



the Architect

Issue no. 36 | Spring 2006

KAMRA TAL · PERITI

IN EVERY ISSUE



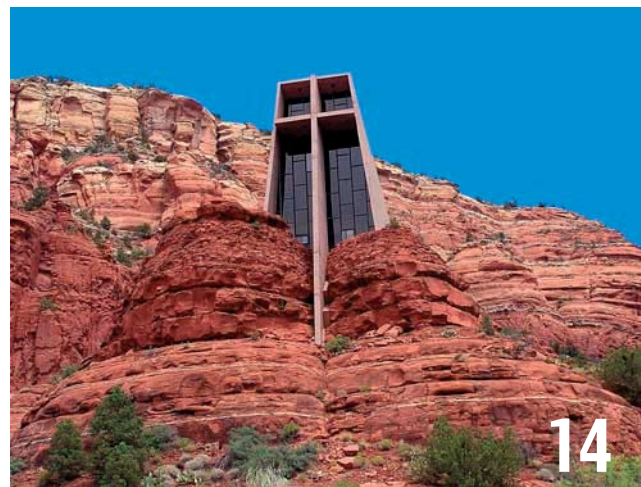
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"While the architectural merits of the existing building (the Qala school) may be one of the considerations, other factors were also put in the balance with a favourable recommendation reached in the end."
MEPA

Mind The Children Get Wet

In one of its earlier issues, tA had asked Ira Miodragovic to write about the building boom of schools in the 1950's and 60's, with particular emphasis on those in Gozo, designed by Joe Huntingford. She had written about the Qala Primary school, that this, "...had the) evident influence of the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, (and) combines two-storey classroom blocks, sunken gardens, external staircases, and covered walkways in an impressive feature of lightness and openness." – A New School of Thought, tA No. 30 of Winter 2004, page 30.

Little could we have known then that this would be one of the last articles written about this excellent rendition of modernism and that, even while writing, an application for planning permission for its partial demolition was being processed.

Much has been said and much has been written. Or maybe not – there is no doubt that, with hindsight, one has to realise that this is no easy matter; it is a difficult task to bring issues like this to national platform for debate, sufficient to cause the level of media attention that will make decision takers retract from their uninformed positions. While it was evident that many were in agreement with Kamra's position, no one chose to show real support and the result is now what it is; one of the most obvious possible buildings of inspiration to current and future generations of architects has been demolished. The letter issued by Kamra President, David Pace, and circulated in our monthly newsletter gives an accurate and fair reflection of the mood at Council these days; it is being copied here in full:

"In today's highly competitive world the world 'failure' is a non-entry in our vocabulary. We refuse to accept that targets we aimed at achieving have in fact not been reached, searching for reasons for justifying our underachievement, while at the same time attempting to reverse the situation to one which is nearer to our aims.

I confess that these were my feelings on learning that demolition works had started on the Qala school. I know that my feelings were shared by many on Council.

Did we do enough within our powers to stop the project? Had we tried all that was possible to convince the authorities of the importance of the building and the need to preserve it? Maybe we were not persistent enough, maybe we should have been more vociferous in condemning the project design. Maybe we could have objected during the processing of the first application. Rather naively

perhaps we were convinced that finally the importance of the building as forming part our modern architectural heritage would have been recognised and an alternative design respecting the building's value drawn up. I am not sure whether this feeling of failure was brought about by the destruction of the building itself more than the realisation that our modern architectural heritage is hardly even understood let alone appreciated. And I'm not referring to uneducated bumpkins.

It is becoming clearer that the decision to draw up a National Policy for Architecture could not have been taken at a more opportune moment. There is an urgent need for an awareness and educational campaign across all the strata of our society. This incident has also highlighted the abject failure of our scheduling / listing bodies in taking strong decisive action to protect our built-environment heritage.

The KTP is applying for admittance to DOCOMOMO which will enable us to draw upon resources and expertise in identifying, surveying and listing buildings belonging to the modern movement. For obvious reasons we would like to see this process extended to cover all architecture of merit built in the 20th century and beyond. The KTP will be campaigning for the present system to be reviewed in order to avoid the incident mentioned above. We call upon all our members and colleagues to support this campaign, so that we may never ask ourselves once more – have we failed?"

The Kamra has learnt many lessons from this whole course of events. While having to deal with the sense of defeat that has prevailed, it must now gather its energies to engage in other issues with urgency if it is going to retain its role to catalyse an improvement in the quality of our built environment. The Kamra has already taken a firm position about the possible redevelopment of St. Anne's Square in Sliema and it also keeping a watchful eye on the proposal for Ta' Cenc, the revised action plans for Ta'Qali and Luqa, and the future of Smartcity.

One final note; in her article, Miodragovic had continued as follows, "The element of the covered walkway and concrete staircase (of the Qala Primary School) also appears as a feature on the main façade of the primary school in Ghajnsielem." You may be interested to read through PA 01141/04 for which permission was granted on 23rd January 2006...

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To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community

The Council of the Kamra Tal-Periti for the year 2006 consists of David Pace (President), David Felice (Vice-President), Keith Cole (Secretary), Alfred Briffa (Treasurer) and Council members Anthony Fenech Vella, William Lewis, Edgar Rossignaud, Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Danica Mifsud and Antoine Zammit

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Cover: Qala School, partly demolished – the loss of yet another architectural gem.

See page 9 for details.

Revisiting Melnikov's house in Moscow

As a follow up to Irina Korobina's highly informative article "Soviet Avant-Garde Architecture is in Danger", published in issue 35 of "the Architect", I would like to share the following additional information with your readers. The journal Architectural Record recently carried the following news item by Paul Abelsky:

"Viktor Melnikov, son of Constructivist architect Konstantin Melnikov, has announced that he will turn his father's famed Melnikov House, along with its collection of artworks, to the Russian government on the condition that it establish a museum and renovate the house.

The house has been a modernist landmark in Moscow for nearly eight years. Built by Melnikov for his family between 1927 and 1929, the building became one of the most celebrated Constructivist designs. It was the only private house in Moscow during the Soviet period. Gradually Melnikov fell out of favour with the regime and was

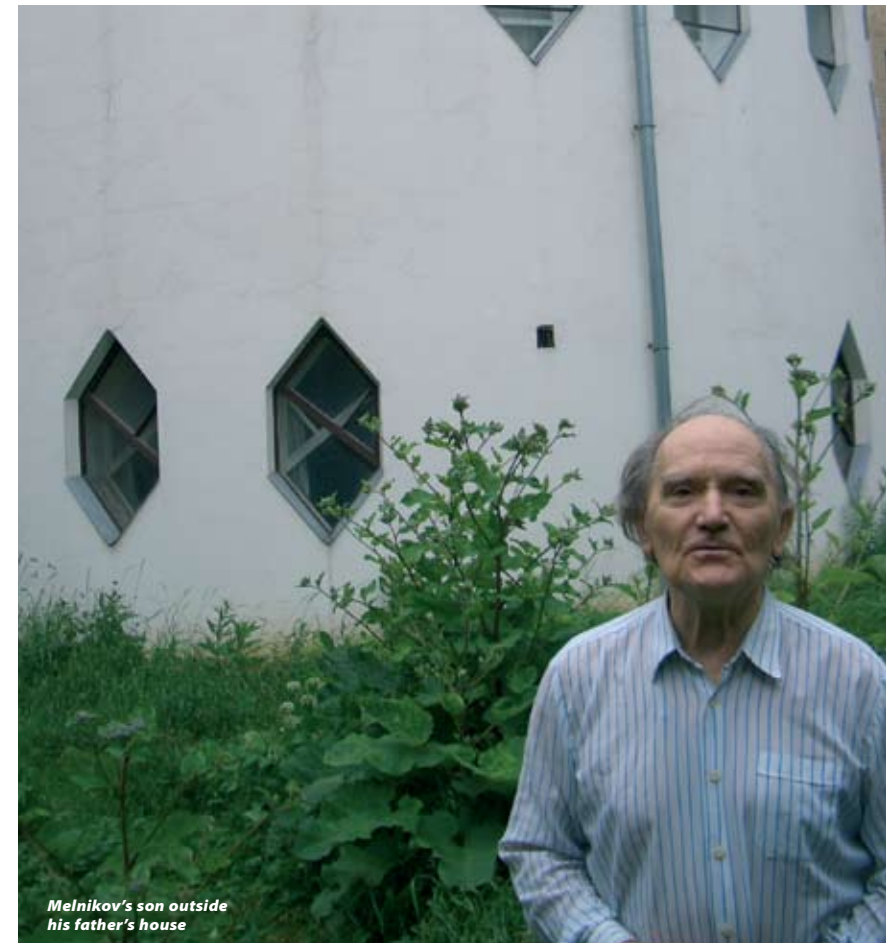
expelled from architecture in 1937. He lived in seclusion at his house until his death in 1974. It has been occupied by his son ever since.

The building is composed of two interlocking cylinders with rhomboid windows. It has been deteriorating steadily in recent years, especially after an unsuccessful restoration attempt in the late 1990s. Despite Viktor Melnikov's decision, a family dispute over succession rights is likely to cloud the future of the masterwork."

Yours sincerely,
Conrad Thake

Letter from a Londoner

It was great to be back in Malta! My trip last October was soon enhanced by a quick jaunt by helicopter (courtesy Joanna and friends) to Gozo in the early evening light and then back in total blackness – I sat on the wrong side of the helicopter! But what a glorious experience confirming my view that there is more architecture per square metre in Malta than anywhere except Rome!



Melnikov's son outside his father's house

After bringing an illustrated talk on modern architecture to a business breakfast audience of over seventy at the unholy hour of 8.30am, I was relieved to find that the book launch the next day for Conrad Thake and Quentin Hughes' splendidly illustrated new book on Modern Malta was to be held in the prime evening hours and in the impressively renovated Knights' Hospital.

What a rich week it proved to be. There was plenty of 'Time for Architecture' and to see Valletta again. The conference on "The Founding Myths of Architecture" turned out to be a stimulating if somewhat curious event, a mixture of subjects and content. It covered interests that ranged from the origins of architectural myths and mythologies that represent national images, through Louis Sullivan's Chicago at the turn of the 20th century. Le Corbusier's brief but significant visit to Gozo in 1933 along with the luminaries of CIAM, to a well constructed talk on the technicalities of Italian Baroque theatre. Eric Parry, the current president of the Architecture Association, brought the congress to a close with his talk on Sunday morning.

The day after his talk, on Monday, Eric Parry took up the leadership of the AA Council for our new session 2005-6. With the eight or nine other councillors we met to hear about the radical restructuring of the AA School by the new Director, Brett Steele. But this was no ordinary Council meeting rather a turning point of opportunity and optimism for the AA which Steel claimed is still "the world's most internationally diverse school of architecture." A place, in other words, to be at.

The proposed changes are drastic. They aim at giving the school a new direction and provide an impetus for the creation of an 'intensive learning environment.' The AA has always been known to be continually questioning and transforming architectural assumptions in an open and democratic manner. Largely run by students and staffed by over ninety international architects and teachers it has an extended worldwide membership of over 3500.

Among the drastic changes are proposals that AA First Year will be taught as an open studio space and not in Units; new studio spaces have been acquired in nearby Morwell Street for Intermediate

and Diploma Schools; the successful Graduate Programmes will continue to expand while Supplementary Studies (aesthetic, professional and technical) are brought together and fed into courses at all levels. Finally a much closer connection between students and the wider AA membership is planned.

With over 500 students at the school and over 160 staff members the future looks bright. Exhibitions and publications continue to attract a wide range of students to join the courses at various levels from First Year to Graduate School, the programmes for which are set out in the new AA School Prospectus 2005-6 available free from the AA School of Architecture, 36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES (info@aschool.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely,
Dennis Sharp

Nice Cover!

I refer to your Winter 2005 issue: nice cover!

No doubt this budding architect will have the opportunity to present his scheme, after his graduation, as the umpteenth proposal for the site which I am sure will



then still be in the state it is in today! Best of luck, Julian.

Yours sincerely,
Richard England

Letters from our readership to be considered for publication are most welcome. Letters for inclusion in Issue 37 are to reach tA by the 30th May 2006. Please write to: The Editor, "the Architect", Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira GZR 06, or send an email to thearchitect@ktpmalta.com. All contributions will be acknowledged.

The first four months of the new Council's term have proved to be very intensive. The highlight is certainly the launch of the drafting of a National Policy for Architecture. The Council has been involved in various other initiatives and discussions, and is actively working in supporting members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice.

KTP DAY SEMINAR

The new KTP Council felt the need to plan its work in order to better meet the needs of the profession. To this end, a full day seminar was held on 17 January 2006. At this meeting, the KTP Council strategy was addressed. Last year's standing committees were re-established and their roles and objectives redefined. These standing committees are Professional Practice, Built Environment, Communications, Education, International Relations and Finance. Any members interested in joining these standing committees are invited to contact the Kamra.

