

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE HON
MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

Art Gallery at St. John's Square, Valletta.

A request has been made from Mr. G. Diacono on behalf of The Gallery of 6, St. John's Square, Valletta for the lease by direct allocation of half the basement underneath the Arcades in St. John's Square, Valletta.

Mr. Diacono's request for a direct allocation is based -

- (i) on his claim that his family were not given equivalent alternative accommodation when their shop and house in St. John's Street were taken over for the incorporation in the "St. John" Scheme, and
- (ii) that access to this underground cellar could only be through his shop or through one of the other tenements on the South side of the Square - and therefore this would not be a case were a public call for tenders can be issued.

Director of Public Works has no objection to applicant's request provided the proposed underground art Gallery is constructed outside the arches and beneath the site enclosed by dotted blue line with access from Tent. No. 3216 shop 6 as shown at the attached Plan No. 1H/727.

If the request is granted, the Director of Public Works recommends the following conditions:-

1. The lease of the site will only be given for the construction of an underground gallery i.e. with no right whatever to make use of the area at square level.

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2. That the roof of the underground is to be so constructed as to withstand the heavy traffic to which the area is subjected. The car park is to remain.

3. That any disturbance to the shops in the area during the works will have to be the responsibility of the grantee.

4. That detailed plans and sections will have to be submitted for my approval before the works are started.

5. That any damage caused to Government property will have to be made good by and at the grantee's expense.

6. That Government property where disturbed will have to be reinstated to its present state.

7. That the grantee shall have no right to transfer the lease without your written approval.

The questions to be decided upon are:-

a) whether we should lease the underground cellar in question by direct allocation to Mr. Diacono. The nature of the lease would necessarily have to be for not less than, say, 16 years in view of the fact that he will have to incur considerable expense, "inter alia", to clear up the underground cellar which, I have been given to understand, is blocked with material, and to construct a roof of the necessary strength to bear the weight of the heavy traffic in the square, or

b) whether the request should be refused.

6th May, 1969.