

Barrakka lift application to be decided on Thursday

by Noel Grima

The long-awaited Barrakka lift application is due to be heard and decided upon by the Mepa board next Thursday.

The application is for the “construction of (a) vertical transportation system connecting Lascaris Ditch and Upper Barrakka Garden, (the) embellishment of Lascaris Ditch, (the) demolition of (the) NSO building within (the) ditch, (the) embellishment of (the) area in front of the Old Customs House”.

When it was first announced, the lift had a post-modern appearance that seems to have clashed with the opinions of people in Mepa’s fortifications and heritage committees who considered it too futuristic to blend with the historic fortifications.

The lift had to be entirely re-designed. Ministry officials and on at least one occasion Minister Austin Gatt himself, were heard voicing their exasperation at the delay since the construction of the lift is deemed essential for the re-establishment of Grand Harbour as the preferred mode of transport from people in the Grand Harbour area to Valletta, as used to be the case when the lift was in use pre-1972. No images of the newly designed lift have been made public and it will be on Thursday that the public will get a glimpse of them.

Other items to be decided on Thursday include an application for the upgrading of the existing bus terminus at Victoria, Gozo, including an administration building, landscaping and a lightweight canopy.

Still in the pipeline are applications for the redesigned public bus terminus at Valletta and for the re-design of the entire area outside City Gate including that around the Tritons fountain and The Mall. The application regarding the bus terminus is particularly urgent because of the impending public transport reform, sources told this paper.

Three items being also decided on Thursday regard schools: one application is for the demolition of an existing building and the construction of a new school at Tal-Handaq; another is for the addition of sports facilities to complement the new school at Ta’ Zokrijain Mosta and

to change the use of a farmhouse there to educational purposes, while a third application is for the construction of a car park and access roads at the Mikiel Anton Vassalli Junior Lyceum at Tal-Handaq.

One final item to be decided on Thursday regards the proposed construction of a kiosk at Xatt ir-Risq in Vittoriosa.

The list of new construction applications listed on yesterday's issue of this paper's sister daily includes an application for the construction of an old people's home at Triq Qrejten, Hamrun, as well as an application 'to construct a lightweight walkway within and directly outside the Ggantija Temples to provide universal accessibility to the temples while aiding in their preservation and permitting maximum enjoyment of areas of particular interest.