NATIONAL POLICY FOR ARCHITECTURE

Late last year, KTP wrote to the Ministries, Leader of the Opposition, authorities and organisations inviting each body to nominate a representative to participate in the process of drafting a National Policy for Architecture (NPA). This policy which is intended to bring our built environment in line with EU practice, is being promoted by KTP together with Heritage Malta. KTP now has the support of the President of Malta, the Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition amongst others. An introductory meeting was held on 23 February at the Museum of Fine Arts, where the members of the policy drafting committee were briefed on the scope of this National Policy for Architecture. This meeting was followed by a press conference where Tourism and Culture Minister Francis Zammit Dimech said that he has accepted to act as the key Minister in the drafting of this



Day Meeting participants (from left to right): David Pace (President), Edgar Rossignaud, William Lewis, Antoine Zammit, Danica Mifsud, David Felice (Vice President), Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Lawrence Mintoff (past President), Keith Cole (Hon Secretary), Tony Cassar (secretary), Alfred Briffa (Hon Treasurer).

policy. The first meeting of the policy drafting working group was held on 21 March. For further information see the full report on page 20 or visit www.ktpmalta.com.

MEETING WITH MINISTER ZAMMIT

A meeting was held with the Minister for Resources and Infrastructure on 17 January to discuss the Warrant Board requirements of the Log Book and the possibility of a Professional Formation Course. KTP will be providing a course in the format of a series of lectures, aimed primarily, but not solely, at young architects, to help bridge the gap between the academic and the working world.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

KTP Council together with the Professional Practice Standing Committee is currently discussing a Professional Indemnity Package for KTP members. Three insurance agencies were contacted, and were invited to deliver a presentation to the Council during two half-day seminars held in the beginning of February. The Council feels that the notion of insuring against risks should cover all aspects of the building process and not just the perits services. More specifically, insuring the Works (Employer), CAR (Contractor's risks), third party liability and PII should be considered together and not separately. KTP Council is currently reviewing

the options presented in order to choose the best way forward.

REVISED TARIFFS

The Professional Practice Standing Committee has for the past year worked on a new proposal for tariffs and professional fees. This proposal is now in its final stages. The KTP Council has called an EGM in order to present

the changes and confirm them by means of a vote. The KTP regulations are also being revised and are to be concluded in the same period.

KTP NEWS

This year the Kamra has continued to issue an electronic newsletter in a new format, KTP News, which is being sent to all members of the profession at the end of each month. This e-newsletter contains information on the Council's work during that month, as well as information on upcoming events. Members of the profession who have not received this year's three issues are to contact the Kamra with information of their email address.

SEMINARS AND OTHER EVENTS

The Kamra continues to organise various events throughout the year. "Aluminium in Apertures and Curtain Walls" was the title of a seminar held on 24 March.



Metra: Some of the products on display at the Metra seminar

The attendees were addressed by Ing. A. Latino and Geometra T. Coralla on behalf of METRA Group. Another seminar on waterproofing systems was held on 3 March this year.

KTP HOSTS ANNUAL DRINKS

The annual social event for all KTP members and guests was held on 13 January at the Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise in Valletta. KTP Council took this opportunity to award certificates to participants of the Valuations CPD Course. Those who were unable to attend the event are to contact the KTP office for details on how to collect their certificate.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

The membership fees for the current year became due on the 1st January 2006. Membership offers various advantages including discounted rates for participation in conferences, workshops and seminars organised by the KTP.

KTP OFFICE HOURS

KTP secretary, Mr. Tony Cassar, is available at the KTP office every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 12pm. The Kamra can also be contacted via email on kamrataperiti@nextgen.net.mt.

www.thebluebucket.org

The Time for Architecture (T4A) events in October 2005 brought a new focus to architecture in Malta. It was also the first of a number of initiatives aimed at reconciling Architecture with its proper context of culture and distancing it from the vulgar image of unbridled development some have come to associate it with. Encouraged by the energy behind T4A, the first steps were made in establishing a website to host an ongoing architectural debate. The idea was born in a haze of inebriation during one of the legendary SACES Christmas parties several years ago. Two newly graduated architects discussed a website's potential to promote architectural discourse and coined the unlikely name which appears to have remained with us. Launched in early March, the website is envisaged as a platform for architectural debate primarily focusing on the Maltese Islands and seeks to attract the involvement of all those with an interest in the quality of our built environment. In broad terms, the goal of the website is to provide a venue for and encourage users to engage in architectural debate with the aim of stimulating a collective effort to produce a higher quality built environment.

FORUM

The website's main feature is a Forum where topics for discussion are floated for debate. Users can discuss this topic and also propose other topics for discussion. The main topic under discussion at the moment is the National Policy for Architecture. Other topics being discussed are the demolition of the school at Qala and responsibilities towards third parties during construction. Having your say is easy – users just need to register and can automatically take part in any of the discussions posted, as well as propose their own. Various interesting contributions have been made so far under the various topics. Under the National Policy for Architecture topic, users have discussed



that "the educational aspect... is very important" and that "Architecture reflects the culture of the people who build it." Some have questioned whether Malta needs this National Policy at all, and that the aims behind this policy are not understood. One contributor states that "to many ... architecture means merely a construction project with a pretty face."

20 QUESTIONS

Another feature of the website is "20 questions". Here different architects are confronted with a series of twenty questions (!) with the aim of getting to know the interviewees better. The last interview at time of going to print was with Perit Catherine Galea, the third interviewee so far. Watch this space, which is being updated regularly. Past interviews will still be online in the archive section of this page.

I WITNESS

"I witness" is a home-page feature and

changes regularly. It proposes different images that relate to architecture – the good, the bad and the ugly! The intention of this item is to provoke thought, and contributions for this section by the public are welcome.

BULLETIN

The "Bulletin" proposes a number of events related to the profession taking place locally. Here too, the public is invited to inform the Blue Bucket team of any events that may be of interest to the profession.

WATCH THIS SPACE

thebluebucket.org will continue to be updated regularly. Although the number of registered users is currently on the low side, it is hoped that many more users will register in the coming weeks. This is the ideal site to debate on issues that affect the profession locally, and is the only one of its kind. Registering is easy, but should you find any difficulty do not hesitate to contact the Blue Bucket team.

Contacting the team is easy. One can do this by using the online pop-up window accessible from the home page by clicking the "contact us" button. One can also email the team directly on team@thebluebucket.org. Your feedback on the site is invaluable.



Log on and have your say at www.thebluebucket.org

GUIDELINES ON LIFTS

The Consumer and Industrial Goods Directorate of the Malta Standards Authority has issued a notification that, for safety reasons, the installation of lifts in existing buildings where there is no provision for pit/headroom space shall be subjected, with immediate effect, to prior approval by the Consumer and Industrial Goods Directorate of the Malta Standards Authority. This approval is to be sought before the commissioning, specification and installation of such lifts. Queries on this matter are to be directed to the MSA on email address info@msa.org.mt, or by calling 21242420. The relevant guidelines can also be downloaded from http://www.msa.org.mt/cigd/ce_marking.htm (click on 'Product Areas' and 'Lifts')

POLITICAL AGENDA FOR ACE

Jean-François Susini (France) has been elected President of the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) for a two-year mandate, taking up his functions on the 1st January 2006. Also elected were Luciano Lazzari (Italy) as Vice President, Katarina Nilsson (Sweden) as Treasurer, Pierre-Henri Schmutz (Switzerland) as Coordinator Access to the Profession, Olgierd Dziekonski (Poland) as Coordinator Architecture and Society, and Fabian Llisterrri Monfort (Spain). The other Members of the Board by rotation are John Wright (UK), David Felice (Malta), Peter Benuska (Slovakia), Tonu Laigu (Estonia) and Rob Budding (The Netherlands).

A major task for the new President and the Board will be the implementation of the recently adopted ACE Strategy and Multi Annual Work Programme which calls on the ACE and its membership to adopt a more political approach and re-focus its activities on priorities, to emphasise the overall sustainable quality objective and to produce practical tools for use by EU architects in the day-to-day practice of the profession. Furthermore, significant efforts to develop a much improved communication strategy will be pursued with the aim of reinforcing the identity of architects and of the ACE as an organisation in the context of the Political Agenda that was adopted by the ACE General Assembly in November 2005 and that can be downloaded through the following link: <http://www.ace-cae.org/Public/DownloadCae/EN/other/PolAgenfinal.doc>. For further information contact the ACE

Secretariat by email at info@ace-cae.org or visit the website of the ACE at www.ace-cae.org

UMAR

The UMAR 12th General Assembly was held in Hammamet, Tunisia, from the 26-27 January 2006. This Assembly was hosted by the Tunisian Order of Architects, OAT, in conjunction with a Bureau and Council meeting of the UIA (International Union of Architects), a council meeting of the Union of African Architects (UAA) and of the Union of North African Architects (UAM) and a conference for about 400 Tunisian Architects titled "Handicrafts Arts in Architecture".



Sixteen countries participated in the Assembly. The Kamra tal-Periti was represented by Perit David Pace, also General Secretary to UMAR, Perit Anthony Fenech Vella, and Dr David Mallia who presented a paper at the Conference through the auspices of KTP.

URBAN FUTURES 2.0

Urban Futures 2.0 is a European conference on urban governance and partnership where politicians on a local, regional, national and European level are invited to interact with a cross-section of practitioners and researchers on the future challenges for urban areas in the context of European policies. The conference, organised by the City of Stockholm and the Swedish government, will take place in Stockholm from 3-5 May 2006.



It is being held in the context of the outcome of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on urban policy in Rotterdam in 2004 at which European Ministers responsible for urban policy adopted conclusions on the importance of the development and implementation of urban policies for the future of the EU. The conference will explore the role of cities in the efforts to achieve the goals of the Lisbon Strategy and sustainable development. Most importantly, the conference is a unique opportunity to promote structures and tools for multi-level and cross-sector dialogue and partnership. More details can be found at www.urbanfutures.se.

B-E-X 2006

The second annual Building Exchange (B-E-X 2006), organised by Building on Business Ltd, will be held in Madrid (Spain), from 7 to 9 June 2006 on the theme: "Where Property Meets The Built Environment." This unique meeting of professionals of the world of property and the built environment brings together the leading figures from across Europe, the Middle East and Africa who together represent the whole spectrum of the chain: property, design and the construction industry.

The programme proposes over 20 lectures as well as workshops, seminars and theme-lunches involving more than 50 internationally recognised speakers. This event is supported by the UIA. Further information can be found on www.b-e-x.com.

ERABUILD

The building and civil engineering industries form a major sector of Europe's economy. Both technical and process improvements are needed throughout the sector to reduce adverse environmental impact and to enhance quality and competitiveness. Many of the issues that require research and development in order to bring about improvements are common to several countries across Europe.



Cooperation between national research funders would improve the cost-effectiveness of addressing these common issues and enable a wider range of topics to be funded by avoiding unnecessary duplication of work.

To encourage such cooperation, the European Commission has supported ERABUILD, an ERA-Net project in the field of sustainable construction and operation of buildings. Further information on the ERABUILD project and joint calls can be found on the project website www.erabuild.net/description.html (Source: Innovation and Research Focus Issue 64)

SEISMIC VULNERABILITY

Perit Denis Camilleri was the keynote speaker at a Malta Workshop chaired by seismologist Pauline Galea, held on 24 -27 April 2006, entitled "Seismicity and Earthquake Engineering in the Extended Mediterranean Region", as part of the RELEMR programme (Reduction of Earthquake Losses in the Eastern Mediterranean Region), sponsored by UNESCO and USGS. The title of his paper was "Outlining the seismic vulnerability of Malta's buildings - is it an issue?"

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

In February, the KTP placed an application for the ESF 2004-2006, one of the four Structural Funds made available by the European Union. Further details will be forwarded to members once the outcome of this application is known.

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority has published the "2005 State of the Environment Report." The aim of this Report is to support progress towards sustainable development by providing credible environmental information to policy makers, organisations and the general public. It should also provide guidance for the development of new policy directions and help identify investment requirements.

The report tackles various aspects, including air, water, waste, climate change, biodiversity, and others. The report can be viewed at www.mepa.org.mt

REVIEW OF TA' QALI ACTION PLAN

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority issued revisions to the Ta' Qali Action Plan of 2000 for public consultation. This, MEPA explained, was done "to address changing circumstances in the sector of convention centers and to

accommodate new land uses within the boundary of the Ta' Qali Action Plan." The revisions are being considered necessary by MEPA to accommodate aspects in the economy which are developing rapidly and are considered to be making a significant contribution to the national economic output together with additional uses which would benefit from a location in Ta' Qali and lead to an overall upgrading of the environment of Ta' Qali.

The revisions include land allocations for: (1) a Convention and Exhibition Centre as an extension to the site designated for this use in the 2000 Action Plan (2) a temporary fair for a two year period extendable only if necessary (3) a diplomatic mission to replace an industrial use (4) residential development to replace an industrial use. The representation period closed on 5 April. The revised Ta' Qali Action Plan may be viewed on the MEPA website at www.mepa.org.mt.

In the meantime, Trade Fairs Corporation and the company Sign-It have submitted a joint application for a convention centre earmarked as part of the revised Ta' Qali action plan, even though such plan has not yet been approved.

