

From: Alistair Brown
DAS
6 June 1997

1. PS/Mr McLeish
2. PS/Secretary of State

Copy to: PS/US of S
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Mr R Gordon
Dr Gibbons
Mr Grice
Jim Lonie
Director, InD
Mrs Doig
Mr Andrew
Mr Elder
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*M. Gordon: Smaldons;
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ACCOMMODATION ASPECTS OF A SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

1. In his minute of 2 June, PS/Secretary of State reported on the Secretary of State's discussion with Mr McLeish and officials in Bute House on 1 June about accommodation for a Scottish Parliament, and asked for a paper appraising various alternatives. This is a preliminary response. It lays out broad alternatives as we see them. A further note will follow next week with estimates of the associated costs and timescales, without which of course no recommendation can be made or decision reached.

Assumptions

2. We have assumed in preparing this paper that Ministers will want the Parliament to sit in Edinburgh, as Scotland's capital city. We have also assumed that Ministers would see some advantage from a practical point of view in having the Parliament located reasonably close to one of the main existing Scottish Office buildings (on the assumption that these will in future be occupied by staff of the Scottish Executive) along the lines of the Westminster/Whitehall model with Departmental offices located close enough to Parliament to allow travel on foot.

Alternatives

3. My minute of 20 May examined the combined Old Royal High School/St Andrews House option (the Regent Road option) in some detail, but made clear that there were possible alternatives which had not been investigated in depth. We are now in a position to describe 3 broad alternatives in a little more detail. As noted above costs have not been worked up yet and will follow next week.