

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE HON. MINISTER OF WORKS & HOUSINGPassenger Shelter at Kingsgate Bus Terminus

The passenger shelter at the Kingsgate Bus Terminus was erected in 1951. The shelter on the Sliema side of the terminus collapsed on the 3rd December, 1951 and had to be rebuilt entirely: the causes for the failure were never clearly and definitely established. The structure on the Cottonera side was built to the same designs and in all probability to the same standards as the original shelter on the Sliema side.

At the beginning of the year 1964, cracks began to show in the columns carrying the roof slab and the roof slab itself started to flake badly with the result that the steel reinforcement became totally exposed in places and started rusting. In order to obviate the possibility of further damage and even of collapse, five out of fourteen bays in the shelter on the Cottonera side were shored up between the 21st January and the 14th February, 1964. Requests have been received for the removal of this shoring which is an eyesore.

The first reports submitted to the Director of Public Works by his engineers was that the condition of the structure was such as to require complete demolition. Because of the public reaction to such a step, the Director had the structure examined repeatedly in the hope that a way would be found to repair the shelter and leave it in place. The Director of Public Works now reports, however, that the damage is too advanced and too extensive to make a repair job worth while and he recommends that the structure be demolished.

Such a step is bound to cause a public outcry and the possibility has been examined of carrying out this operation as part of the replanning of the area. The idea is to return to the original scheme for the Kingsgate terminus - suitably modified - to allow for segregation of bus traffic from traffic entering or leaving Valletta. Such a scheme would cost about £70,000. It would provide for the construction of a grade crossing underneath the prolongation of Kingsgate and for 1,100 feet of Departure platforms and 250 feet of Arrival platforms: this would correspond to 27 departure and 6 arrival buses. The present footage of combined departure and arrival platforms is about 1,500. A drawing No. R.D. 91D/64 which is largely diagrammatic is attached. This drawing should be considered as tentative as considerably more study and work will have to be put in before a final scheme is drawn up. The implementation of the scheme would be a vast improvement on the present set-up but there is some hesitation in proposing it not only because of the large sum of money involved but also because replanning in the area was carried out very recently.

It has been suggested that the passenger shelter is not used much first because waiting queues are never long and second because the openness of the structure makes it only slightly effective as a shelter. It has been further suggested that the removal of the present shelter would not be a real loss to the public but that on the other hand its loss would be felt far more than its presence.

The demolition of the Cottonera side structure and the reconstruction of the shelter would cost around £7,000. This would include the cost of erecting a small waiting room for bus drivers and conductors.

The Cabinet is requested to decide:-

- (a) whether to demolish and reconstruct the structure on the Cottonera side;
- (b) whether to remove the present structure and await development of a possible replanning of the area before re-erecting the shelter.

16th February, 1965.

MWH 23/62.