CITIZEN'S DECLARATION ON THE CITY OF TOMORROW

A group of representatives of twenty-six European Countries, among which was Malta, presented a Citizen's Declaration on the City of Tomorrow to the European Commission. This came in response to a call by the Directorate General for Research when, for the first time ever, the European Commission actively sought the opinion of the European citizens on European Union policies through the "RAISE" initiative.

"In our daily lives, sustainability means to us the ability for ourselves, our children and grandchildren to have a good quality of life, to use resources wisely, to use technology and research to solve problems, so that the world will be a sane, safe, happy and healthy place to live in. We are aware that every technology comes with a cost, and that we need to use research as a tool to try to look further, be aware of the dangers and find ways to anticipate potential problems

and try to avoid them."

The declaration addresses the issues of urban governance, sustainable transport, sustainable built environment, cultural heritage and education. The full version of the Citizens' Declaration is available on www.raise-eu.org

TARXIEN TEMPLS VISITOR CENTRE

Last January, Heritage Malta and Bank of Valletta held a preview of the Tarxien temples visitor centre, part of the BOV Tarxien Temples Project. The centre is the first phase in a conservation project that has been proposed for the prehistoric temples complex in Tarxien, under the patronage of the bank. The visitor centre is awaiting MEPA approval and works should start by the end of 2006. Meanwhile, excavations, including the digging of trenches, would be carried out to see whether there are any archaeological remains in the area. It is envisaged that the visitor centre would be complete in about two to three years, but that the entire project, which would include further conservation and possible tenting, would take six to eight years due to its "sensitive" nature.



MEPA REFORM

MEPA is currently going through a change implementation process with the assistance of the Management Efficiency Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister. Last March the KTP Council was hosted to a presentation by the MEU on the first phase of the proposed reforms of the planning set up with the aim of improving efficiency.

The KTP Council assures its members that it will be closely following the implementation of these reforms and the results they will (hopefully) achieve. In order to assist its members better, the Council will be meeting with MEPA regularly to discuss any issues that may arise. Members may keep the Kamra informed of any issues of a procedural nature (not project specific) that may be raised with MEPA by copying the KTP Council in correspondence.

E-APPLICATIONS

Last March, MEPA presented their proposals for a new computer system which

will facilitate the submission of applications through electronic media. Since a number of periti were not able to attend, MEPA has proposed to hold another presentation of the e-application procedures, should the members of the profession request one. Any requests should be sent to the Secretary of the Kamra, at the earliest.

PLANNING WATCH

IS THERE NO SHAME?

In a press release issued on 23 March, the Kamra tal-Periti strongly condemned the demolition of a substantial part of the Qala primary school in connection with a project for a new facility for the Institute of Tourism Studies, undertaken by the Ministry for Gozo and utilising European Union Funds.

This act of architectural vandalism occurred in defiance of strong objections made by the heritage authorities within MEPA, despite which planning permission was granted last year. Furthermore, MEPA's own Audit Officer prepared a damning report, which called for the immediate issuance of an Emergency Conservation Order.

The local media featured a number of items on the matter. The Times, in its article "Demolition of architectural gem starts" (25.03), reported the Gozo Ministry stating "that the original plans had been amended following meetings between the ministry, the Kamra and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, to incorporate the front portico of the school into the design." It further quoted a MEPA spokesperson who said, "It would be interesting to hear the comments of the Kamra tal-Periti with regard to those of its members who endorse such applications as this."

The Malta Independent carried an item titled "Chamber of Architects condemns demolition of school in Qala". Here the Kamra's reference to a Resolution by the Council of the European Union on architectural quality in urban and rural environments was quoted. The resolution called on the European Commission "to seek, in consultation with the member states, and in accordance with the rules governing (the use of) structural funds, ways and means of ensuring, in the application of those funds a wider consideration of architectural quality

NEW WARRANTS

On the 28th March, Resources and Infrastructure Minister Ninu Zammit presented warrants to ten new periti. Congratulations to Claire Abela, Aidan Bundic, Monique Calleja, Tiziana Caruana, Ian Cutajar, Frederick Grech, Alexis Inguanez, Edward Magro, Victoria Valletta and Gail Woods.

and the conservation of cultural heritage."

MaltaToday carried an article (26.03) in two parts, with the damning titles "Auditor accuses MEPA of 'gross act of vandalism' in Qala school" and "Planning Authority failing in its duties." It reported that MEPA audit officer Perit Joe Falzon has "described the arguments brought forward by the case officer to accept the demolition of this building (as) at best, derisory. At worst, they lead to the suspicion of ulterior motives and possible undue pressure on the case officer from external or internal sources." Falzon also recommended that disciplinary action should be taken against the manager of the IHM, the Gozo area team manager and the case officer for writing a report "with intentional misleading conclusions, contrary to the MEPA policies." MEPA, in its defence, claimed that "while the architectural merits of the existing building may be one of the considerations, other factors were also put in the balance with a favourable recommendation reached in the end."

The Kamra strongly condemns the mistaken notion that our country's architectural heritage is confined to buildings that date back to pre-20th century eras, automatically excluding any constructions of a contemporary or modern nature. In 1923, the internationally celebrated Mies van der Rohe, said that "Architecture is not a theory nor a speculation or a doctrine, but a spatial expression of the spirit of the time." This is nowhere more evident than in buildings such as the Qala school which heralded the embracing of the modern movement in Maltese architecture. The cover of this issue of tA is dedicated to the loss of this iconic building. Have your say on this issue in the online forum at www.thebluebucket.org





Services in the Internal Market (SIM) Directive

By Simone Vella Lenicker

On the 16th February, the European Parliament voted on the First Reading of the text of the Services Directive. It adopted a significantly modified text that arose from intensive and lengthy negotiations among the main political groups in the Parliament and which is largely in line with the policy of the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) on the issues covered.

At first sight, the adopted text is one with which the architectural profession could be reasonably satisfied as it significantly clarifies the relationship of this directive with the Qualifications Directive published in October 2005. However, following further, in-depth analysis in the ACE Work Group on Services in the Internal Market and deliberations in the Executive Board of the ACE, it was decided at this stage to call for architectural services to be excluded from the scope of the Directive.

THE DIRECTIVE

The proposal for this directive is part of the process of economic reform launched by the Lisbon European Council with a view to making the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Achieving this goal means that the establishment of a genuine internal market in services is indispensable. It has not yet been possible to exploit the considerable potential for economic growth and job creation afforded by the services sector because of the many obstacles hampering the devel-

opment of service activities in the internal market. This proposal forms part of the strategy adopted by the Commission to eliminate these obstacles and follows on from the Report on the State of the Internal Market for Services, which revealed their extent and significance. The objective of this Directive is to provide a legal framework that will eliminate the obstacles to the freedom of establishment for service providers and the free movement of services between the Member States, giving both the providers and recipients of services the legal certainty they need in order to exercise these two fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Treaty. The proposal covers a wide variety of economic service activities and applies only to service providers established in a Member State.

ACE'S POSITION

In a statement published in early February, the ACE made a few recommendations. It noted that Article 1 of the proposed SIM Directive applies to both provision of services and establishment. It should therefore be made clear, in Article 3, that the new Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications is not affected, in any way, by the proposed SIM Directive. This derogation is essential as the more specific provisions of the Qualifications Directive prevail (lex specialis principle). Without such a clarification, the Services Directive will contradict, in several provisions, the Qualifications Directive, for example, in relation to the conflict between Article 14 of the SIM Directive and Article 6(a) of the Qualifications Directive in relation to registration. The ACE therefore called for an amendment to be introduced to Article 3 of the proposed SIM Directive giving a derogation to the full content of the Qualifications Directive.

The ACE further noted that the proposed SIM Directive seeks to apply the Country of Origin principle to the need, for architects, to have Professional Indemnity Insurance when a provider establishes himself in the territory of a Member State other than that in which he is ordinarily established. This means that the Host State cannot require Professional Indemnity Insurance from the provider if they already hold equivalent insurance at "home". Taking into account the actual situation in the market this aspiration of the SIM Directive is simply unworkable and irrational. Introducing such a measure would first of all require that all liability regimes existing in the Member states would be harmonised – a matter that will not happen in the foreseeable future. Indeed it has been recognised that the unregulated insurance market is one of the main stumbling blocks to a quick implementation of the Directive. Nevertheless, for the current and future situation, Professional Indemnity Insurance must cover all the requirements that the host country uses to protect the interests of the client in relation to the services offered and received, not only specific parts of the service. Furthermore, this application of the Country of Origin Principle is further flawed by the fact that the provision of architectural services has a direct impact on public health and safety and the proposed directive (at Article 17(17)) specifically excludes all activities that have such an impact from the Country of Origin Principle.

THE DRAFT PROPOSAL

Following discussions in the European Parliament, a draft proposal was put forward to the Commission, where it will be further discussed and a final draft will be proposed towards the end of April. The major change in the draft under discus-

sion was the withdrawal of the 'country of origin' clause whereby service providers would carry their qualifications over into the host country without having to subject themselves to that country's laws. The ACE, in a note to all member organisations, explained that, 'It has been abandoned altogether in favour of new provisions that establish the right to provide services across borders in the EU. This revision has been compared to the adoption of the "driving licence" approach whereby a person gets his driving licence in his home country and can use it to drive anywhere in the EU by obeying the rules of the road in the country in which he is driving. This comparison is a little simplistic, but is eloquent in describing the basic concept that now underlies the Directive as amended by the Parliament.' The amendments to Article 27 (professional insurance and guarantees) have somewhat softened the approach of the Commission by introducing the words "Member States may require that providers whose services present a direct and particular risk..." at the start of the Article. It therefore leaves it to the discretion of the Member States to impose an obligation on service providers to hold professional indemnity insurance. The revisions also place conditions on service providers to inform the Host Member State, on a yearly basis, that any required insurance is in place and up to date. The ACE still holds, however, that although the original provisions are desirable for the profession, they are unworkable in the current market.

THE NEXT STEP

The next step in the process will see the publication, by the Commission, of a revised proposal that will take account of the vote in the Parliament and the reaching of a Common Position in the Council.

Now that the term of the 2005/06 Committee has come to a close, we may look back on a year full of hard work and great effort which helped reap more

than satisfactory results. Following is a brief look at this committee's work. Throughout the summer months we endeavoured to make our yearly Design Workshop and Exhibition as successful as ever. Unlike previous years, these events were held in conjunction with KTP's Time for Architecture, a collaboration which we hope will repeat itself for years to come. Both the Workshop Pack-IT and Exhibition were of a high standard and thus attendance and participation were high. This year's committee also began work on our own common room, made available by the Faculty with the help of Prof De Lucca. GoMobile kindly provided sponsorship for this project. The common room's launch is in the pipeline and will take place under the next committee. During the festive season, the committee also organised Christmas drinks, hosted within the Faculty itself, for students and lecturers as well as Faculty staff. This turned out to be a success, as most lecturers and a great number of students attended the event, held just before the Christmas holidays. The past committee would like to wish the new one the best of luck in their efforts, projects and other endeavours.

SACES Committee 2005/2006

NEW SACES COMMITTEE

A new SACES Committee for 2006/07 has been elected and is composed as follows: Brendon Muscat (President), Richard Borg (PRO), Christian Zammit (Activities), Paula Curmi (Secretary), Arielle Abdilla (KSU Liaison), Giancarlo Torpiano (Treasurer), Mark Muscat (Student Services), Christopher Mintoff (Publications & IT), Matthew Cachia Zammit (International Officer). Congratulations to all, and good luck with the year of work ahead.

High-rise buildings in Marsa Park

Vertigo: defined in the English dictionary as a sense of dizziness or/and an instance of such sensation or a disoriented state of mind.

If demand is high for high-rise buildings, should such typologies be allocated to specific regions only? Most probably, specific areas should be designated for this particular use. The twelve hectare zone known as the Marsa park (or GM11 as named in the local plans), can easily be allocated to host a cluster of high-rise buildings.

Proposed conceptually to accommodate two high-rise buildings, one for commercial and the other for residential purposes, the project would bring light and purpose to the neglected and dilapidated area. Such a proposal had to take into account the sensitivity of the area due to the close proximity of the dense residential area to the Marsa power station and the adjacent arterial road. The commercial tower named Vertigo undergoes metamorphosis by spinning helically about its centroid, giving its back to the power station whilst enjoying green views of the Marsa Sports Club and the residential area. Towards the top the tower spins higher to grasp unseen views from the Grand Harbour up to the island's inland agricultural area reaching up to Rabat.

