

the Architect

The official journal of the Kamra tal-Periti

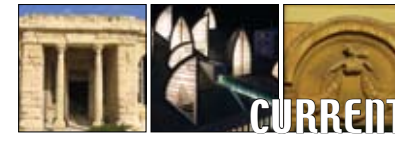
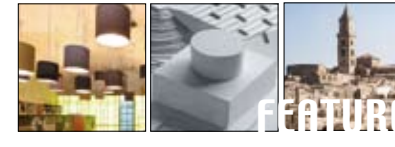


Issue no. 40 | March 2007

KAMRA TAL · PERITI

NEWSPAPER POST

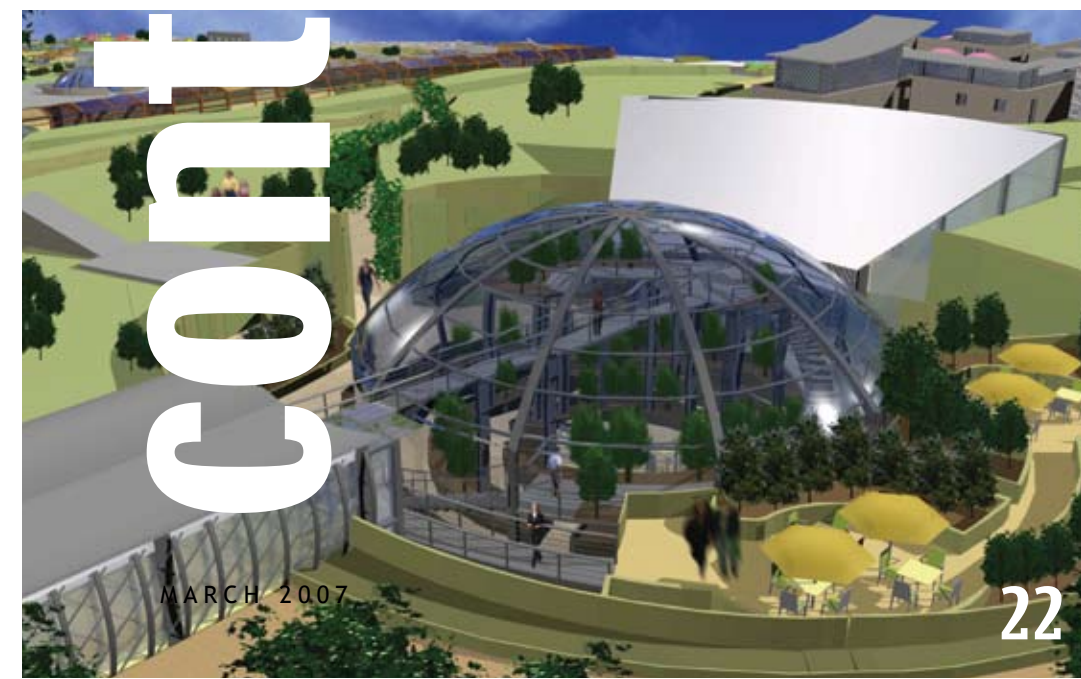
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"Freezing a space in time and denying it any contemporary use is nearly always unfeasible."

Edward Said

contents

"Freezing a space in time and denying it any contemporary use is nearly always unfeasible," states Edward Said in his article (p12) on the reuse of vaulted spaces in this 40th issue of tA. This is the main theme of this edition: Malta is scattered with old buildings that are currently in disuse, and a good amount of these also have important historic value. tA takes a look at a number of examples, both locally and abroad, depicting how such spaces have been adapted to our modern-day requirements and transported from the past into the present. The reuse and re-adaptation of these buildings and spaces is imperative if we are to preserve our building stock. There is, however, a fine line to be drawn here – what is worth preserving and what can be demolished in order to make way for buildings that better suit the needs of today. In particular, it is not only buildings that have value in the fact that they were built over a hundred years ago that should merit preservation, but also buildings that were built in the last century and that are of important architectural value, which is not often appreciated by those that opt for the demolish and rebuild solution.

