary's briefing for the meeting.

3. May I leave it to you to consider whether and how the points in John Whitehead's minute might be drawn to the attention of the Prime Minister in advance of any such Ministerial meeting?

*Patrick Wright*

Patrick Wright

From: John Whitehead

PERSONAL -

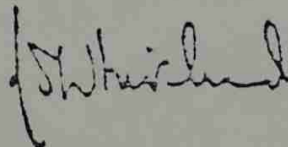
Date: 12 September 1986

PUS

cc: Private Secretary  
Sir C Tickell

## RICHMOND TERRACE - ALLEGED FCO MISUSE OF WHITEHALL ACCOMMODATION

1. In paragraph 3 of your minute of 9 September to the Private Secretary you asked for comments about possible extravagance and delay in refurbishing the Old Home Office Building and the possibility of the FCO paying PSA "rent" for the whole of the Main Building, including the vacant sector being refurbished.
2. Responsibility for this building rests entirely with the PSA. I am not aware of the background to the refurbishment of the former Home Office area on Whitehall but it was handed over to the FCO in the winter of 1982/83.
3. Refurbishment of the "Red Sector" in King Charles Street West then began with most of the occupants decanted into the former Home Office. The whole refurbishment plan has been of a minimalist nature with nothing that can fairly be described as extravagant. It is the first time the building has ever been thoroughly gone over since it was constructed in 1868. The plan is basically to modernise it by replacing wiring, plumbing, lifts, toilets etc plus a small amount of structural alteration to provide additional offices mainly on the fourth floor. The PSA are taking the opportunity to restore fine areas such as the Durbar Court, the Secretary of State's and PUS's rooms, Grand Staircases, Locarno Rooms and Ministerial Offices in accordance with their legal responsibility as the custodian of a Grade 1 listed building and within financial constraints.
3. Any delay is also entirely the PSA's responsibility. The fire in the Red Sector of October 1985 in effect postponed its completion by one year from end-1985 to end-1986.
4. It is PSA's universal practice to impose an "accommodation charge" (ie "rent" plus an element for maintenance and rates) only for offices which are occupied. It would thus be most unusual (and possibly unprecedented) for them to penalise the FCO by imposing an accommodation charge for the one-sixth of our Main Building which is vacant because of refurbishment. This would have the effect of increasing the accommodation charge for the Main Building from £4.452 million to £5.194 million. As soon as the refurbishment programme is complete in late 1986 we will of course be vacating space elsewhere (Matthew Parker Street) to occupy the last sector refurbished. It would be unreasonable to expect us to pay a surcharge of £0.75 million per annum for at least 10 years for vacant space held by the PSA.



J S Whitehead

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

PRIME MINISTER

RICHMOND YARD

RTA reports below that Mr. Baker is not interested in a suite of rooms in Richmond Yard. I hope that you can now agree that the ODA should be moved into Richmond Yard on the basis that the new Committees will review the whole Whitehall accommodation scene, including the FCO's refurbishment operation and the long-term future of the old Home Office.

Agree?

N. L. W.

N. L. WICKS

15 September 1986

Ref. A086/2523

MR WICKS

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Richmond Yard

As I reported to you yesterday evening, I went to see the Secretary of State for Education and Science, as instructed by the Prime Minister, to find out whether he would be interested in having a suite of rooms in Richmond Yard for himself and his fellow Ministers in the Department of Education and Science.

2. He asked me to tell the Prime Minister that he was grateful to her for the offer, but that he would not wish to take advantage of it. He would have welcomed the other proposal, to move over, say, 600 or so of the staff of the Department of Education and Science; but he would not want to be a general so far removed from his troops as would be implied by the more restricted proposal.

3. I have to add that the Secretary of State made it clear to me that he shared the Prime Minister's view of the proposal that the Overseas Development Administration should move into Richmond Yard; but he understood why that was a difficult decision to undo in the circumstances.

4. I should add that we have now set up Ministerial and official committees to review the allocation of office accommodation to Government Departments in inner London. The official committee will start its work by reviewing the whole scene: the buildings now available or expected to become available, the demands for accommodation in the area and the present plans and dispositions for movement - including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office refurbishment operation and the

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long-term future of the old Home Office. I hope that as a result of that review it will be possible to report to the Ministerial committee with options and recommendations.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

11 September 1986