Aware of Vertigo's location adjacent to 13th December



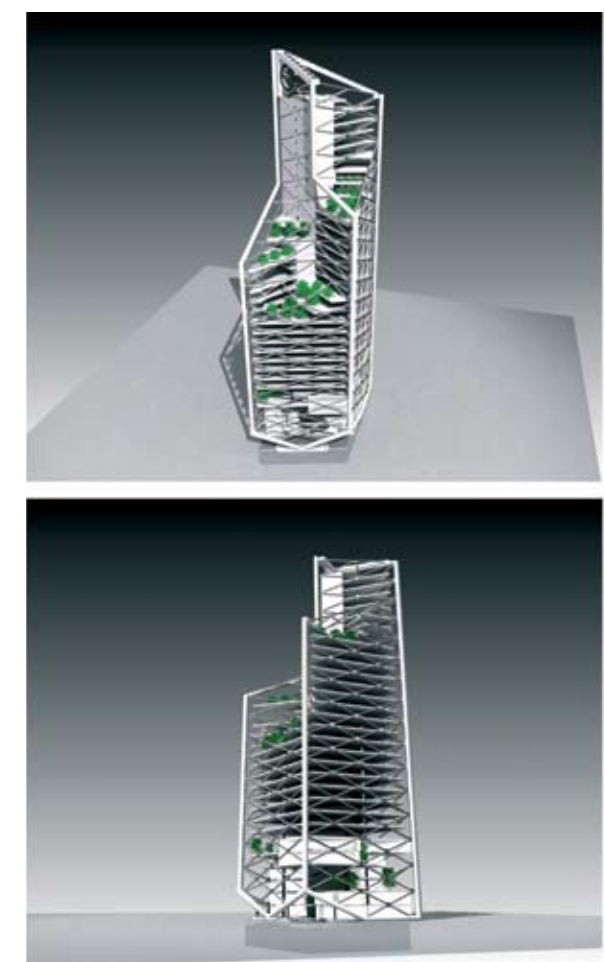
Road, an arterial road that links the North and South of the island, besides acting as a node for the residents in its vicinities, the tower also carries with it a commercial value. Its shape, location and internal use are all variables in the equation that affect the building's marketability. For this reason, the tower is divided into three levels.

Vertigo tower's lower section acts as a public area, having not one but seven entrances spread on the first six floors, leading off from different areas in its surroundings through a series of ramps. Within these six floors is a plaza intertwined in the building's fabric, filling most of the voids with a number of internal gardens. Above the plaza are twelve floors of offices separated midway by an internal core sky-court, to encourage social mingling and flow of scented air. Above the final office floor there is another sky-court acting as a sky lobby for a golf and airport hotel. The hotel's entertainment facilities such as restaurants, bars and a conference hall overlook another sky-court which acts as a visual extension to the inland agricultural area.

Vertigo's design follows a green agenda not only after completion but also during its construction phase. Apart from solar collectors wrapping around the tower providing generic free energy and acting as a shading device, innovative solar collectors that capture the sun's rays have been placed along the structure of the wind turbine, providing a hybrid system of sunlight in the offices through fibre optics. The footprint of the tower is similar to a rhombus not only due to site constraints, but also to use one of its sharp edges as a blade to cut through the wind and also reduce solar exposure at peak hours. The structure of the tower is a steel shell cell structure where all vertical and wind forces flow down to the ground through the perimeter only, thus the structure externally carries its weight, forces and also all the glazing needed to clad the building.

Due to its strategic location adjacent to the golf course, residential area and industrial area, the venue ensures an ideal, contemporary, highly efficient working environment. Also since the tower is close to the airport and adjacent to several water fronts, Vertigo tower is ideal to promote a corporate image so vital to today's market.

Thesis Project
Etienne Fenech



A New Highlight for St. John's Church in Valletta

By Marco Rotunno

St. John's is the most important church in Malta. Better known as the Co-Cathedral of St. John, it represents Religion, History and Art, at the same time. One cannot leave Valletta without visiting it. The history of St. John's is strictly linked to the Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, who ruled the Maltese Islands from 1530 until Napoleon's invasion, in 1798. After the Great Siege by the Turks on Borgo-Sanglea was driven back in 1565, the Knights decided to build a new, fortified town: Valletta. The council of the Order gave the architect and military engineer Girolamo Cassar the task of the project for a convent church, which actually became the headquarters and a symbol of the Order itself. The works lasted six years, and were completed in 1578, with the consecration by the Archbishop Ludovico Torres of Monreale. Like most churches built at that time in Malta, it has a rectangular plan with an apse at the East end. It also includes a series of 12 side-chapels between the reinforcing buttresses, a solution already adopted for the convent church of the Dominicans in Rabat. Also, the

vaulting over the nave appears to be innovative for Malta. The combination of all these features on a single, large scale project, together with a rigorous use of the golden rule proportion (after Leon Battista Alberti), typical of Italian Renaissance, make St. John's a peculiar, significant work.

A second phase in the history of St. John's concerns its baroque re-decoration by the Italian artist Mattia Preti, from 1661 to 1666. Guiding a team of stone carver masters and gilders, and himself painting several pictures and a cycle of frescoes depicting the Baptist's life on the vault, he turned the already beautiful church into a stunning baroque masterpiece.

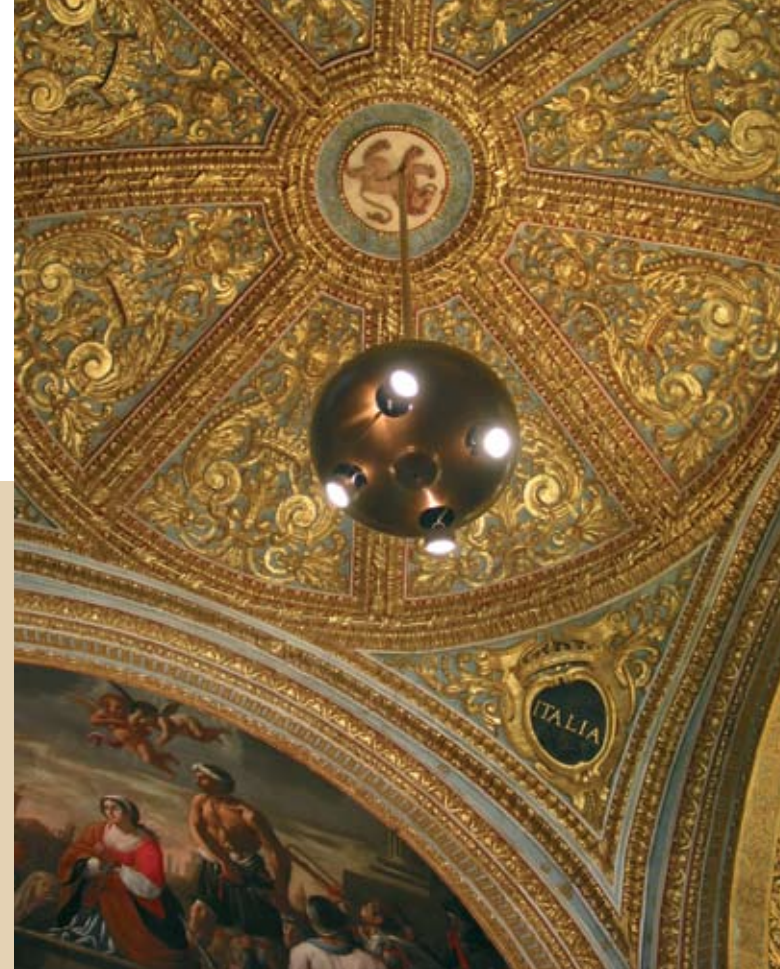
The church is also a sanctuary and hosts numerous works of painters like Caravaggio, sculptures, cult objects and tapestries that make it a unique museum, a shrine of European and Mediterranean History and worship.

There were eight official languages of the Order, and there is a side-chapel devoted to each one of them individually. The four other chapels have a

passage way leading to the sacristy, oratory, bookshop and to a side entrance.

NEW LIGHTING

The project for a new lighting installation in the church is now under way. When the Studio Dall'Osso was commissioned (following an international competition) for a project to provide a new lighting system for the Co-Cathedral by the Foundation Council, the task appeared to be a great responsibility, due to the importance of the monument for Malta itself and for Christianity as a whole. The first step for the project leader, Stefano Dall'Osso, was to learn



more about the history of the church, its original architecture and the changes that took place through the centuries. It was important to know how natural lighting was originally intended for the church. A series of measurements and a tedious task of data collection (including photographic records) led to the creation of a digitalised model of the church. This phase allowed Dall'Osso and his team to carry out an accurate analysis of every single detail, and to perform a long sequence of computer simulations.

The site has multiple functions and purposes. A place of worship, a shrine, and a cathedral in which to celebrate special events, but it is also a real and important museum, visited by numerous tourists every year. The new project had to fit all functions, according to the state of the art for lighting design, without distorting the original concept of lighting the interior with sunlight. A full respect of the worshiping practices, as well as the safety of the paintings from a variety of radiations, meant also taking into account the specific norms issued by competent authorities, which the team has done.



Due to the on site complexities, as explained above, there were no specific light fittings available on the market, so the project has included the design of new, custom-made devices. These are intended not to interfere with the existing architecture.

Therefore, their shapes are very linear, discreet and simple looking, whereas they have a highly technological content and performance. To guarantee a perfect preservation of all art works, all fittings are equipped with filters which fade ultraviolet and infrared radiations. The light intensity on the art work has been tested and verified by means of specific software. The color of every single fitting is different according to its location, for the best camouflage effect. All light fittings for this project have been made by the Italian company Quattrobi S.P.A., based in Colnago (Milan).

DIRECT LIGHTING:

This kind of illumination is necessary to allow the believers to read texts, and the visitors to appreciate the decorated tombstones which constitute the floor. It is obtained by small, adaptable projectors, placed on the nave cornice, equipped with metallic iodides or halogen bulbs.

VAULT LIGHTING:

To give the vault a correct and perfectly uniform, low intensity illumination, which compensates for its round shape, an asymmetric optic has been studied. The fittings, simple and small, have been placed on the cornice, on both sides of the nave.

STRESS LIGHTING:

This illumination is meant to return the image of liturgical space hierarchy, with order and articulation. It also highlights the sculptures present in the nave. Fittings having the same shape and colour as those used for direct lighting are placed on the nave cornice as well.

CHAPEL LIGHTING:

Side chapels needed a more specific illumination. They once had a single lantern hanging from the ceiling. All of the chapels (with the exception of the four used as a passage), have an altar-piece, knights' tombs and lunettes, each one having a painting on canvas. Some chapels have more paintings hanging from the walls. Moreover, these chapels sometimes host temporary art exhibitions, which need their own lighting.

To match all these needs while keeping fittings discreet at the same time, an innovative system has been developed by the Studio Dall'Osso. Taking inspiration from the shape of the original lanterns, a new multi-projector chandelier has been designed. The new fitting has a system of four adjustable pullout projectors in the bottom. On the top part, four light devices having symmetrical optics illuminate the vault. Together with these (always on the top) one can assemble up to twelve adjustable mini-projectors. Such a system allows for a non-invasive electric plant, as power has to be brought to a single point, like before, through existing holes on the chapel vaults.

The so called triumphal arches are the architectonic conjunction elements between chapels and nave. Their rich bas-relief decorations have been highlighted by linear light fittings, mounted on the cornice, and equipped with fluorescent bulbs, themselves linear and irradiating a warm tonality of light that embellishes golden decorations.

ORATORY LIGHTING:

Among the proposed solutions, the purchasers have chosen to illuminate that room and the works there stored by means of the same kind of apparatus used in the chapels, just smaller in size. Pictures on the walls are lit by adjustable projectors, equipped with halogen bulbs mounted on the lower part of the chandelier. Indirect lighting is obtained by a fitting with a metallic iodide bulb.

The famous painting by Caravaggio, Beheading St. John the Baptist, is lit by six projectors and is assembled on a light, self-supporting structure, placed behind the altar to avoid glares.

SACRISTY LIGHTING:

This is achieved by ten fittings placed on the cornice. They illuminate the lacunar barrel vault. The picture on the altar is illuminated by halogen bulb adjustable projectors.

The whole lighting project employs 181 light fittings, 11 chandeliers in the church; 4 chandeliers and 16 projectors in the oratory; 16 fittings in the sacristy, with a total power of about 28 kw.

For the best flexibility, control circuits allow different configurations and intensities, according



STEFANO DALL'OSSO

Stefano Dall'Osso is one of the most famous Italian lighting designers.

Born in Fermo, Marche, in 1963, he started his career as a lighting technician consultant with FAEL Luce, of Agrate Brianza (Milan). He soon became an expert in the field, and has collaborated with leading companies in Italy in the area of the production of light fittings. In 2000, he opened his own studio in Fermo, where he leads a 9 person multi disciplinary team (architects, industrial lighting designers, technicians with different skills). The Studio Dall'Osso carried out numerous projects for the lighting of important public and private sites, particularly those having historical and artistic interest, both in Italy and other countries.

Dall'Osso is also a lecturer at the Centro Sperimentale di Design of Ancona, the Libera Accademia della Luce of Umbertide (Perugia), and reporter to the Accademia della Luce of Florence. He is also a member of APIL Italia (Associazione Professionisti dell'Illuminazione), and works for the promotion of the professional image of the lighting designer in Italy.

In recent years, he has extended his work to include the design of new light fittings, giving a remarkable impulse to design in the field.

A book on his life and work, L'Avventura dell'Uomo di Rame, was published in 2005.

In the completed work for the project of St. John's new lighting installation, an important role was played by a few members of the Studio: Architect Dr. Cecilia Rampini, Industrial Lighting Designer Dr. Mauro Aragona and Cad Designer Annalisa Giommarini.

to the future needs for different kinds of events and celebrations.

The installation will be completed by May, 2006.