This issue of tA also introduces a new feature: a competition for our readers (p25). Try your luck at guessing the answer! We've started off with a relatively easy one, to test the waters, and have given you lots of clues to help you out. We don't promise that they will get easier, but the success of this section will depend on your response. This section is being kindly sponsored by Agenda Bookshop.

In the meantime, a new Council took up its role at the end of 2006 and another year of work for the Council and members of the various Standing Committees of the Kamra tal-Periti has begun. Though the year had a slow start, momentum picked up relatively soon after, and the vast number of tasks ahead appears, at times, daunting. Juggling a professional life and giving time to matters of the Kamra and of the profession is not always easy, so on behalf of the Council I take this opportunity to thank all those who are giving of their time to organise events, maintain the KTP's website, contribute towards the publication of this journal and of the newsletter KTP News,

assist the Council in responding to the various requests for information that are regularly received at the office and those who support the Kamra through their membership and participation in events. This support is indispensable for the successful working of the Kamra and is invaluable if the KTP is to raise its profile and be effective in its service of its members and the profession.

The year ahead, in fact, promises to be an important and exciting one, both for the Kamra and for the profession. A number of events are already being planned. As I write, final preparations are underway for the first in the 2007 series of Architecture Nights, and by the time you read this Manfredi Nicoletti would have come to Malta, delivered what will certainly be an enthralling lecture, and gone back home. A number of other world-renowned names are lined up for this year's series, including Mario Botta, Cesare Casati and Peter Lorenz, so make sure to enter the dates into your diaries. Work has already begun on the Time for Architecture events to be held in October, as well as a number of product seminars, CPDs and information meetings. The Kamra is also working on a number of technical issues, including the transposition of the Qualifications Directive into national law (p10), responding to a number of draft documents published by various entities such as MEPA, political parties and Ministries, and actively working on the reorganisation of the Kamra's office in order to make its tasks more efficient and effective.

Another aspect the Kamra is actively working on is the exposure of both the Chamber and the profession in the press. Many of you would have noticed a number of articles and interviews that have been presented in the written media. Although this always seems to be a constant struggle, interest in the Kamra's work and its opinion on certain matters is growing. I urge you to log on to www.ktpmalta.com to keep yourselves updated.

Simone Vella Lenicker
Editor


THE PROFESSIONAL CENTRE
SLIEMA ROAD
GZIRA GZR 06 - MALTA
TEL./FAX: (+356) 2131 4265
EMAIL: kamratelperiti@nextgen.net.mt
WEBSITE: www.ktpmalta.com

KAMRA TAL-PERITI

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 2007 consists of David Felice (President), David Pace (Past - President) and Council members Keith Cole, Anthony Fenech Vella, Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Danica Mifsud, Antoine Zammit, Damian Vella Lenicker, Vincent Cassar, Malcolm Sullivan, Ruben Sciortino and Philip Grech.

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Editor: **Simone Vella Lenicker**
Consulting Editor: **Danica Mifsud**
Design: **Zvezdan Reljic**
Sales executive: **Joseph Zammit**

Published by:

M T
MEDIATODAY

Vjal ir-Rihan
San Gwann SGN 02
Malta
Tel: +356 21 382 741
Fax: +356 21 385 075
Email: admin@mediatoday.com.mt

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Inside 2 22. tA explores this new project gracing Valletta. See article pg 18

