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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

*Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*

## REPORT

relating to the proposed construction of

# ADDITIONAL STOREHOUSE BUILDING

at

## STORES DEPOT Tottenham, Victoria

(THIRD REPORT OF 1970)

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

ADDITIONAL STOREHOUSE BUILDING AT  
STORES DEPOT, TOTTENHAM, VICTORIA

R E P O R T

On 6 February 1970, His Excellency the Governor-General in Council referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report to the Parliament the proposal for the construction of an additional storehouse building at the Stores Depot, Tottenham, Victoria.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows:

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

1. Written submissions were received from the Departments of Supply and Works and we took evidence from representatives of these departments at a public hearing in Melbourne. An inspection was made of the stores buildings of the Department of Supply in the Melbourne area, at Brooklyn, Maribyrnong and Tottenham, as well as of the site for the proposed building at Tottenham.

THE PROPOSAL

2. The proposal referred to the Committee is for the erection of a single storey storehouse building measuring 480 ft by 244 ft and having a clear inside height of 20 ft. It also includes an extension of the standard gauge railway spur line to the storehouse.

3. The facilities are to be constructed on Commonwealth land as part of a complex of stores operated by the Department of Supply.

4. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$960,000.

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY STORES IN MELBOURNE

5. The Department of Supply through its Stores and Transport Branch, holds materials, machine tools and intermediate and final products appropriate to its role in the provision and manufacture of aircraft and munitions for the Services. In its additional role as the central storage authority for the Commonwealth, it is also responsible for holding stores on deposit for other Commonwealth departments and authorities and for the operation of disposal depots for the sale by auction of goods no longer required by the Commonwealth.

6. The Stores and Transport Branch has three stores depots in the Melbourne area, exclusive of special explosive and chemical storage facilities. The depots on Commonwealth land are at Maribyrnong and Tottenham and there is a third depot at Brooklyn, which is rented from the Australian Wool Board. The three depots have a combined gross storage capacity of about 9.8 million cubic ft.

7. Stores Depot, Brooklyn The rented buildings at Brooklyn are of timber framed construction with fibro cement sheathed walls. The main items stored are departmental strategic stocks of raw rubber and sundry deposit stocks held for other departments including paper and scientific equipment.

8. Fire protection is limited to hoses and fire extinguishers and a thermal alarm system connected to the nearest fire station about four miles away. The Commonwealth Fire Board has recommended that buildings used for storing rubber have a sprinkler system with double the normal number of sprinkler heads. However, such an installation at Brooklyn is not considered to be economical, particularly as the buildings are rented. It is therefore planned, in the long

term, to transfer the stocks of rubber to be held in Melbourne to the Tottenham depot. Storehouses 2 and 3 at Tottenham are to be provided with the recommended fire protection measures for this purpose.

9. Furthermore, as the storehouses at Brooklyn are only 60 ft apart, they do not comply with the Fire Board's recommendations for a minimum clearance of 100 ft between individual buildings and 150 ft between each group of three buildings.

10. Stores Depot, Tottenham The Stores Depot at Tottenham, which occupies 52 acres of Commonwealth-owned land some six miles west of the city, is being developed as the main Department of Supply storage centre in the Melbourne area. Existing storage accommodation comprises seven large storehouses and ten small Nissen huts with a total gross storage capacity of about 2.7 million cubic ft. Some 20 to 30 public auctions of goods and vehicles are conducted at the depot each year. The Department of Supply's Heavy Transport Depot is located nearby at the corner of Ballarat Road and Ashley Street.

11. The depot is served by both broad and standard rail spur lines and is the point of receipt and movement by rail to the Munitions Filling Factory at St. Marys, New South Wales, of ammunition components produced by the nearby Department of Supply factories at Maribyrnong and Footscray. It is also the point of despatch of Army combat rations and other food supplies to Sydney and Brisbane.

12. Some 4,000 tons of ammunition components and 3,400 tons of combat rations and food supplies are despatched each year by standard gauge rail from the depot. Existing storage and platform space is inadequate and we saw evidence that this has forced the Department to adopt unsatisfactory storage

practices such as stacking in aisles. We noted also that there is a need for additional storage and platform space to provide the minimum capacity that might be required in an emergency.