20th Century Churches

Architect **Conrad Thake** selects four modern churches that were designed and built during the second half of the twentieth century. These churches are all masterpieces of modern architecture and each reflects the creative ingenuity of their designer.

**CHURCH OF ST FRANCIS,
PAMPULHA, BRAZIL (1943)
ARCHITECTS: OSCAR
NIEMEYER (1907-)**



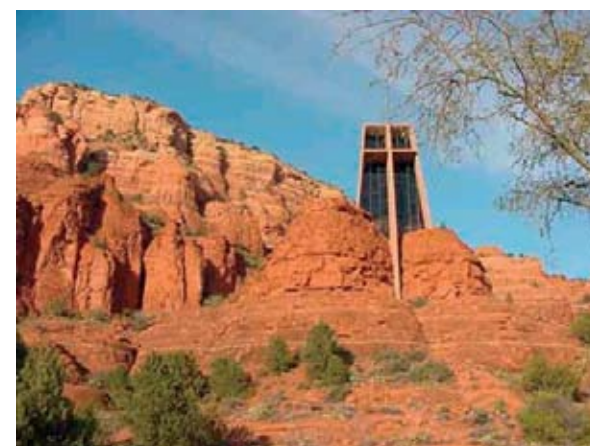
The church of St Francis was built in 1943 and is part of the Pampulha Lagoon architectural complex designed by Oscar Niemeyer. Sited on a promontory some distance from the Pampulha amusement complex, this small church embodies an entirely revolutionary use of concrete for ecclesiastical purposes. At the time of its construction the only comparably daring structure had been Auguste Perret's vertical and largely precast structure

at Raincy in France, built in 1924. Niemeyer employed the plastic qualities of concrete by using the same structural element for walls and roof in a series of parabolic arches. The outer screen wall on the north side is finished with a tiled mural depicting scenes from the life of St. Francis.

The Pampulha Church had of necessity to maintain some spirit which prevails in the other buildings of that locality designed by Niemeyer and to show a faith in the plastic possibilities of contemporary methods of construction. Two great vaults cover the nave and high altar and dominate the whole composition which develops into successive vaulting at the rear. The bell tower and the marquee at the entrance serve as contrasting elements.

The building provoked, however, a great deal of animosity among some people. One mayor went as far as to propose the demolition of the building and its replacement by a copy of the church of Saint Francis in Ouro Preto. Prevented from doing this, he proceeded to have the church filled with altars, benches and pews of miscellaneous origin. Finally, the National Department of Artistic and Historical Patrimony decided to take the church under its jurisdiction, saving it from those who were either unable or unwilling to understand it.

**CHAPEL OF THE HOLY CROSS,
SEDONA, ARIZONA, USA (1955-1956)
ARCHITECTS: ANSHEN & ALLEN**



In 1932 Marguerite Brunswig Staude (1899-1988), an Oak Creek resident, sculptress and rancher had a reoccurring vision of a cross on the newly completed Empire State Building in New York. The cross became a recurring theme in her life during the next twenty five years. She felt inspired to get the assistance of architect Frank Lloyd Wright and to build a skyscraper cathedral in Hungary. When World War II broke out, they cancelled their plans. Finally in 1955, her dream was realised with

the building of the Chapel of the Holy Cross in Sedona. The Chapel is 250 feet high and emerges from a 1,000-foot wall. It seems to be suspended in the blue sky and clouds. The red rock cross can be seen from miles around Sedona. The Chapel was the first contemporary structure built as a Catholic Church. The American Institute of Architects gave it "The Award of Honor" in 1957. In Marguerite's words, "Though Catholic in faith, as a work of art the Chapel has a universal appeal. Its doors will ever be open to one and all, regardless of creed, that God may come to life in the souls of all men and be a living reality."

**SAN GIOVANNI CHIESA
"DELL'AUTOSTRADA",
FLORENCE (1960-1964)
ARCHITECT: GIOVANNI
MICHELUCCI (1907-1975)**



Giovanni Michelucci was seventy-three years of age when his design for a church, the "Chiesa dell'Autostrada" as it has become known, was completed in 1964. Located at a motorway junction on the outskirts of Florence, it is arguably his most famous work. As a keen advocate of modernism, from his early encounters with the futurist Filippo

Tommaso Marinetti, Michelucci later became intimately involved with some of the most important Italian Fascist projects from 1932 to 1940. But even within the polemical climate of the 1930s, he still managed to maintain an unconstrained position, a balancing act between Rationalist culture and the academic and authoritarian culture of Marcello Piacentini (the chief architect of the Fascist state). So it was from Piacentini's shadow, more than anyone else's, that Michelucci emerged after the collapse of the regime allowing him to return once again, to the aspirations of his youth: of a modern architecture from within which "tradition" could find new means of expression.

The design of the "Chiesa dell'Autostrada" itself, Michelucci said, "came out at a time in which I had taken the liberty to sing a song, which I had improvised", and as a result is often classified as the work of an eclectic. Michelucci attempted to force an architectural logic of distorted forms, the outcome of a continued protest waged against the formal imperative since the days of Rationalism. In this sense it was a revolutionary building, but at the same time the most resolved of his buildings: a resolution of the choices he had made and designs he had tried during the previous decade.

**WOTRUBA CHURCH,
VIENNA (1974-1976)
ARCHITECT: FRITZ
WOTRUBA (1907-1975)**

The Church of the Holy Trinity (Kirche Zur Heiligsten Dreifaltigkeit) in Vienna, better known as the Wotruba Church is located in Liesing, the 23rd District of Vienna. It was constructed in the period 1974-1976, on the



basis of a model prepared by Fritz Wotruba. Wotruba died before the completion of the church, which was inspired by a visit to Chartres. To Wotruba, Chartres represented the essence of Europe, and Wotruba subsequently held up Chartres as a yardstick to his own work. Wotruba was first and foremost a sculptor, and the church was a collaboration with Fritz G. Mayr, who continued the work after Wotruba's death.

The church startles at first glance, resembling more an enlarged piece of abstract sculpture. It provides visitors with the unique opportunity to enter into an art form more often viewed on a much smaller scale. The building consists of 152 asymmetrically arranged concrete blocks of a size between 0.84 cu m (1.84 t) to 64 cu m (141 t); the highest block measures 13.10m. The church, which borders the Wienerwald, is 30m long, 22m wide, and 15.5m high. The unusual modernist design created some local resistance.

During the Third Reich, the site where the church is located housed the German Wehrmacht barracks. However, today the Wotruba Church looks down on Vienna and far into the Marchfeld through a profusion of trees and shrubbery - a fitting blend of nature's beauty and one man's vision of a temple to God in today's modern world.

Sacred Spaces Today

Simone Vella Lenicker spoke to **Fr Hilary Tagliaferro**, Director of the Millenium Chapel Foundation, about the makings of sacred spaces. What are the characteristics of sacred spaces, and what are people looking for in sacred spaces today?

"Beauty is the only way for contemporary man to arrive at belief in God," was the immediate reply to my question. This quotation by Simone Thones enforces Fr Hilary's firm belief that beauty is a sure way to God, and that it raises the soul of those who see it to God. The power of beauty, he continued, lies in the fact that those who perceive it respond to it unthinkably and spontaneously.

Since its beginnings, the Catholic Church has valued art and culture as a means to help its congregations experience God. St John Chrysostom, who lived in the latter half of the first century AD, stated that "God created the arts in order that life might be held together by them, so that we should not separate ourselves from spiritual things." It is this love and respect of the arts that has been the driving force behind Church building, where spaces were adorned and enhanced with the aim of creating a space that is representative of all that is Divine.

Even today, the Church continues to value art and architecture. In an interview with Mgr José Manuel del Rio Carrasco, the Official of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Assets of the Vatican, The Malta Independent (08.04) reported him saying that Pope John Paul II "expressed the wish that art could be used to evangelise. Sacred art can reach the hearts and minds of many and spread the message that is ingrained in the Holy Scriptures. This

approach encapsulates the whole mission of the Church to spread the message of Christ."

In Fr Hilary's opinion, an important aspect to consider when commissioning an architect to design a sacred space is the spirituality of the architect himself or herself. How can one create a sacred space if one is not accustomed to "meeting God"? It is only through an experience of God that the architect and the artist can create a space that truly allows the user to encounter God. A good architect is one who can move the emotions of the public through his design, and this is all the more important in the creation of sacred spaces.

Today's society does not interpret beauty in the same way that was valid in the Baroque or Renaissance periods. Modern spaces are required to be beautiful in a different way to what was the norm in the past. In today's chaotic world, modern man looks for a space that inspires calm and tranquillity, a space that is not cluttered and over-stimulatory. Today's church-goers, in particular the younger generations, are looking for spaces where they feel at home, spaces that speak their language in all senses. This is possibly the reason why people are seeking smaller spaces rather than the massive, awe-inspiring constructions of the past. Smallness implies intimacy, and this is what people are after – a place without distractions, where they can be intimate with God, for a more personal relationship.

MODERN CHURCH-BUILDING IN MALTA



The facade of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church facing onto Hompesch Road

Photography by tA

"OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL" PARISH CHURCH, FGURA

1975 – 1985
ARCHITECT: VICTOR MUSCAT INGLOTT
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: GODFREY AZZOPARDI

When, in 1965, Fgura was granted the status of an independent parish, it became apparent that a church that met the needs of this residential town, which was experiencing a rapid growth in population, was required. The Carmelite friars set out to build a modern church that would meet the requirements of the town. "The new church is one of the most original and boldest structures to be built in reinforced concrete on the island." Its design is based on a square plan roofed over

The church seen from Reggie Miller Square, where the original three-dimensional experience of the church can be better appreciated.



The past century saw the building of a number of new churches in the Maltese islands. Most of these came about through an increase in the size of the population of a particular urban settlement, and replaced former edifices that had become too small to cater for the needs of the residents. Three of these are reviewed briefly by tA, with all quotations taken from the recently published book **"Malta - War and Peace, an Architectural Chronicle 1800-2000"** authored by **Conrad Thake** and the late **Quentin Hughes**.

by a concrete shell structure that is symmetric about both axes. The strength of the structure is derived from its form rather than its sheer mass. "Unfortunately, the highly-sculptural form of the concrete church can only be fully appreciated from an aerial perspective or bird's eye view as several three-storey high terraced buildings were constructed along two of its sides. Hence, externally one can only have a frontal view of the church which is far less dramatic than a three-dimensional vista as was originally planned had the church remained as a free-standing structure with open space around it."

"OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL" CHURCH, PACEVILLE

1967-1973
ARCHITECT: ARTHUR ZAMMIT

The foundation stone for this church was laid in June 1967, and the new church was intended to cater for the growth in size of this residential suburb. Zammit planned



Decked out for the Easter celebrations



Our Lady of Good Counsel Church; internal view

this church with a semicircular form, with the roof being supported by a series of slender reinforced concrete columns and cantilever beams. A masonry bell-tower flanks the church.

"Zammit's church design, though not as structurally daring, appears to have been influenced by the modernist designs of Oscar Niemeyer for various buildings in the new city of Brasilia. Today, the church is completely overshadowed by the Portomaso tower which immediately adjoins the site of the church and convent."



The church is now overshadowed by the Portomaso tower

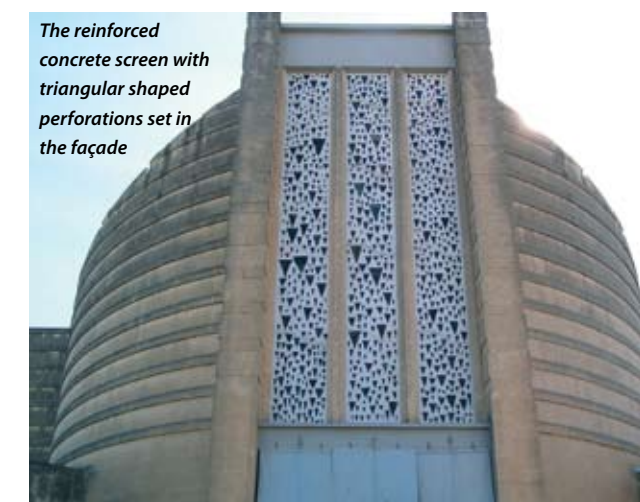
"ALL SOULS" CHURCH, TARIEN

1864-1987
DESIGN ARCHITECT: MGR VALERIO VIGORELLI
EXECUTIVE ARCHITECT: ITALO RANIOLO

This small modernist church is constructed within the cemetery grounds adjoining the Tarxien Neolithic temples. In the post-war period, Tarxien's population grew considerably, and a new church was needed to cater for this growth. Mgr Vigorelli, architect and director of the school

of Christian art at the Istituto Neato Angelico in Milan, was entrusted with the design. Based on an elliptical plan, the design of this church seems to be inspired by the nearby temples. "The curved walls rise towards the entrance portal which is set at one end of the long axis. The façade is constructed in local masonry with alternating stone fascias projecting at regular intervals. Overlying the centrally-placed entrance and set within the façade is a reinforced concrete screen with triangular shaped perforations, recalling Gio Ponti's façade of the cathedral of Taranto."

