

Memorandum for Cabinet by the Minister of Works
and Housing

Re-erection of the Law Courts.

Draft Plans for the re-erection of the Law Courts on their old site in Kingsway are ready and tenders may be issued in a relatively short time.

Before finalizing the plans, however, it must be decided whether the Law Courts building should occupy the present bare site or incorporate in addition the "Savoy Theatre" building and underlying shops.

The acquisition of the Savoy site would ease the problem of accommodating the Law Courts and related departments as the present bare site is rather restricted. It would help in providing a more noble and imposing building and the extra works would provide additional employment. However, according to P.W.D. estimates, acquisition alone would cost more than £200,000 and its development and equipment would bring the total additional figure required to nearly £500,000. Part of this additional cost would of course be for actual works, but this would in this case be about £100,000.

Hon. Ministers are asked to say whether the finalization of the plans of the Law Courts should be proceeded with or whether new plans should be drawn up to cover the existing bare site together with the area occupied by the Savoy Theatres. In the latter case, as radical replanning and distribution of accommodation would be necessary, more time will have to elapse before the re-erection of the Law Courts can be taken up in earnest. Although from the national, aesthetic, accommodation and practical aspects, the desirability of having one large block for the Law Courts cannot be denied, very careful consideration must be given to the political, apart from the financial implications involved. In this time of financial stress, it may be very hard to obtain the additional amount required, which would probably exceed that available for the implementation of the project as it is now.

A third alternative would be to erect the Law Courts on the clear site now, and if at any future time it is decided to acquire the Savoy buildings, a Government block would be erected conforming aesthetically and architecturally with the Law Court Buildings.

12th January, 1963.