NEW COUNCIL SETUP

Following the election of the new KTP Council for 2007, roles were assigned to each of the Council Members. David Felice will serve as President for the coming two years, while David Pace will serve as Outgoing President for one year. The Council nominated Tony Fenech Vella as its Vice President, which role is to be confirmed or contested at the 2007 AGM to be held next December. Various members were appointed as Chairpersons for the different Standing Committees of the Kamra. These are: Keith Cole (Education), Danica Mifsud (Communications), Malcolm Sullivan (Finance), Damian Vella Lenicker (Professional Practice), Antoine Zammit (Events), Alberto Miceli Farrugia (Built Environment) and Ruben Sciortino (International). Phillip Grech will serve as Vice Chairman of the Built Environment Standing Committee. Vincent Cassar was appointed to lead the project of the Architecture Centre, which project the Council embarked on during 2006 and which is still in its embryonic phase. Members of the Kamra tal-Periti interested in serving on any of the above-mentioned committees are invited to contact the Kamra at their earliest convenience. Participation in these standing committees not only provides a means of exposure to matters related to the profession, but also provides a means of getting to know other periti and the opportunity to make a difference in issues that are relevant to our daily professional lives.

The new Council held its first meeting on the 6 December 2006, followed by a half day seminar held on the 4 January 2007. In these two meetings the Council set its goals for 2007, the more pressing of which include the formulation of a working Organigram for the Kamra, tackling issues of membership, endeavouring to address a number of issues relating to the practice of the profession and the setting up of a framework for an Architecture Centre. Of course, the Council will also continue with the work begun by the previous council, including the upgrading of the KTP website, discussions as the need arises with various Ministries and bodies such as MEPA and BICC, and the organisation of various CPD courses and events such as Architecture Nights and Time for Architecture.



Close to 200 guests attended the Annual KTP Drinks 2007

ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Ethics Committee for 2007 will be composed as follows: David Felice (Chairman), David Pace, Tony Fenech Vella, Joseph Falzon, Alan Saliba. Lawrence Mintoff is a reserve member.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership subscriptions for 2007 became due on the 1 January 2007. Those periti who have not yet settled their payment for this year are encouraged to do so at their earliest. Membership of the Kamra offers a number of benefits,

CONTACT

The KTP often sends out important announcements via e-mail. If you do not receive these messages, please submit your e-mail address to the KTP office by contacting the office secretary as per the details below.

CONTACT KTP

president@ktpmalta.com
professional_practice@ktpmalta.com
built_environment@ktpmalta.com
finance@ktpmalta.com
communications@ktpmalta.com
international@ktpmalta.com
education@ktpmalta.com
events@ktpmalta.com
ethics@ktpmalta.com
thearchitect@ktpmalta.com
admin@ktpmalta.com
secretary@ktpmalta.com
kamratelperiti@nextgen.net.mt

KTP President
Professional Practice Standing Committee
Built Environment Standing Committee
Finance Standing Committee
Communications Standing Committee
International Standing Committee
Education Standing Committee
Events Standing Committee
Ethics Standing Committee
Journal Editor
Web Site administrator
General Secretary
KTP office

The KTP office secretary is available at the KTP office every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 1000 – 1200hrs.



KTP President David Felice with Minister Censu Galea

including the receipt of the monthly newsletter KTP News and this quarterly journal, "the Architect". Furthermore, members are entitled to reduced rates at various events organised by the Kamra, as well as a number of benefits through the Kamra's sponsors. The membership form may be downloaded from www.ktpmalta.com.

ANNUAL DRINKS

On Thursday 11th of January, the Kamra tal-Periti held its Annual drinks at the Chamber of Commerce in Valletta. A wonderful crowd of 200 guests, including periti, members of the press and contributors had the opportunity to meet and discuss the year ahead. Amongst these was the Minister for Competitiveness and Communications, Perit Censu Galea as well as the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands H.E. Mr Jan Heidsma & Mrs Mrjolijn Heidsma. Throughout the evening, the documentary "Panorama 2004 - Maison Cinema" was screened as a backdrop. The author of this documentary, Antonio Borghi, was in Malta last October for Time for Architecture 2006. This documentary is a collage of extracts from various films on the theme of residential architecture and interiors.