All Souls Church, Tarxien



The reinforced concrete screen with triangular shaped perforations set in the façade

TOWARDS AN ARCHITECTURE OF THE SACRED

By Richard England

INTRODUCTION

"The greatest challenge for the architect remains the church."

Antonio Gaudi

Religious architecture is the manifestation of man's attempts to create sacred spaces to pay homage or to pray to his God or pantheon of gods. Since ancient times these spaces have always been expressed according to mankind's current understanding of the Divine. The belief and theology of each particular period have always been the guide lines and parameters for the making of man's spaces for worship. Ever since his earliest existence man has realised that in relation to the totality of the cosmos he plays but a small part. In order to come to terms with these forces beyond recognition he has always paid homage and made offerings to the deity of his creed, in an attempt to link the voice of humanity to that of the gods. It is true to say that the greatest architectural works of all civilisations have been accomplished in buildings of worship; a manifestation of man's respects and fears of the powers of the Divine and of his quest to reach out to the spiritual. Always in this genre of building man attempts to outlast and defy time in establishing a relationship with the eternal timelessness of the Divine.



Hal-Farruġ Church interior, I/o Luqa,



Dar il-Hanin Samaritan Chapel, Santa Venera, Malta. Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis

ANCIENT SITES

"Looking upward the sage contemplated the images in the heavens; looking downward he observed the patterns on earth."

Fu Hsi, (First Emperor of China)

The ancient builders of sacred sites had an innate ability to locate their places of worship at specific earth-focussed or sky-oriented locations. Perhaps, because the architects of pre-history were high priests, magicians and myth-makers they were able, with a knowledge now lost to choose sites pregnant with energies, which were not only uplifting to human consciousness, but were also mystically bonded to both the earth and the heavens. Through their understanding of geomancy, astronomy

and geometry, space was given meaning and transfigured into place, which was then in turn sanctified into meaningful loci of sacrality.

Malta's own Neolithic temple complex at Mnajdra is a clear example of such an ancient builders' sophisticated ability to relate to terrestrial and celestial alignments through an awe and respect for both cosmic powers and earth forces. It seems that all ancient sacred sites were specifically earth or sky oriented. The oracle at Delphi located on a geological fault emitted gases capable of altering human consciousness and fume-induced trances; a testimony to the ability of ancient man to cross the threshold of the secular into the magical and mystical realm of the Divine.

SACRED SPACES TODAY

"I wanted to create a place of silence, of prayer, of peace, of internal joy."

Le Corbusier, (Dedication speech Ronchamp 1955)

Despite the fact that over many millennia, and more so in the last century, man has made giant strides in the field of scientific knowledge and communications, to this day he still knows least about what matters most. The problem of the contemporary concept of sacredness and that of bringing the Divine into today's soul-less life-patterns becomes even more complex because of our contemporary secular-oriented society.

The sacred today faces strong competition.

The church must therefore offer a living dynamic response to the continuous mass media flow of materialistic information. The problem which one is now confronted with is that of how the architect of today can combine the rich readily available sophisticated technology, together with his personal artistic quality and I would add, faith, to produce places of prayer which are not only relevant to our time, but which are conducive and attractive to a commercially

media saturated and brainwashed audience. Yet it is also a ripe time for the church to seriously re-think its spaces and functions as crowd pullers, since it seems that man today is searching for the *spiritual* and the *infinite*. Perhaps because the *finite* has provided little substance in the recent past, the infant years of the new millennium have demonstrated that man's long standing love affair with science and technology is waning. Man today is focussing more on

the mystical world of magic, fairy tales and other mystical legends in an attempt to escape the violence and horror that constantly surround him. Recent Hollywood productions such as Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Narnia and others are a clear indication of this. It may therefore not be that difficult to satisfy this search for the spiritual by channelling it into its ultimate most



Millennium Chapel, Paceville, Malta. Photo: Peter Bartolo Parnis



Hal-Farruġ Church exterior, I/o Luqa, Malta.



Church of St Joseph, Manikata, Malta. Photo: Daniel Cilia

valid destination, that of man's communication with the Divine. Perhaps a return to bare essentials in the making of sacred spaces is an appropriate road to take. "Less is more" would be a good axiom! Certainly it would serve as a welcome antidote to our island's still prevailing ostentatious culture of a Baroque typology, where simplicity is read as poverty and more is never enough. The church of today must be conceived as an arena of gathering for prayer which aesthetically and functionally relates to man's present beliefs and his current understanding of the liturgy.

Contemporary sacred spaces must essentially read as *communication* arenas with no divide between clergy and public. It was Pope Pius X in 1903 who first planted the initial seeds for the congregation to no longer remain spectators but to actively participate as co-celebrants. These changes were finally crystallised in the publication of the Vatican II document in 1963. The church of the third millennium must therefore be conceived as a place of welcome and convocation. No longer seen to be the house of God, nor a pre-echo of heaven, the new spaces, conducive to prayer, meditation and spiritual growth, must be arenas which promote convergence and dialogue between man and his Creator. The contemporary church must ultimately be seen as a sacred locus where sacred time and sacred space are brought together to evoke the sacred ritual of eternal Presence. The church today as an institution, if it must have credibility, must also dedicate time and toil to the life patterns of its community through concern and care for the problems of youth, family, the elderly and society in general.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

"Beauty is the only way for contemporary man to arrive at belief in God."

Simone Weil

My own body of works of religious spaces spreads over four decades. These works have comprised private prayer spaces (it has always worried me why so few clients demand a space for prayer in private houses), houses for the dead and public prayer arenas. In all of these projects I have attempted to create pastures of meditative solitude where the solitude is not one of loneliness, but one of communion. Sacrality together with a specific relationship to the Zeitgeist of our time are aspects which I consider paramount. Above all I continue to believe that the necessity of spiritual solace in life can never be over estimated; without it man is caught up in an apocalyptic cul de sac.

SELECTED WORKS

Church of St Joseph, Manikata, Malta (1962-1974)

Designed in 1962 pre-empting the requisites of church design as laid down in Vatican II, Manikata was visualised as a symbol of a new spirit. Its innovative forms, however, still recalled its origins and spirit of place, making it a church for today designed on the foundations of yesterday; a form of continuity within change. Its departure from traditional Baroque forms caused havoc with the ecclesiastical authorities which initially refused to accept the design. My intention was to produce a building which was to read as a house for the community rather than as a residence of the Deity. »



Filfla Chapel, Malta

Dar il-Hanin Samaritan Chapel, Santa Venera, Malta (1996)

An interior of optimism, brightness and serenity conceived as a place where one can pray bathed and washed in a resplendent luminance as reflected through the blue-glass block grid walls.

Filfla Chapel, Malta (2005)

The Filfla chapel (vide *the Architect* No. 34) was originally presented to the ecclesiastical authorities in 1998 in concept form as a proposal for the celebration of the Millennium. Turned down on that occasion it was eventually developed in 2005. The concept involves a dugout troglodyte structure on the southern coast of Malta with a window opening on the cliff-side

overlooking the iconic islet of Filfla. The project is meant to carry Filfla's previous religious intensity over to the present day, now transfiguring it into a Christian altar, at the same time celebrating contemporary man's renewed respect for nature and its forms.

Millennium Chapel, Paceville, Malta (2000)

Conceived by Fr Hilary Tagliaferro and the Augustinian Community in Paceville as an oasis of peace for the clubbers descending to this popular night-life area, the chapel is designed to provide a comforting place of refuge and contemplation in contrast to its surrounding noisy environment; a locus of silence conceived for quiescent muted meditation. The end wall with its empty cross and halogen-lit starry sky evokes its visitors to transcend the threshold from the materialistic, secular outside world to the spiritual arena of the Divine.

Hal-Farrug Church, I/o Luqa, Malta (2005)

A recently designed project for the village of Hal-Farrug comprising a play of inclined

cylindrical volumes, which despite their apparent displacement, stand in balanced equilibrium. The interior uses infused light as a metaphor for salvation. The main cylindrical form focusses on a behind the altar garden and is primarily designed as a locus of welcome, convocation and spirituality. The project is at present under consideration by the church authorities.

Triangle of Peace, Malta (1998-2006)

A current project which for the last years I have been contemplating is the possibility of building a Mosque, a Synagogue and a Christian Chapel at the apexes of an equilateral triangle/piazza, thus bringing together the three Monotheistic religions. This meeting area would also serve as a communal threshold to the three sacred spaces. The concept of the threshold from secular to sacred has to me always been of paramount importance; conceived as a delicate cross-over zone between two worlds and yet paradoxical the arena where the secular and the Divine meet and join. Access from the common parvis would provide a much needed bond of fraternity area between the practitioners of these faiths. The concept of this project also provides the manifestation of the late John Paul II's

dream of the unification of these religions. Malta, with its history and background, at the crossroads of the Mediterranean is an ideal geological, historical, religious and social location for this project. Although long discussed with local religious and secular authorities the project as yet remains unrealised.

CONCLUSION

"The soul needs more space than the body."
Axel Munthe

In the creations of these sacred spaces together with many others, I have always attempted to design places where the spiritual overrides the materialistic; to create arenas of sacrality where one's spirit may be *transfigured* from that of an earthbound closed chrysalis to that of a heaven focussed winged butterfly. Always, these sacred spaces have been fashioned with hands of love, belief and faith. As such I would like to think of them as beacons of light drawing people closer to the Almighty, which reflect in built-form the words of C.S. Lewis,

"inside my empty bottle while others were making ships I was constructing a lighthouse."



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PAYMENT DETAILS

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KTP membership entitles paid-up only members to a number of benefits, including:

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- Discounted rates for participation in the diverse CPD programmes organised by the KTP.

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- Complimentary weekly copy of *Business Today*, published by *Mediatoday*.
- Opportunities to network with

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KTP is currently negotiating deals with a number of corporate partners that will entitle its members to avail themselves of a number of benefits, including competitive insurance rates when taking out Professional Indemnity insurance policies as will be made obligatory under forthcoming legislation.

- Through affiliation with the Malta Federation of Professional Associations, members will also be able to avail themselves of discounted Life and Health Insurance policies with BUPA.



Drafting a National Policy for Architecture

By Keith Cole

The KTP in conjunction with Heritage Malta, after securing the support of Government, Leader of the Opposition and other constituted bodies, has embarked on the process of co-ordinating the drafting

process of a National Policy for Architecture. This raises two not unreasonable questions: "What is a National Policy for Architecture?" and "Does Malta need one?" Clearly the building industry operates within a setting of diverse national interests. The scope of this drafting exercise is first to understand the local conditions and milieu and to recognise boundaries within which the industry is encouraged to operate in the interest of society. As a result of this information and knowledge the decision-makers shall seek to promote policy changes directed towards improvement in quality of life in Malta, with particular attention to economic, social and environmental well-being.

The Council of Ministers of the European Union approved Resolution No. 2001/C73/04 on Architectural Quality in Urban and Rural Environments on 12th February 2001. This stimulated the drafting and promulgation of a number of national policies in several European Countries. In 2004 the Architects' Council of Europe, to which KTP is affiliated, issued all-encompassing guidelines titled "Architecture and Quality of Life", encouraging the adoption of national policies.

The scope of the National Policy for Architecture shall be:

- to foster consumers informed of their rights to enjoy a built environment which is socially, economically and environmentally sound;
- to work towards achieving a sustainable built environment for today's and tomorrow's beneficiaries; to become aware of and protect cultural aspects of the built environment; and
- to contribute towards achieving good governance in architectural matters.

Representatives of various ministries, authorities and organisations met last February and March. The second meeting was a half-day workshop where initial thoughts were registered on five topics to which architecture is intrinsically related, namely environment and sustainability, society and culture, employment and economics, general education and the education of architects, and government, both local and central.

WHAT IS BEING DEBATED? Architecture and Economy

The Lisbon Agenda (2000) aims to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world. Given that we are constantly seeking a better quality of life, how can architecture and architectural services contribute to the strengthening of the economy? Considering that the construction industry benefits from the services of tradesmen and craftsmen often operating as SMEs, what is being done to ensure a fair distribution of quality-based work for these?

The Public Client has a special responsibility to society in raising quality standards. A noteworthy development is the Directive for Public Procurement which takes the environment and quality aspects into account in public purchasing. Should government have a strategy to spread the notion of environment and quality criteria throughout its tendering process? Despite government's best intentions in favour of value for money, quality, environmental impact and costing-in-use, is the lowest price still the main criterion in tender adjudication? What forms of training and checks may encourage good governance in public procurement?

Architecture as cultural expression

Heritage Malta's chairman Dr Mario Tabone often reminds us that "Today's architecture shall become tomorrow's heritage". Are we nurturing a milieu which encourages artistic development and creativity in the arts? Do art and architecture convey the spirit and meaning of beauty? Which pre-conditions need to be ascertained to develop the art and craft of architecture?

Innovation and sustainability are two crucial elements for the construction sector, both separately and in combination, to create conditions for a lasting record of our time. Because the built environment often lacks at least one of these two elements, it is not achieving its potential to become the cherished cultural heritage of the future. How significant are our demands for innovation and sustainability in the development of local architecture? What can be done to stimulate these two drivers of progress?