13. Total Storage Requirement Of the 9.8 million cubic ft of gross storage capacity available at the three Melbourne depots, only 500,000 cubic ft or about 5% is at present unoccupied.

14. As a result of a detailed departmental survey of stored material and future requirements of storage, it is expected that there will be a need for an additional 5% to 10% of space over and above that currently available, in the next ten years. This forecast takes account of the continued introduction of modern storage aids and practices such as pallets and pallet racking.

15. The conclusion drawn from the assessment is that if the Commonwealth is to vacate the stores at Brooklyn, the space needs to be duplicated elsewhere and some provision made for future requirements.

16. The basis for the current proposal is therefore the provision of a storehouse at Tottenham which will, in effect, replace the unsatisfactory accommodation at Brooklyn and augment the rail facilities there. The land available at Tottenham would permit a further building to be erected in the future if the need arises.

#### THE NEED

17. Apart from the direct saving in rental of \$53,200 per annum if the Commonwealth vacates the Brooklyn stores, we noted that economies in the employment of staff, administration, transport costs and running expenses, are expected to save around \$62,000 per annum.

18. The Committee were informed that lack of security of tenure of rented space is a serious drawback of the Brooklyn premises.

19. It was clear that Brooklyn stores are poorly constructed, are unsatisfactory for the application of modern storage methods and although well maintained were only temporary when built almost 30 years ago. We can well understand the apprehension of the Commonwealth Fire Board at the fire risk associated with the continued storage there of valuable Commonwealth property.

20. The other important factor giving rise to the current proposal is the inadequacy of the railway transport facilities at Tottenham, including storage and platform space and the need to improve this situation. It is relevant that Brooklyn is not served by rail.

21. For these reasons, the Committee concluded that

- there is a need for a new major storehouse in the Melbourne area served by rail transport facilities, to replace the rented stores at Brooklyn; and
- the Tottenham stores depot is a suitable location for the erection of the new storehouse.

#### THE SITE

22. The Department of Supply stores at Tottenham adjoin the R.A.A.F. Stores Depot, road access being from the north from Beechley Street. Rail access is by means of a spur line from the main Melbourne/Sydney standard gauge line and the Victorian broad gauge line which run along the southern boundary.

23. The site for the proposed new storehouse is at the western end of the area adjacent to stores 2 and 3. Space for a future additional store is reserved adjoining the western boundary fence.

DESIGN

24. The Requirement In general terms, the requirement is for a storehouse with a floor area of some 117,000 sq. ft and a cubic content of 2.34 million cubic ft. A building of these dimensions will provide 600,000 cubic ft less than is available at Brooklyn but will be designed to allow maximum use of its total capacity and the implementation of modern storage techniques, including pallets, pallet racking, container pallets, containers and special purpose fork lift trucks. By comparison, the Brooklyn stores are not well designed from a storage viewpoint and do not permit the efficient use of space.

25. The proposed building, because of its better design, will not only replace the Brooklyn premises but also provide the additional storage required at the Tottenham rail terminal.

26. Outline The new storehouse will measure 480 ft by 244 ft with a clear height under the roof trusses of 20 ft. The long axis of the building runs north and south. The covered platform at the southern end will be 16 ft wide with the roof extending over the rail track nearest the platform.

27. Internally, columns will be minimised consistent with economical construction, for efficient storage. Natural light and ventilation will be provided by translucent panels and exhaust ventilators in the roof. Inlet ventilators will be in the walls. Vehicular entrances will be provided in both end and side walls and personnel doors adjacent to the main doors in the side walls.

CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS

28. Foundations to walls and columns will be reinforced concrete strip and spread footings respectively, bearing directly on rock or on firm clay. The floor will be a reinforced concrete slab on compacted fill, designed to take fork lift and transport vehicle loadings.



29. The roof will be galvanised steel ribbed decking on steel purlins supported on tubular steel roof trusses framed into steel stanchions for optimum economy of structure. External walls will be galvanised metal sheeting over a brick dado wall 7 ft high.

