

MEMORANDUM TO CABINET BY THE HON MINISTER OF PUBLIC
BUILDING AND WORKS

Erection of a hotel at Qbajjar, M'Forn, Gozo

An application has been received for the erection of a luxury hotel with over 300 bedrooms, conference hall, restaurant, swimming pool, etc. at Qbajjar, Marsalforn, Gozo.

The site lies just outside the tourist development scheme as can be seen from the enclosed copy of plan.

The Town Planning Board feel that since the site lies outside the area zoned for development, the application should not be accepted. This attitude is understandable as the extension of the Master Plan to include this area is bound to lead to other extensions elsewhere and it would be very difficult to know where to stop.

The United Nations Physical Planning Adviser on the other hand considers that it was only the unsuitability of the site - as regards topography and soil structure - that led him to exclude this area from the development zone. As the applicants seem confident of overcoming the structural difficulties and as the area is of very low agricultural value, Mr Sieckowski would "see no objection on planning grounds to the inclusion of the site in the tourists development zone." In fact, he feels that "the proposed hotel may provide a strong and significant architectural feature, which will 'finish off' the coastal development strip."

The solution proposed by the developers is certainly very clever and is clearly designed to integrate the structure to the site as far as possible. It could be said, in fact, that the architect has proposed a structural skull cap for this low bill. The breaking of the building into several masses each receding

in plan and in elevation shows a sensitiveness for the landscape and should ensure the integration of the building into the hill rather than clash with it.

The fact remains, however, that the site lies outside - even if only just - the developable zone. The site coverage is also very high and the size of the building is larger than the general scale of buildings in Gozo and so goes against one of the principles of the Gozo Plan which sets out to respect as far as possible the rather diminutive scale of the island; of its natural features and of its buildings.

The erection of this hotel would make a very significant contribution to the tourist potential of Gozo.

Hon. Ministers are requested to decide whether this application should be considered further and permit issued.

3rd June, 1969.