

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1203	Press
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252-254		
Dated	28-7-	1863
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Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
28th July 1863.*

Read the following papers:—

No. 252. From J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector General of Jails; to A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint George, dated Vizagapatam, on Circuit, 20th April 1863, No. 955.

I have the honor to forward a letter from Mr. Grant, Collector of Coimbatore, forwarding a letter from some of the residents proposing that the Central Jail to be built at that station shall be moved from the spot selected to some other spot, which, from the description, must be near Mr. Ward's house. If this is the locality selected I have no objection to it, but I should think Mr. Ward would object to it.

2. The Jail should, in my opinion, be in a healthy place between the town (Court House) and Railway. I never before heard any objection to the site selected.

From P. GRANT, Esq., Collector and Magistrate of Coimbatore; to J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector General of Jails, dated Ootacamund, 8th April 1863, No. 82.

1. I beg to forward for your consideration a copy of a letter to my address from the European residents of Coimbatore, bringing to prominent notice the permanent injury likely to be inflicted on the station by the erection of the Central Jail on the site selected by you when last at Coimbatore, and pointing out another site which they consider possesses all the advantages of the one alluded to, without any of its disadvantages.

2. In the arguments advanced in favor of the new site I myself coincide; you may remember that I mentioned it to you, but that you did not approve of it, on account of the probable difficulty that might be experienced in procuring water, and the distance from the Railway Station, whereby the expense of the carriage of materials brought by train would be enhanced. At first you proposed to erect the Jail on a site in that part of the station called the Race Course, to this I objected most strongly; you then fixed on the site now under reference, and I withdrew any further objection, as of two evils I considered it the least, at the same time thought it very likely that the other European residents would think that their comfort and future sanitary condition had not received that consideration to which they were entitled. At the time you fixed on the site I was under the impression that the prevailing wind blew from the north-east. I have since learnt that it comes from a point east and by north, which will for many months of the year subject the residences of the Europeans and the Natives of Coimbatore, to the influence of any malaria or contagious disease in the Jail, in addition to the obvious nuisance which must be experienced at night when the air breathed has been blown over a building occupied by a 1,000 or more Convicts. Had the prevailing course of the wind been north-east, Mr. Stanes' houses and that in which I myself reside, would have been liable to the evils above alluded to, but a course east and by north brings the whole station, European and Native, within their influence. I trust that this subject may receive your early consideration, for, it would be a serious evil, from want of due forethought, to run the risk even of ruining the healthiest low country station in Southern India, a station so healthy indeed that Invalids are frequently sent from the Hills to it for the benefit of their health.

3. This subject might have been brought to your notice earlier, but your presence in Coimbatore was looked for, when it was hoped that things might have been represented to you personally; the Engineer has now, however, taken possession of the site, so that an immediate decision of the question becomes necessary.

From the European Inhabitants of Coimbatore; to P. GRANT, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, dated Coimbatore, 30th March 1863.

We the undersigned European inhabitants of Coimbatore, beg to request your earnest attention to the question of the site of the proposed new Gaol ere long to be built here.

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2. The site fixed upon by Mr. Rohde, as you know, is about east and by north of the centre of the Race Course (an oval of about one and a half miles in circumference, around which are built about all the European houses of the station) and at a distance of about 500 yards from the east extremity of the course.

3. During quite six months of the year, i. e., from the early part of October to the latter part of April, this quarter (east and by north) is not only the prevailing quarter of the wind, but almost the only quarter from which the wind blows. The Gaol parallelogram being about quarter of a mile square, it follows that for six months of the year, the six months during which epidemic and infectious diseases are most rife in Coimbatore, almost the whole of the wind passing over the European quarter of town, would first pass over the Gaol, and would come laden with what ever happened to be the prevailing aroma of the 1,000 inmates of the Gaol at the time.

4. This is no exaggerated statement, and we must press upon you the question whether the probable injury to the health of the European inhabitants of what has been hitherto reputed one of the healthiest stations in the south of India is not a very serious objection to the placing of the Gaol on its proposed site.

5. There is another site to the north of the town, in the angle included by the Avenashy and Suttimungalum roads, which is free from all objections on this score. The north-east wind passing over the Gaol would blow perfectly clear of all houses either Native or European, and the south-west would also blow clear away from the town all the vapour of the Gaol. The land of this site is the highest in the neighbourhood (higher than Mr. Rohde's site). It is waste ground never cultivated; water is easily obtainable, and is, as shown by experience (all the Europeans getting their drinking water from a well near the site) the best in, or near, Coimbatore. It is distant about 500 to 600 yards from the town, and the new Police lines are almost the nearest buildings to it, the amount of land available is almost unlimited. Its distance from the Railway station is about the same as Mr. Rohde's site, at most is not half a mile greater.

6. Mr. Rohde's site is not low, but still it is much lower than the north site. The whole of the land is under cultivation and must be bought. The nearest wells show that water is not to be found until a great depth is reached, and is, then, rather scanty (so far as can be judged from the only two wells in the neighbourhood). The distance from the Police lines is from one and a quarter to one and a half miles. There is no road at present to the site from any side, and land (all cultivated) will have to be taken up for each approach.