KTP DIRECTIVE 01/07

The Council of the Kamra tal-Periti had been made aware by its members of the publication of a tender for the provision of architectural services to the Health Division (Ref CT 454/2006). In this regard, the Kamra issued a directive to its members reminding them of their obligations to comply with the contents of Tariff K of Chapter 12 of the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure where applicable. This recommendation is valid for all cases where periti are requested to submit fee proposals. The Kamra tal-Periti, as it has done even in the recent past, will continue to follow the proceedings and adjudication of the above-mentioned. The full text of this Directive can be viewed on the KTP website www.ktpmalta.com.

MCCA CHAIRMAN

Perit Adrian Mamo has been appointed as Chairman of the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts (MCCA). This Council is responsible for Malta's cultural policy, in particular in the field of visual and performing arts. Over the last year it has been promoting more high calibre events that not only promote culture and the arts but also add value to the Malta product for the benefit of Maltese and visitors alike.

On behalf of its members, the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti congratulates Perit Mamo on his appointment.

MEPA AUDITOR

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority has renewed Perit Joseph Falzon's three year contract as its Audit Officer. On behalf of its members, the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti congratulates Perit Falzon on his appointment and augurs another term of sterling work as the Authority's watchdog.



PERIT DAVID SPITERI

Perit David Spiteri passed away on the 7 February 2007, aged 50. On behalf of its members, the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti extends its condolences to his family and friends.

AIA AWARDS

The American Institute of Architects has announced the recipients of two of its highest honours. The 2007 AIA Architecture Firm Award has gone to the Boston-based Leers Weinzapfel Associates Architects (LWA) in recognition of their history of design excellence. In his nomination statement for the Firm Award, David B. Greenbaum, FAIA said of Leers Weinzapfel: "Their commitment



University of Pennsylvania Gateway Complex chilled-water plant, by Leers Weinzapfel Associates Architects, recipient of the 2007 AIA Architecture Firm Award. Photo: Peter Aaron/Esto. Courtesy: Architecture Week

to the public realm and to the craft of building in dramatically complex projects represents a remarkable commitment to ingenuity, resourcefulness, and design excellence in the most extreme circumstance." The firm is headed by partners Andrea P. Leers, Jane Weinzapfel, Joe Pryse, and Josiah Stevenson. In 1982, principals Leers and Weinzapfel established the firm, which has become one of the most prestigious woman-owned firms in the United States.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., by designer Maya Lin, was selected to receive the 2007 AIA Twenty-five Year Award. The granite-clad walls are each 246 feet (75 meters) long. Inscribed on the wall are the names of over 58,000 men and women who either died or remained classified as missing in action when the wall was constructed. "The memorial speaks to the power of design and resonates with all of us," said Richard Logan, chairperson of the 2007 jury. "It creates a magical moment of the living and the dead touching, and it is still as potent as the first time you saw it. You can't help but see yourself in the reflection of the names and even after 25 years, you watch people touching it and being touched by the stone."

34U

The extent of vegetation cover and natural habitats in the Maltese islands has



been drastically reduced by centuries of human habitation. Large areas of woodland have been cleared to make way for agriculture and other forms of land development in a country where such resources are very limited.

The 34U Campaign enables anyone to participate and contribute towards making our island a greener place to live in. One can opt to commemorate an important event, remember a loved one or simply adopt a tree. This campaign, initiated by the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, gives people the opportunity to make a difference by participating in local afforestation projects. Anyone interested in planting a tree in their locality may contact the 34U team for further details on 22952333 or 34U@gov.mt.

NEW ACE MEMBERS

On 1 January, Bulgaria and Romania were welcomed as new members of the European Union and as full Members of the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE). This enlargement has had an effect on certain institutional matters including the weighting of votes with Romania being assigned 14 votes and Bulgaria being assigned 10 votes, thus changing the various calculations for majorities in the Council. This change will also be reflected in the ACE as its voting system mirrors that of the Council. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania means that there are now 23 official languages in the EU. The two countries have been inserted into the list for the rotation of Presidencies with Bulgaria due to take the Presidency in the second half of 2018 and Romania taking the Presidency in the second half of 2019.