Architecture in Education - Educating Architects

Should education about architectural concepts commence as early as pre-school years? Should knowledge of our local architecture feature in the national curriculum? What would we like to pass on to or preserve for future generations?

Can we sincerely aspire to create "high" architecture given that the perit practices in both architecture and civil engineering? Do these two disciplines require

similar aptitudes from practitioners? Are we investing enough resources into educating the perit?

Architecture as an intrinsic element of the Environment

Acknowledging the work undertaken in drafting a National Strategy for Sustainable Development, how can the careful use of natural resources in construction be encouraged? What can be done to encourage recycling of spent construction products and the regular use of sustainable building products and techniques? Should government reward such positive action with tax incentives or other means?

Further, how do planners ensure that new urban development strategies are environmentally sensitive? Is this reflected in Local Plans and Structure Plan?

Local councils, government and regulatory authorities

What are the roles and responsibilities of individuals and local councils in improving their immediate urban and rural environments? Should LCs be given greater rights of ownership in order to produce public spaces and amenities closer to their community's needs, and what parameters would assist them in improving the quality of their locality's urban space? What enticements/assurances would improve the provision of quality public spaces? Do Local Plans go far enough in improving quality of life for our citizens? Is determination of land use a sufficient tool in order to improve quality of life in our towns and villages, and what role can LCs play in making local plans their own?

CONCLUSION

The draft National Policy for Architecture would therefore be expected to include policy recommendations to stimulate and expect quality in both the built and rural environment, quality in the provision of architectural services, quality in education at all levels, sound sustainable development strategy, consumer protection and informed purchasers of goods and services, innovative public finance strategies, aesthetic value in our choices, good governance, a society content with the quality of life afforded by its built and rural environment, a holistic approach in developing policies in favour of sustainability and economic growth and a fair distribution of responsibility amongst all players and beneficiaries to provide a pleasant environment for our citizens.

KTP is committed to assist in the creation of appropriate conditions for the provision of a better quality of life. This is being stated with a modern understanding of social well-being, education and culture, and economic growth in a sustainable environment.

The potential application of urban design codes in the Maltese planning system

By Perit Antoine Zammit, MSc (Lond)

INTRODUCTION

The Maltese built environment is experiencing challenging times. This is a legacy of a multitude of circumstances – uncontrolled building activity in the recent decades, the misuse and misinterpretation of vague planning policies and the absence of appropriate design policies or guidance.

Urban design currently plays a limited role on the Maltese planning agenda; numerous urban design policies, principles and elements are absent from site-specific Local Plans and the recent Development Control Policy and Design Guidance 2005 (DC2005) produced by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA). The results of this deficiency in the Maltese planning system are reflected in the ever-increasing incompatibility of environments, as the dense urban fabric becomes more complex with increasing projects.

At a time when one of the fundamental aims of urban design – to create buildings and spaces that “combine to form an attractive public realm... which can be seen and enjoyed by the public” (Tibbalds,

p105) – seems to have been lost, a design response is needed to fill this gap and to instigate high quality urban design in the public realm. In this article it will be argued that urban design codes could be the best response to this deficiency. The aim of such codes would be to guarantee a number of urban design objectives and elements outlined for a locality or a Local Plan level.

The article presents the salient issues of a MSc (Town and Country Planning) dissertation carried out by the author at the Bartlett School of Planning, University College London. It highlights the characteristics and benefits of urban design codes, proposes a structure and potential content for Maltese design codes, discussing some urban design elements that these would include, and identifies situations where codes could be used in the short term together with the long-term implications of codes.

Some initial thoughts

Note that the focus is on ‘urban design codes’. The emphasis is deliberate, to exclude architectural codes while empha-

sising the urban context of various issues. Urban design codes address particular urban elements that together compose the public realm. The discussion of these individual elements continuously refers to the urban dimension without entering into their specific merits. The study is therefore concerned with finding those objective elements that can be coded, as opposed to subjective aesthetic judgements or features. This does not exclude the possibility of addressing basic architectural issues in design codes produced for specific contexts, but this would be unique to such localities.

This concern with ‘townscape’ therefore shifts the attention from individual buildings to the spaces defined by these buildings. It further suggests the need for visionary plans, or three-dimensional spatial plans, which can better treat the relationships between buildings and the spaces that surround them, while giving greater importance to the buildings’ massing composition. Such plans should form an integral component of an urban design framework together with the codes themselves (CABE 2004b, p16).

THE NEED FOR AN URBAN DESIGN APPROACH

A rapidly changing character

The rapid urbanisation over the past forty years has had consequential changes in settlement patterns. Families have moved out of their houses in the older, densely populated localities to apartments in lower-density suburbs. The structure of these suburbs is amorphous, lacking identifiable centres and edges or defined public space (MEPA 2004a, p11). Within existing localities (including UCAs), the “cacophony of designs” (MEPA 2004b, p101) of newer infill developments has been detrimental to the traditional Maltese streetscapes, heavily conflicting with the more vernacular building typologies contained therein. In both new and existing settlements, the abundance of garages catering for increased car usage has also had damaging consequences on the design of individual façades and streetscapes (MEPA 2004b, p101). In recent years there have further been frequent requests to demolish vernacular buildings within UCAs, replacing them

with higher blocks that are insensitive to the existing context (MEPA 2004b, p104). These buildings collectively constitute the historical urban fabric and character of the entire locality. Such demolition evidences the failure of existing regulations, resulting in situations where old houses become flanked by appallingly high party walls, as is the case with Sliema.

Large developments and compromised skylines

Given Malta’s scale, large developments have considerable repercussions on a significant area. Some recent sizeable developments were simply architectural statements transformed into inward-looking gated communities with no positive contribution to the public realm. In addition, the recent approval of a number of tower blocks, facilitated by vague planning criteria, has become another crucial and pressing issue. DC2005 forbids the application of the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) when new heights are not “compatible with... the character of the surrounding areas” (MEPA 2005, p27). Localities not covered by this vague restriction must now consequently house high-rise structures.

The deficiency of current planning documents

According to the Urban Topic Paper (UTP) (MEPA 2003), Local Plans should “(D) Include urban design/townscape concepts for the area and its surroundings” (MEPA 2003, p29, added emphasis).

A content analysis of these documents was carried out by the author, together with an examination of design policies at a more detailed level through DC2005. The analysis revealed that these documents are an inadequate source of reference for urban design issues, a fact further confirmed by the UTP itself (MEPA 2003, p33): “No Plan really develops urban design or townscape concepts...”

When present, the urban design terms and concepts are generally poorly defined and not aided by illustrations. Statements within the initial part of DC2005, such as “Contribute positively to the local environment” (MEPA 2005, p10); “Be compatible with its context” (MEPA 2005, p10); and “Amenity is not adversely affected” (MEPA 2005,

p13), become so vague as to be virtually meaningless. This phenomenon also renders these documents inadequate for the purpose of subsequent development control procedures.

The UTP further recognises the need for “... a quantitative and qualitative approach to building heights and density, which links with urban design issues in Local Plans ... and provides a policy framework for dealing with these based on the identification of character areas (MEPA 2003, p191, added emphasis) – a point that further confirms the pressing need for an urban design agenda.

The analysis also highlights a missing link between the ‘macro’ (regional) scale at Local Plan level and the ‘micro’ (building) scale at DC2005 level. No form of urban design documentation addresses the scales in between, ranging from ‘street’ to ‘town’ levels and verging on the ‘regional’ level itself (Figure 1).

What is an urban design code?

An urban design code is a detailed and prescriptive form of design guidance (CABE 2004a, p108) establishing fundamental design components, attributes or principles as part of an urban design

framework, development brief or masterplan (Carmona et al 2003, p251). In physical terms, a code is likely to comprise a three-dimensional masterplan of a development area or locality, detailed illustrations that develop the established design principles and written requirements (CABE 2003, p3).

A study of existing codes would reveal a number of variations in their remit of interest (ranging from a group of buildings to an entire area), their level of prescription and their actual form. In a sense, a code is a document as much as it is a process – one could effectively think of a code as a mechanism that implements design guidelines and/or standards in practice (CABE 2004b, p15). It translates a vision for an area into an operational framework that can be built.

Importantly, codes are formulated in support of an urban vision – they specify individual parts and their relation to each other, but the final outcome is undefined. Furthermore, while codes define visions for places and outline important design principles, individual designers are involved in implementing them and providing their own interpretations of them, thus generating variety (Figure 2).

How can codes be beneficial?

Design codes can offer designers a source of good guidance. The experience of codes in numerous other countries reveals that, by establishing design principles from an early stage and specifying a degree of standards, such codes have had a threefold effect:

1. They have improved and enforced design policies, making them less vague and giving them a more contextual scenario and practical application.
2. They have guaranteed that design outcomes across an entire development are of high quality.
3. They have offered a degree of certainty to developers and officials alike as well as the community at large. A faster (and fairer) decision process has therefore been guaranteed following agreement and compliance with the codes.

In this sense, therefore, an urban design code becomes a binding contract between a developer and

a locality – it gives the developer certain rights and requires in return the fulfilment of certain standards. In this way it guarantees that the wider community would truly obtain the outcome it would be expecting. This results in both greater certainty within the planning process and a greater guarantee of achieving high design standards (Carmona et al 2002, p18).

If insufficient attention is given to their formulation, however, codes could end up simply becoming formulaic rules, stifling design creativity in the process and ending up as modular, standardised designs without due regard to specificity and context. For this reason, their formulation and preparation relies heavily on good design skills (CABE 2004b, p27).

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Part 2 of this article will be published in the next issue of **TA**.

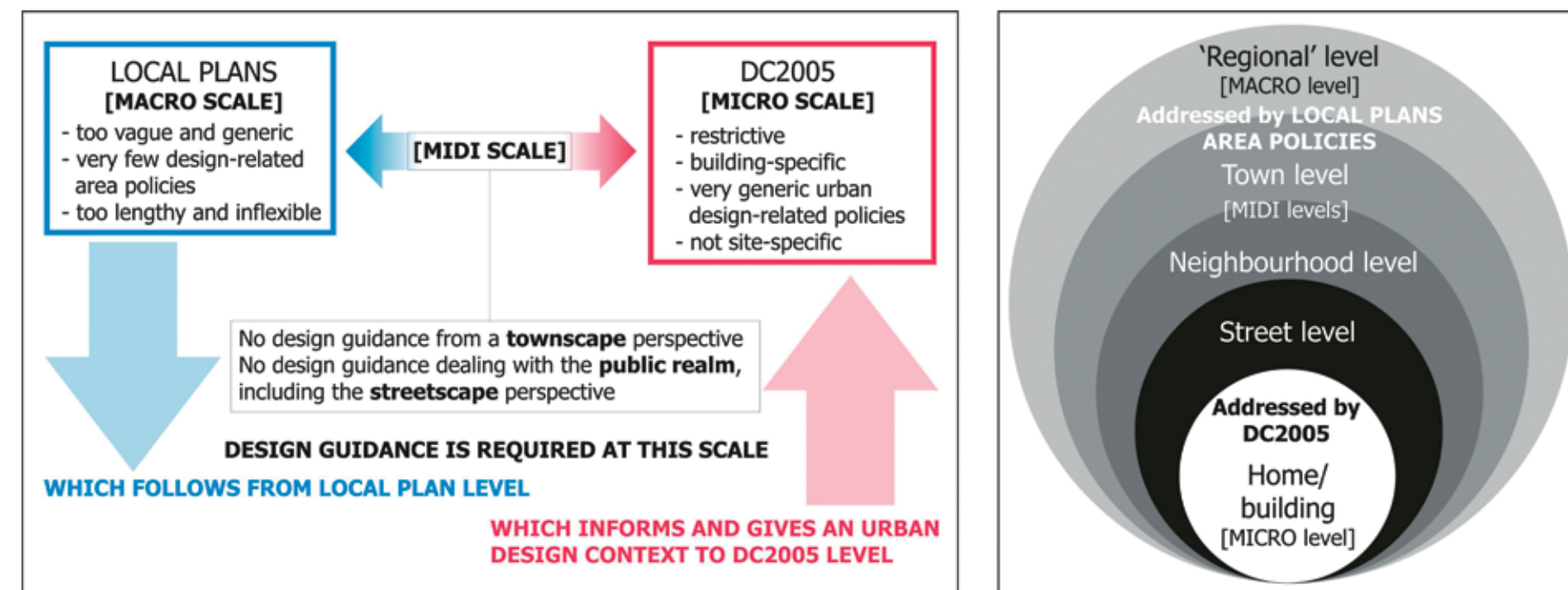
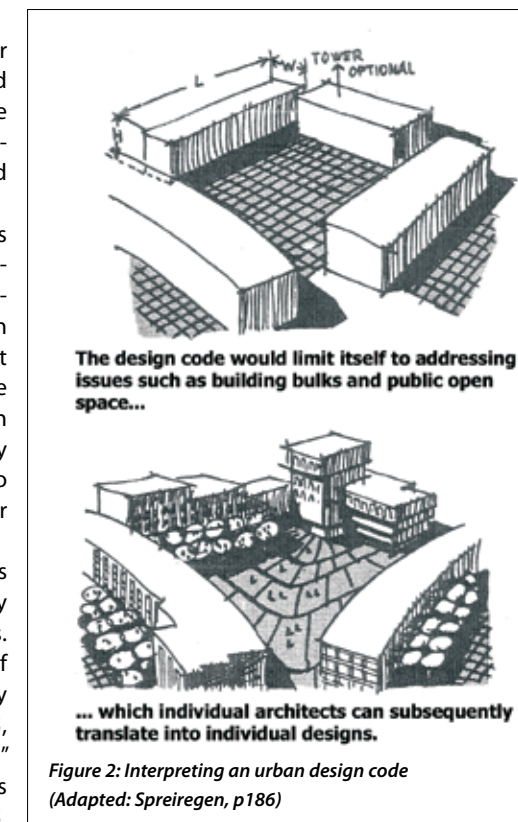


Figure 1: The macro-micro mismatch (left) and missing gaps in local policy-making (right, adapted: Barton et al, p67)



The Muslim Cemetery at Marsa (1871-74)

By Edward Said

During a visit to Malta in the late 19th century Abdul Aziz Khan, Sultan of Constantinople, insisted on paying a visit to the newly-constructed Mohammedan cemetery. So taken aback was he by its beauty that the prestigious Order of the Medjie was bestowed on its Maltese architect, Emanuele Luigi Galizia.