7. It is not difficult to sum up. In every particular, without one exception, Mr. Rohde's is the inferior site, and the first reason urged, which is, to speak plainly, the one most immediately concerning us is, we are of opinion, of quite sufficient weight to induce earnest reconsideration if not the immediate abandonment of the site proposed by Mr. Rohde.

8. We would beg your immediate attention. Since Mr. Rohde is desirous, we believe, of beginning the work at once.

9. We have every reason to hope that yourself will, on going into the question, be disposed thoroughly to endorse the opinion we have expressed and give our objection your strenuous support, in forwarding it to the proper quarter. We have omitted to bring forward any arguments to show that the close proximity of a Gaol must necessarily be objectionable, taking it for granted that it will be denied by hardly any one, that a Gaol, in the plains of India, for 1,000 Native Convicts must be, more or less certainly, a nuisance. Nor have we dwelt on the fact that the Convicts would necessarily be continually passing and re-passing along the Race Course road, which has hitherto been a great source of health to us all. Affording as it does a drive and walk close to our houses, and that their presence would, practically, drive us away.

10. We cannot be putting the case too strongly in saying that, if we granted a preference (which we utterly deny) on the part of Mr. Rohde's site over the other, simply for Gaol purposes, carrying out Mr. Rohde's wish would be merely preferring the comfort and health of the criminal dregs of the population, to those of that part of the population, which practically stands the highest both in rank and character.

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11. Many of our number are absent from Coimbatore, but we are assured of their support if they were present.

(Signed) C. G. WALKER,
(") E. W. OGG,
(") P. A. COLE,
(") R. J. LOURY,
(") S. JONES,
(") R. STANES,
(") T. H. L. GORDON,
(") D. H. TRAIL,
(") J. MICHAEL.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) P. GRANT,
Collector.

No. 253. From P. GRANT, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore; to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Coimbatore, 19th June 1863, No. 52.

On the 4th of April last, I received from the European residents of this station a Memorial against the site of the new Coimbatore Jail fixed on by Mr. Rohde. On the 8th of the same month, it was forwarded to Mr. Rohde with my own observations; but up to the present date no notice of it has been taken. I therefore deem it my duty to place copies of the Memorial and my letter to Mr. Rohde before Government, in order that the matter may receive that consideration which it appears to me, it deserves. The late outbreak of Cholera in the Salem Jail shows that the subject should be well considered in all its bearing ere a step is taken, which may ruin one of the finest low country station in Southern India. The site chosen by Mr. Rohde has been marked out and a well commenced by Convict labor, but beyond this, no expense has, I believe, been incurred, and I would recommend that no money be laid out until the order of Government in favor of or against the prayer of the Memorial is passed.

OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM

The Inspector General of Jails has reason to believe that the Government desire to accede to the wishes of the residents of Coimbatore in respect of the site of the Jail as communicated by the Magistrate in his letter of the 8th April 1863, No. 82.

In submitting this letter to Government, the Inspector General stated that he had no objection to offer to the change proposed, namely, as he understood it, the placing of the Jail behind Mr. Ward's house in the direction of Suttimungalum, but that this proposal had not hitherto been subscribed by Mr. Ward, whose property was nearest to the site.

In making this reference the Inspector General did not consider the objections of the residents well founded, but he did not think the objections to the giving up of the site originally selected paramount.

Mr. Ward having stated that he has no objection to the site now selected which extends to the cross road to the north of Mr. Ward's house, it rests with the Collector, should the Government accede to the request of the residents, notified by the Magistrate, to secure the necessary ground which should extend to the Suttimungalum road to the east, the cross road to the north and so far to the west and south as would prevent the erection of any building within 200 yards of the Jail.

A suitable piece of land for a burial place, and for discharging the filth of the Jail should be provided at a distance of 400 yards from the Jail.

In the absence of any order of Government on Mr. Grant's letter nothing more definite can be arranged at present.

(Signed) J. ROHDE,
Inspector General of Jails.

COIMBATORE, 11th July 1863.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
28th July 1863.*

No. 254.

ORDER THEREON, 28th July 1863, No. 203.

The Governor in Council has no objection to the proposed alteration in the site of the Central Jail about to be erected at Coimbatore.

2. The site in question, which is a few hundred yards to the north of Mr. Ward's house, in an open and healthy situation, has been visited by the Inspector General of Jails since his return from the Northern Circars and that Officer considers it suitable. The Medical Officer is of the same opinion, and Mr. Ward, whose house is the only one near it, does not object to the Jail being built on it.

3. Orders will accordingly be issued in the Department of Public Works for the adoption of the site in question in lieu of that which has been marked out to the east of the Race Course.

(Signed) A. J. ARBUTHNOT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. T. McMootry.

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Judicial Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

*Read the following
Letters.*

From the Ins. Genl. of Jails - 18. 20. April 1863.

Collector of Coimbatore - 19 June -

Order thereon 28th July 1863. No. 1203.

*MM
RM*

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W. R.

North of P. W.
S. Genl. of Jail

3 Aug 29

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சுருக்கப்படுகிறது.

Section 186 Department.

No. 203.

PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNMENT,

Dated 28 Aug 1873.

The site of the
Jail at Pondicherry, the
east of the Prison, towards
the north of the road
house.

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