NEW WARRANTS

20 Periti were awarded their warrant in March: Antoine Abdilla, Aaron Abela, Alastair Avallone, Alexander Bianchi, Ivan Bondin, Sarah Borg Bonnici, Joseph Cachia, Sarah Calleja, Michael Camilleri, Neil Felice, Etienne Fenech, Clive Galea, Reuben Gatt, David Grima, Abigail Lewis, Nicholas Mallia, Philip Micallef, Mario Pirota, Joseph Saliba, Andrew Sapienza. Congratulations to all.

OHSA

Earlier this year the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) celebrated its fifth year of operation. Throughout this year the OHSA will carry out a series of activities to mark its Anniversary. In the course of these past five years, the OHSA has made considerable progress in achieving its main aims and objectives. Today, there is more information and awareness about occupational health



Tree planting ceremony to mark the Authority's anniversary.

and safety amongst the labour force, the public at large as well as school children through a series of publications, talks, seminars and media initiatives. The OHSA has also made marked progress with regards to the promotion of education

and training on OHS, and emergency and first aid response at work places through a number of general and specialised courses drawn up and organised by the OHSA itself.

In spite of the very limited resources available, the OHSA has carried out thousands of on-site inspections varying from construction safety, radiation protection, lifts and machinery safety, chemical and biological safety as well as accidents at the workplace. The OHSA has also successfully participated in a number of European projects while it is still active in some others. Members of the OHSA are also represented in a number of fora at both the local and European level. In spite of all this, the OHSA is aware that the local situation is far from utopian and a much more concerted effort is necessary to ameliorate the current situation. The OHSA is furthermore organising a number of courses, some of which are listed below:

2-4 April: Introduction to Occupational Health & Safety

17-20 April: The Workers' Health & Safety Representative

24-27 April: Principles of Risk Assessment
Further information and application forms may be downloaded from the Authority's website www.ohsa.org.mt

UIA - IFLA

Gaetan Siew, President of the International Union of Architects (UIA) represented by the UIA Vice president Mauricio Rivero Borrell and Martha Fajardo, President of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) signed an agreement for co-operation between the two organisations. While recognising the distinct nature and standing of the two bodies and of the professions they represent, the UIA and IFLA want to contribute to the development of the role of architecture and that of landscape architecture in order to reinforce the importance of the context of the built environment and enhance the quality of life for human beings. The UIA and the IFLA will encourage initiatives that support the professional needs of their respective members and their joint aspirations.

SERPENTINE GALLERY PAVILLION

German architect and engineer Frei Otto has been chosen to design this year's Serpentine Gallery Pavilion. The 81-year-old RIBA Gold Medallist, who is best known for his pioneering lightweight tent structures, has joined a growing hall of fame given the chance to build their first UK project on the gallery's



Frei Otto

lawns in Kensington Gardens. Otto will follow in the footsteps of Toyo Ito, Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, Alvaro Siza with Eduardo Souto de Moura, Oscar Niemeyer and Rem Koolhaas to design the temporary summer event space in the famous London park. Speaking about Otto's appointment, Serpentine Gallery director Julia Peyton-Jones said the influential German was a 'leading pioneer of 20th-century architecture' and hailed him as 'a seminal figure in the development of tensile architecture'. She said: 'He was the first architect to lead away from simple geometric solutions towards organic free forms that were able to respond to complex planning and structural requirements.'