30. The store office will be lined with plaster board above the external brick dado wall and partitions will be glazed above 3 ft. The brick partition walls to toilets and locker rooms will be finished with tiles and struck brickwork respectively. Ceilings will be plaster board.

31. The Committee were told that it was proposed that the vehicle access doors in the end and side walls be 14 ft high. Whilst an entrance this high would admit most loads, there could be difficulties with over-size or unusually high loads. As higher doorways up to 18 ft can be provided at no extra cost, we recommend that this course of action be followed.

#### ENGINEERING SERVICES

32. Roads and Earthworks The existing roads in the depot are to be extended to provide all-round access to the new store and the railway siding. Nature strips, islands and other areas affected by earthworks will be grassed.

33. Electrical Services The existing reticulation within the depot will be extended to the new building. Internally, services will include power outlets and fluorescent lighting. Externally, quartz iodide security lighting will be provided.

34. Hydraulic Services Water and sewerage services will be extensions of the existing mains. An improved water supply for fire fighting purposes is to be provided by new 9 in. and 6 in. supply mains and a 6 in. ring main around

the building. A ground level reinforced concrete storage tank of 150,000 gallons capacity is to be constructed for additional water storage for fire fighting purposes. This water will be pumped by two diesel electric pumps of 3,000 gallons per minute combined capacity which will be located in a brick pump house adjacent to the storage tank.

35. Fire Protection To comply with the requirements of the Commonwealth Fire Board, a sprinkler system is to be installed with drenchers dividing the store into three equal parts. Other fire protection devices will include smoke curtains, automatic heat and smoke ventilation, manual fire alarms and an indicator board in the guardhouse and external hydrants on the ring main.

36. Railway The extension of the 4 ft 8½ in. standard gauge spur railway line to the covered loading platform at the southern end of the new store will accord with the requirements of the Victorian Railways Department.

37. The Committee examined the possibility of extending the broad gauge spur line to the new storehouse and were told that at this stage there would be no use for such a line because the traffic from it is almost entirely to New South Wales on the standard gauge line.

38. We noted, however, that in an emergency a broad gauge extension to the new building could be an advantage. On enquiry we found that at an extra cost of \$15,000 provision could be made now so that the broad gauge connection could be built at short notice should the need arise. To construct the complete broad gauge extension now would cost a total of \$45,000.

39. The Committee recommend that at an estimated extra cost of \$15,000 the current proposal should include the work required to facilitate the provision later of a broad gauge rail connection to the new storehouse.

40. Committee's Recommendation Subject to the other recommendations in this report, the Committee recommend the construction of the work in this reference.

ESTIMATE OF COST

41. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$960,000 as follows:

	\$
Building works	498,000
Engineering and other services	462,000
	960,000

PROGRAMME

42. The Committee noted that after an approval to proceed is given, six months will be required to complete contract documents, invite tenders and let a contract. Construction of the work is expected to then occupy nine months.


RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

43. The summary of recommendations and conclusions of the Committee is set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers.

	<u>Paragraph</u>
1. THERE IS A NEED FOR A NEW MAJOR STOREHOUSE IN THE MELBOURNE AREA SERVED BY RAIL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.	21
2. THE TOTTENHAM STORES DEPOT IS A SUITABLE LOCATION FOR THE ERECTION OF THE NEW STOREHOUSE.	21

Paragraph

3. THE HEIGHT OF THE VEHICLE ACCESS DOORWAYS SHOULD  
BE 18 FT. 31
4. THE CURRENT PROPOSAL SHOULD INCLUDE THE WORK  
REQUIRED TO FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF A BROAD  
GAUGE RAIL CONNECTION TO THE NEW STOREHOUSE. THE  
EXTRA COST IS ESTIMATED AT \$15,000. 39
5. SUBJECT TO THE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT,  
THE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE  
WORK IN THIS REFERENCE. 40
6. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE WORK WHEN REFERRED TO  
THE COMMITTEE WAS \$960,000. 41

  
(C.R. KELLY)  
Chairman.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

12 March 1970.