

Memorandum for Cabinet by the Hon. Minister of Education, Culture and Tourism on the restoration of Pinto and Forni Stores.

Since January, 1959, repeated requests were made by the Director of Public Works for the demolition of the Pinto and Forni Stores and their re-erection on a different plan to provide additional accommodation for bonded stores for which no alternative site in the harbour is available.

2. The Director of Public Works and the Customs Authorities contend that the stores in their present state are unsuitable for the loading and unloading of merchandise and recommend that the interior of the building be re-modelled and that the existing exterior doors be widened to allow the passage of large trucks through these doors. It was also stated that proposed works would reduce considerably handling expenses of merchandise in and out of the stores.
3. The question of the adaptation of Pinto and Forni Stores as modern storage accommodation was considered by the Antiquities Committee at several sittings.
4. The Committee were not averse to the re-modelling of the interior of the stores but insisted that the facade including the exterior doors should not be interfered with. They also recommended that the interior of one of the stores and the oil vats at the back of same be preserved.
5. In the opinion of the Antiquities Committee these stores are very important both from the antiquarian as well as from the archaeological point of view. Unesco and the Council of Europe are advocating the preservation and rehabilitation of groups and areas of buildings of historic or artistic interest and since the two buildings in question, Pinto and Forni Stores, constitute one historic ensemble it is felt that nothing should be done which could diminish in any way this cultural heritage. The Minister of Education, Culture and Tourism who had occasion to visit the place agrees with the views of the Antiquities Committee and with those of the Director of Museum that the facade should remain intact and at the time of the visit last year the then Comptroller of Customs (Mr. R. Soler) and the Public Works Department representatives seemed satisfied with the arrangements suggested by the Director of Museum.
6. The Hon. Ministers are therefore asked to agree to the recommendations at para 4 above.

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27th September, 1968.