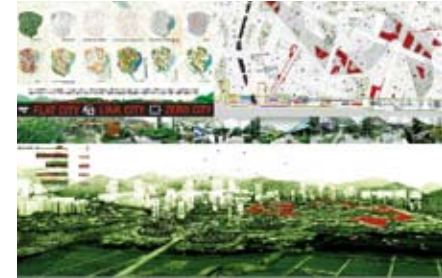
ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

Legal Notice 323 of 2006 is titled "Protection of Workers from the Risks related to Exposure to Asbestos at Work Regulations." The scope of these regulations is to protect workers against risks to their health, including the prevention of such risks, arising or likely to arise from exposure to asbestos at work. These regulations lay down limit values and other specific requirements.

Activities in which workers are or may be exposed to dust arising from asbestos or materials containing asbestos must be covered by a notification system administered by the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA), and no such activities may commence before the Authority is notified. In particular the Legal Notice stipulates preventive measures to be carried out in the case of demolition works where there is a high level of risk of exposure to asbestos.

CHUNGCHEONGNAM

A Korean team, led by Sehan Yoon, is the winner of the international competition for the masterplan of the new central government administration town, on an area of 2.7 million square metres, in the

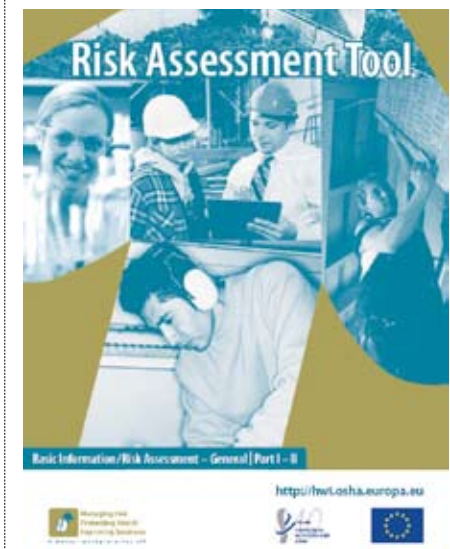


province of Chungcheongnam, in the Republic of Korea. Entitled Flat City-Link City-Zero City, the project proposes a flat city as an alternative to the high-density vertical modern city; a link city where everyone has an equal chance of leading a happy urban life with all physical and philosophical urban components linked together; a zero city which emulates nature's efficiency to reduce waste and save energy.

This project, destined to become a symbol of 21st century Korea, an exemplary and sustainable realisation, is part of a vast planning process that aims to create a balance between growth and development in the Republic of Korea. Launched by the Multi-functional Administrative City Construction Agency (MACCA) and the Korea Land Corporation (KLC), this single stage competition was approved by the International Union of Architects. The results may be viewed online at www.mppat.or.kr

RISK ASSESSMENT

A Risk Assessment Essentials guideline has been issued by the European Agency for Safety and Health. A Maltese version has been also published by the OHSA,



and both can be downloaded from the OHSA website www.ohsa.org.mt. These guidelines give definitions of hazards and risk, and provide information of how a risk assessment could be carried out at a workplace.

7TH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The European Union has recently launched its 7th Framework Programme

for Research and Development. This is the Programme through which Research Funding is granted for the pursuit of Projects in a wide range of thematic areas. An essential part of the 7th Framework Programme is the establishment, by the European Commission, of a database of experts who assist the Commission in assessing proposals for Research Projects. Any person or Organisation interested in being included on the register for Experts for Research activities maintained by the European Commission can apply for consideration by electronic means through the following website: <http://cordis.europa.eu/emmf7>

In a note to its member organisations, the Architects' Council of Europe stated that to its knowledge any work carried out by an Expert under the 7th Framework Programme is remunerated in accordance with particular rules. It strongly recommended the participation of experts in the architectural field, as it has long held the view that the expertise of the architectural profession is not adequately taken into consideration in the relevant parts of the European Framework Programmes and consequently research topics of interest to the profession rarely get funding.

ISC EXEMPTION

Following consultations between the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, the Ministry for Finance, the Water Services Corporation, the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, the Department of Agriculture and representatives of the farming community, it was agreed that animal farms will be exempt from the payment of that part of the Infrastructure Service Contribution relating to drainage services. This directive, regulated by Legal Notice 34, is retroactive from the 1 January 2005. Therefore, those who had paid such contribution on applications for planning permission relating to animal farms during this period are entitled to a refund.

