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Old Putirjal bridge to be incorporated in the Piano design

The old bridge that led to the former Porta Reale (Putirjal), before the entrance and the bridge were widened in the 1960s, will form part of the new Piano design for Valletta's entrance.

The old bridge is still there, enclosed inside the 1960s bridge and could easily be recovered.

Minister Austin Gatt told the media last Friday that Renzo Piano did not know about the existence of the old bridge when he presented his controversial plans for the Valletta entrance 20 years ago. Now that he knows the bridge is still there, he is eager to incorporate it in his new design.

A bomb fell through the bridge during World War II and blew a hole in its middle, and even this could still be traced, it is said.

Giving the lie to speculation that the government came up with the Piano plan, which has been almost universally welcomed by so many bodies, to shift attention away from the current problems faced by the government, it was also revealed that Prime Minister Gonzi and Minister Gatt visited Mr Piano at his Paris workshop some weeks ago.

It seems that when Mr Piano was tentatively approached some years ago to re-present his plans, he was rather sceptic and reluctant. This time, however, at least according to Dr Gatt, he is very eager to do it.

It also seems that his views on Freedom Square would be to create an open space for drama and entertainment to complement the surrounding bastions and the new Parliament house.
