

**ISSUES BY THE KAMRA TAL-PERITI
NEW TOURISM TRAINING INSTITUTE AT THE QALA PRIMARY SCHOOL -
GOZO**

The *Kamra tal-Periti (KTP)* would like to express its concern regarding the recent announcement in the local press of the proposed demolition of a large part of the Qala Primary School in Gozo to make way for a new Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) campus in Gozo.

Over the past few months, *the KTP* has tried to highlight to the Ministries concerned and to MEPA that the Qala School complex is a unique structure worthy of consideration as part of Malta's built heritage.

The School was designed and built in the early 1960s when, following the introduction of the 1946 Education Act, an attempt was made to provide a school in all our towns and villages. Designed by Joseph Huntingford (1926-1994), a Maltese architect employed by Government, the school is one of the finest examples of modern architecture on the islands. Joseph Huntingford was also responsible for the design and construction of some of the most important government schools in Gozo between 1950 and 1961.



Exceptional in its layout, the Qala school comprises a series of finger blocks perpendicular to the street, linked by open covered walkways, the classrooms organized on two storeys with their own resource room, and open courtyards. The finger blocks are separated by landscaped gardens.

In the proposals shown to the *KTP*, a large portion of the school is to be sacrificed to make way for the new ITS training facility. A new single storey block will replace more than half of this modernist landmark, the new intervention bearing no relation to the existing design.

The *KTP* had offered its free assistance on the project, and had suggested alternatives which would have safeguarded a large part of the complex. Within MEPA itself, the Heritage Advisory Committee, and the Integrated Heritage Management Team had also advised that the existing building ought to be retained as part of our artistic heritage. They recommended that it be restored and adapted to accommodate the new use. Regrettably MEPA ultimately gave in to pressures, and approved the proposals.

The *KTP* strongly believes that the uniqueness of the Qala school is worth acknowledging, and that it is truly disappointing no effort has been made to restore the property rather than demolish a large part of it. It furthermore supports the idea of the new facility being housed in a restored Qala school, a building of true character and a tangible manifestation of the ingenuity of local post-war design.

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President KTP