RIBA GOLD MEDAL

The Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, famed for projects including Tate Modern and the Laban dance centre in the UK, are the recipients of one of architecture's most prestigious prizes, the Royal Gold Medal. They were presented with the award by Jack Pringle, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) at a ceremony in London.

Given in recognition of a lifetime's work, the Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Her Majesty the Queen of



Tate Modern, London, UK
Herzog & de Meuron
© Margherita Spiluttini

England and is given annually to a person or group of people whose influence on architecture has had a truly international effect.

The honour recognises the impact Herzog and de Meuron have made both on cities and on architects throughout the world, from their early inspirational work in Switzerland, via the London projects for Tate Modern (2000) and the RIBA Stirling Prize-winning Laban dance centre (2003), to their recent and current work in Barcelona, Tokyo, Beijing and the United States.

At the ceremony, the RIBA also awarded its 2007 International and Honorary Fellowships to recipients including Odile Decq, Ken Livingstone, Paul Smith and Kevin McCloud.

POLLUTION

MEPA and WasteServ Malta will be jointly implementing an EU funded project that will result in a national hazardous waste inventory and provision of technical assistance in the regulatory aspects of hazardous waste management. These activities are a result of interim arrangements pending the establishment of a national hazardous waste treatment facility and a hazardous waste landfill. This project will be implemented through a Twinning Light partnership with the Austrian Federal Environment Agency, which was awarded the contract.

The first result to be delivered will be an assessment report of the current situation in respect of hazardous waste in Malta. The report will suggest appropriate techniques to collect, catalogue, and analyse data related to hazardous waste generation and management in Malta. Subsequently short-term experts (STEs) will design and implement an information management system that will serve as an inventory for the data collected. Hazardous waste producers, operators and other stakeholders will be informed, through a series of workshops, about what is expected from them to effectively manage hazardous waste and what they

should do to register any hazardous waste generation activities. To ensure environmentally sustainable management of such waste, a package of legislative, policy and administrative measures will be introduced and relevant government officials will be trained in the recording of hazardous waste and in the use of related data management and monitoring systems.

All the activities will be carried out under the supervision of the Waste Management Team at MEPA, and WasteServ Malta with the assistance from the EU & Multilateral Affairs Unit of MEPA, which helped to secure EU funding for this project.

ARCHITECTURE THESIS DESIGN EXHIBITION 2007

Every year the final thesis review is a highly awaited event for the students of the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering. The examination is the culmination of five years of study before successful completion of the Bachelor of Architecture and Civil Engineering course.

With no exception, this year, the students from the Architectural Design Stream will be presenting their proposals during the last week of June to local and foreign examiners alike. The brief deals with the regeneration of Floriana, mainly the Belt is-Sebh area and the waterfront onto the Marsamxetto Harbour. Following thorough historical research and data collection from all of the Valletta-Floriana peninsula, a proposed balance of government offices, residential and recreational areas is created. All the students

are currently working on the final stage of their proposals, in teams and individually, to ensure a final product of high quality. This event will take place at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Michel Angelo Hall and the examination process will last one whole day. Seeing the importance of the architectural context in which these projects would exist as well as the national relevance of the proposals, the student body has decided to extend the examination into a weekend-long exhibition that will kick off soon after the termination of the examination. This exhibition aims at promoting the preservation through reuse of our national heritage as well as sustainable based design amongst other key issues in our present society. The opening will be taking place on Friday the 22nd of June at 2000hrs, where the exhibi-



tion will be officially inaugurated by the Hon. Ninu Zammit, Minister for Resources and Infrastructure, with the participation of Perit David Felice, President of the Kamra tal-Periti and Prof. Denis De Lucca, head of the Department of Architecture & Urban Design at the University of Malta. Professionals and students alike are encouraged to participate. Following the opening, the exhibition will

EMBELLISHMENT WATCH

Government seems to have embarked on a gargantuan task of carrying out "embellishment works" in as many parts of the islands as possible. This is certainly a commendable initiative, and most of these works certainly do give a new lease of life to the area within which these are carried out and enhance the quality of life of those who make use of these areas. The same, however, can hardly be said for the embellishment works to the Ta' Xbiex promenade.

