

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: September 19, 1967

Subject: Site for Ambassador's Residence

Place: NOVACAP Building, Brasilia

Participants: Nauro Esteves, NOVACAP Coordinator for Architecture

Herbert S. Okun, Political Counselor, Brasilia  
Theodor Franzen, Administrative Officer, Brasilia

**SUBJECT**

Distribution:	AMB	BRAS(4)	Dept: ARA/BR
	DCM	MINECON	O/FBO
	ADMIN	EXEC	
		CF	

1. We called on Esteves to follow up our previous conversation, at which the NOVACAP Chief Architect had offered a plot of land 70x93 meters for the Ambassador's residence. (After this development, Brasilia was informed by the Department that funds were not available to purchase the property that we hoped, and hope, to acquire and Brasilia was requested to seek an exchange of the original site purchased for the Ambassador's residence in 1960 for the proposed new site--see State 26313.)

2. Mr. Okun opened the talk by telling Esteves that, while we much appreciated his efforts, the 70x93 meter plot at the base of the proposed subdivision was not large enough for our Ambassador's residence and that we still wished to acquire the entire plot, which is 93x130 meters. Esteves said that he had no objection to the U. S. Government purchasing the entire plot but that in any case the public road which entered the subdivision would have to remain and that the furthest he could withdraw this road towards the front of this plot would be another 20 meters, i. e. providing us with a 90x93 meter possible plot.

3. A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the need for this road and the reasons why it had to go so far into the future subdivision. Esteves explained that the road was of vital importance to him as architect and overseer of Brasilia's future development, and that it had to go a fair distance into the future subdivision so that the 90x93 meter plot would not overwhelm the smaller plots at the front of the subdivision. Esteves said

that he would have no objection to the U. S. Government building one or two houses on each of the other smaller plots but that these plots could not be part of the Ambassadorial site because this would be out of keeping with the similar subdivisions that were being made in that area near the lake. Esteves said that all of the other 93x130 (approximately) subdivisions would have the public road running down the middle and that if our site differed markedly from the others, the overall nature of the area would be changed and that the plan of Brasilia would be harmed. He said that he was already making a concession to shorten the public road within the subdivision but that he could not pull it back any farther. Therefore the 90x93 meter plot was the largest site he could make available to us.

4. Esteves said that the site we were discussing was a problem because it was not really where the Ambassador's residence ought to be. In answer to our request for possible alternatives, Esteves mentioned three possibilities: (a) the area known as the "chacara" area near the south peninsula. Esteves said that large tracts are available here, but he readily acknowledged that this was not so desirable an area because of its distance from the lake. On the other hand he pointed out that this area is closer to the Embassy section of Brasilia. (b) Esteves said that he thought we could consider a suitable residence for the Ambassador on the land across the road from our present chancery site. He went on to say that he was not sure that this would be possible because it would require Lucio Costa's approval, but that he would recommend this site. (c) The third area that he recommended was at the base of the residential axis (towards the airport), where he said NOVACAP was thinking of opening up a new section near the lake for large private homes. He was not at all sure whether this section would be opened up, and agreed that that section of the lake was not a particularly desirable one.

5. After much discussion of these three alternatives, we returned to the main site under discussion. We explained to Esteves that size and location were essential considerations in choosing the site and that, as he knew, the U. S. Government had purchased more than five years ago a very large and attractive site for the Ambassador's residence only to have that site subsequently rendered unfeasible because of the University's building plans. It was pointed out to Esteves that the site near the University was more than twice the size of the area he was now offering us (90x93) and that our needs were still for something larger.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

6. Esteves was sympathetic to this line of reasoning and, with the blueprint that we had brought with us of the proposed site in front of him, began to seek some ways to enlarge our proposed site. He still maintained that he could not increase the site at the front, i. e. towards the road, but he said he thought it might be possible to expand the width of the site and perhaps to move it closer to the lake shore. After calling in several of his assistants, Esteves said there would be no problem in increasing the width from 93 to 100 meters and that he thought it would be possible to expand the site on the lake side. He said that he was not sure how much land there was between the projected base of the site and the lake front. Mr. Okun asked whether it would be possible for Esteves's people to check this out as soon as possible and Esteves said it would be easy to do so. He said that within a week or so he would be able to tell us how much land was available towards the lake, but that he was reasonably sure that at least another 10 meters would be available which would give us a 100x100 meter plot. The proposed road at the front of the plot, however, would remain. Mr. Okun asked whether it would be possible, if the soil on the lake side permitted, to think in terms of going right down to the lake shore, and whether we could now think in terms of at least 100x100 meters being available to us in the subdivision. Esteves did not reply to the first point but was affirmative on the second.

7. Our discussion ended at this point with mutual expressions of confidence that a suitable solution would be found. We arranged to be in touch next week to learn the results of the survey regarding the amount of land available between the present base of the subdivision and the lake front.

8. Comment: Our talk which lasted for about an hour and a quarter was friendly and Esteves seemed more relaxed and forthcoming than usual. In response to our question regarding the price of the land, Esteves said that he had nothing to do with setting the price for residential land, that this was done by the Economic Department of NOVACAP. It is just as well that we could not discuss price with Esteves since, even if he had offered us the entire subdivision, we are not at present in a position to buy it.

9. We are still reasonably confident that a suitable plot for the Ambassador's future residence can be obtained in this subdivision--either the entire subdivision, or enough of it to provide an attractive, unencumbered plot. The impasse over the public road should not be considered an insuperable obstacle. Our chief problem is likely to be the availability of funds to purchase the site, if and when it is offered.

HSOkun:mjm:9-20-67 *HO*

Concurrence: ADMIN:TTFranzen