Galizia (1830-1906) needs little introduction in the local field of architecture. Apart from his revivalist affinities, this architect is acclaimed for his eclectic creativity which he acquired as his career progressed. Revivals and pseudo-styles were the norm around Europe. Galizia, who was a traveled man, took a great liking to this romantic movement and embodied it in some of his more famous commissions. The Addolorata Cemetery (almost complete by 1869) strategically set upon the Tal-orr hillside is one such example. It stands as Galizia's largest and most celebrated undertaking.

Just as civil works were nearing completion on this national necropolis, Galizia was engaged to design a more diminutive burial ground, this time for the Muslim community residing in Malta. His concept for this cemetery exploited the character of the brief he was given, together with his acquired tastes for exotic forms. Galizia went for Oriental-Islamic ornament with its typically intricate qualities. When on tour in England he



most likely visited John Nash's Royal Brighton Pavilion (1815-21). Again, this was a style very much in fashion in Britain and the colonies. Much of this inspiration came from India, back then regarded as the crowning glory of the British Empire.

The rectangular plot set in a relatively flat landscape was also opportune for the use of vertical members such as minarets with onion-shaped finials. As with the Addolorata, Galizia also introduced the use of architectural trees as part of the landscaping, this time for the Muslim setting using ubiquitous palm trees. The carved lace-like perimeter walls are pierced by a lofty, horseshoe arched gateway through which one enters the cemetery. The only rooms present are chambers in which funerary rituals were performed prior to interment.

The constrained geometry of the site seems to have inspired Galizia into designing the orthogonal layout of the burial ground, perhaps more akin with classical grammars. It is here that his inclinations towards a fusion of styles begin to manifest themselves. The result was a symmetrically apportioned garden-like necropolis interspaced with sober horizontal grave slabs and simply engraved tombstones. Galizia's sensitivity towards landscaping is evident again in the presence of flowerbeds. During the spring the cemetery abounds with blossoms and flowers appropriately recalling the Muslim vision of paradise.

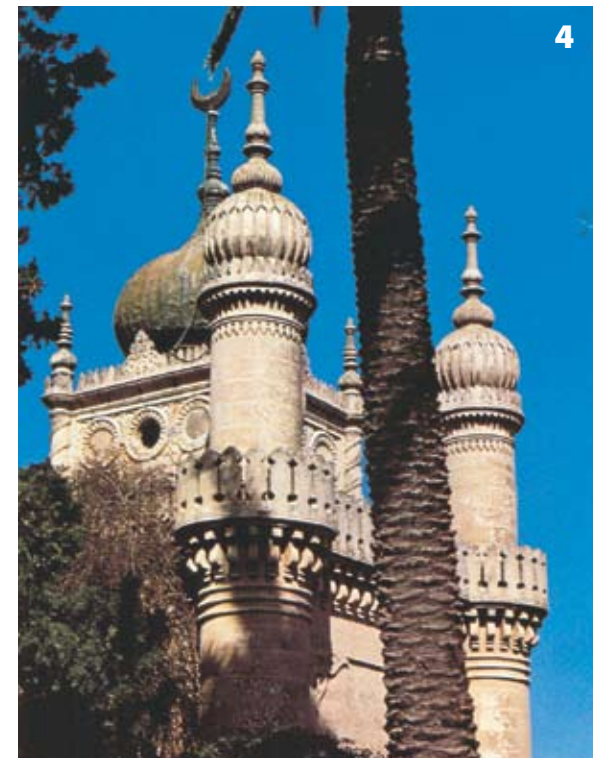
The arcades, towers, central ablutions fountain all delicately carved with muqarna decorations, arabesque tracery and crenellations all attest to Galizia's great abilities. His fondness for this locally unprecedented Indo-Muslim style will be later expressed in his 'Moorish' houses in Sliema. Yet with these the eclecticism that he developed in his architecture becomes strongly idiosyncratic.

E.E. Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79) lamented that the nineteenth century was coming to a close without ever possessing an architecture of its own. He called creations of the pseudo-eclectic kind "hybrid works without character and impossible to classify".

Also an outcome of this nostalgic appreciation of the past were the conservation interventions synonymous with this period carried out on 'authentic' monuments.

Today the Muslim Cemetery stands on the edge of a teeming industrial district. Now well over a century old, its crisp, almost weightless stonework is starting to succumb to a variety of deterioration mechanisms. With a larger Muslim burial ground being prepared up near the Corradino mosque,

Galizia's masterpiece should now be given the historical credit it truly deserves with a comprehensive conservation program being implemented before it is too late.



CAPTIONS

1. Muslim paradise - detail showing one of the ornamental screens found in the wall surrounding the burial grounds (photo by Edward Said)
2. Before industrial engulfment - a general shot of the necropolis taken prior to the surroundings being built up with factories (source unknown)
3. Freshly built - the chambers in which funerary rituals were performed on the deceased prior to interment; posing are most likely the caretaker and his family (photo by Richard Ellis)
4. Feeling of the Orient - minarets, onion-domes and a crescent, stand in the shade of lofty palm trees (photo by Edward Said)

NEW SACRED ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is asked to deliver many things to many people – shelter, comfort and beauty, expanding to more programmatic or formalistic requirements. The demands of religious structures may include all of these, but it is the extra thing that they must provide or at least facilitate – spirituality – that sets them apart from secular buildings.

Having 358 illustrations, this timely book reflects an awakening of interest in religious faiths and the emergence of a global exchange of architecture and culture. For centuries, religious commissions have given architects the opportunity to invent and experiment in ways that small private or even large corporate projects could not. Many architects are finding that spiritual buildings present exciting opportunities for experimentation with form, function and materials.

While Spain's Rafael Moneo has recently completed a cathedral in Los Angeles, Britain's Thomas Heatherwick is designing a Buddhist temple in Japan, John Pawson is working on a Cistercian monastery in the Czech Republic and Richard Meier has completed his Jubilee Church in Rome. It seems, as one Wallpaper pundit commented, "religion is getting a redesign" and the architect's faith is as unimportant as his or her nationality.

Looking at ways in which contemporary architects are

approaching religious or meditative space, this book focuses on 41 churches, chapels, temples, synagogues and mosques that have been built in the last few years and that represent a late-twentieth/early-twenty-first century aesthetic. These buildings demonstrate how new ideas and developments in urban, domestic and public architecture are being used to inform design that is intended for inspiration, worship or meditation. The text discusses the ways in which architects manipulate light and space and considers the placement of these buildings in their surroundings.

Following a brief introduction, the book explores the following five themes: New Traditions; Experimenting with Form; Interventions – Fitting into the Landscape; Retreats – Rural Sanctuaries; Grand Icons – Prayer and Worship on a Large Scale; and Modest Magnificence – High Ideals and Humble Materials.

This book is not a definitive study but it helps give an idea of what the architects are working with and how they have departed from or adhered to traditions. Architect Bernard Desmoulin explains that "because of its metaphysical value, religious

architecture frees itself from a strict adherence to utility to achieve a mystical and poetic dimension. In this regard it corresponds generally to a real demand of architecture."

Author: Phyllis Richardson
Hardcover 224 pages (October 2004)
Publisher: Laurence King Publishing
Language: English
ISBN: 1856693848



www.churchplansonline.org

The website of the Incorporated Church Building Society www.churchplansonline.org, is an extremely comprehensive information source for Anglican Churches in England and Wales.

The website provides an online archive of Church projects since 1818 including 12,600 digitised plans, building specs, artists' impressions, photographs and much more information which might be the only surviving evidence of some Churches that have been demolished.

The search facility is straightforward and effective at reaching the desired church data. Accessing and viewing of low-resolution images is free of charge. However, high-quality prints are also available subject to a fee.



www.religiousarchitecture.org

www.religiousarchitecture.org is the website of the Center for Religious Architecture that deals with the sacred aspect of architecture design as a reflection of the divine, an experience of the sacred and a provision of forms for spiritual energy flow.

A project being undertaken by the Center is to build scale models of worldwide, inter-religious churches in order to better appreciate the various ways with which different cultures express the sacred.

The Center also organises visits to sacred locations around the world. The next scheduled event is a visit to Russian Orthodox Churches and Cathedrals which will take place in June 2006.



Now to 22 April, Gallery 2, RIBA, UK

FRAMEWORK: THE ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF HENK SNOEK

www.riba-gallery.com



Now to 22 May 2006; Royal Academy of Arts, UK

URBAN EYRIE: A HAVEN IN THE CITY

www.rafocus.org.uk

Now to 4 June 2006,

Architecture Exhibition Gallery, V&A, UK

THE MODERN SHOP: ARCHITECTURE AND SHOPPING BETWEEN THE WARS

www.architecture.com

Now to 4 June 2006; Tate Modern, UK

ALBERS AND MOHOLY-NAGY: FROM THE BAUHAUS TO THE NEW WORLD

www.tate.org.uk



Now to 11 June 2006; The Netherlands Architecture Institute, Netherlands

GISPEN IN ROTTERDAM: REPRESENTING MODERNISM

www.nai.nl

Now to 20 July 2006 ; The Lighthouse, Glasgow, Scotland

ARCHITECTURE IN SCOTLAND 2004 -2006

www.thelighthouse.co.uk

Now to 27 August 2006;

Swedish Museum of Architecture, Sweden

BRUNO MATHSSON: DESIGNER AND ARCHITECT

www.arkitekturmuseet.se

23-27 April, 2006; Birmingham, UK

INTERBUILD – THE BUILDING SHOW

www.interbuild.com

April – July 2006; Victoria and Albert Museum, UK

EXHIBITION - MODERNISM: DESIGNING A NEW WORLD

www.vam.ac.uk



3-5 May 2006; Stockholm, Sweden

“URBAN FUTURES 2.0” – CONFERENCE

www.urbanfutures.se

3-7 May, 2006; Istanbul, Turkey

TURKEYBUILD 2006: INTERNATIONAL BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES TRADE SHOW

www.yem.net

3-18 May 2006 ; Gallery 2, RIBA, UK

AJ SMALL PROJECTS

www.architecture.com

31 May - 2 June 2006 ; Edinburgh, Scotland

INSPIRING CITIES OWHC CONFERENCE

www.ewht.org.uk

4-6 June 2006 ; ExCel London, UK

GRAND DESIGNS LIVE 2006

www.granddesignslive.com/

7-9 June 2006; Madrid, Spain

BUILDING EXCHANGE (B-E-X) 2006

“WHERE PROPERTY MEETS THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT”

www.b-e-x.com

11 June – 3 September 2006 ; The Netherlands

Architecture Institute, Netherlands

CHINA IN ROTTERDAM: CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN CHINA

www.nai.nl

17-25 June 2006; London, UK

LAB '06: LONDON ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

www.londonbiennale.org.uk

3-4 July 2006; London, UK

SAFETY, SECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY: CAN ENGINEERS RISE TO THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE? ICE TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

www.iceconferences.com

6-7 July 2006; Milos, Greece

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP - ENERGY PERFORMANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

www.milos.conferences.gr

15-25 August 2006; Florence, Italy

WORLD RENEWABLE ENERGY CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION

www.wrenuk.co.uk

10 September – 19

November 2006; Venice, Italy

10TH EDITION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL BIENNIAL OF VENICE THEME: META-CITIES

www.labiennale.org



16-17 September 2006; London, UK

OPEN HOUSE LONDON

www.openhouse.org.uk

21 -24 September 2006; London, UK

100% LIGHT 2006 – ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING

www.100percentlight.co.uk

21 -24 September 2006; London, UK

100% DESIGN 2006 – CONTEMPORARY INTERIOR DESIGN IN LONDON

www.100percentdesign.co.uk

September 2006

– January 2007;

Victoria and Albert

Museum, UK

EXHIBITION - LEONARDO DA VINCI: EXPERIENCE, EXPERIMENT AND DESIGN

www.vam.ac.uk