In a statement to the press, Minister Zammit explained that the promenade is about 500 metres long, and covers an area of more than 2,000 square metres, and is being embellished with decorative lighting, symmetrical paving and street paving. The icing on the cake, however, is the

installation of 1,550 balustrades which have all but obliterated the view across to Manoel Island, over Marsamxett and beyond to Valletta. The Minister was reported as saying that "the balustrades will not only serve as a boundary to the pedestrian area, but will also complement the surrounding landscape characterised by a view of the bastions." What a far cry from the unimposing, though in need of revamping, series of columns and horizontal railings that graced the site prior to this intervention! Furthermore, one cannot but point



out that up to the date of going to print, the application to MEPA for the works on this promenade, submitted in July 2006, had not yet been determined, as indicated on the MEPA's website. The works, however, seem to be all but complete.

TransEuropaExpress 3: Città Europa



The third edition of TransEuropaExpress, the three-day conference, that every year discusses a theme related to the European identity, was held in Rome between the 21st and the 24th February. This year's theme, Citta' Europa, sought to identify what qualities define the European urban space and whether one could find a common identity that characterizes the entire continent.

Twenty-four delegates, comprising of architects, urban planners, urban sociologists, policy-makers, installation artists, poets, writers, filmmakers and actors and covering the entire spectrum from the European Union, participated in this initiative. The themes discussed were therefore wide and varied, given this unique scenario wherein the same theme could be debated from very different perspectives. Major themes included the city's peripheries, which were looked at from architectural, artistic and sociological viewpoints; the success stories of the new Berlin, Swedish eco-communities and new Danish quarters were debated at length, as was the emerging Eastern European countries' physical and psychological rebuilding after years of broken memories due to the communist regime.

Perit Antoine Zammit, a member of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti, represented Malta with his paper entitled "Regulating urban design visions for our cities," in the spirit of finding common urban design

principles that characterise European cities that could thus form the basis of common urban policies. This paper was well received by the other speakers and the Roman public, present in large numbers for the entire duration of the conference. The nature of European cities is often varied. There are intricate relationships between a historical city centre at one end and a city's peripheral development, generally entirely different in nature (industrial areas, single-use suburban areas, or even heavily commercialised areas), at the other. In between lies a transition zone composed of a number of internal pockets and infill developments

that at times conflict with the more vernacular building typologies contained within the city centre.

The main success of this conference was the realisation that the beauty of Europe lies in its diversity; each country having its own distinct history, culture and therefore identity,

with resulting approaches to urban planning and design. The TransEuropaExpress project was curated by the Casa delle Letterature dell'Assessorato alle Politiche Culturali in Rome in collaboration with the Fondazione Antonio Ratti in Como, the Italian Representation of the European Commission and the Embassies and Cultural Institutions of the countries of the European Union. The Kamra tal-Periti would like to thank Mr. Carmel Galea at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Dr. Patrick Cassar at the Embassy of Malta in Rome, for making this participation possible and for taking care of all necessary logistics.



letters

Warranting What?

I read the warranting board's letter to architects with some concern. The board's approach, with its emphasis on site and structural work, carries with it an inference that if a perit is not a structural/site oriented professional he/she does not qualify for a warrant.

Without a shadow of doubt, structural safety is a key consideration for the profession and one where the consequences of error are paramount because lives may be put at risk. Notwithstanding, an ethical professional should know that one cannot undertake work which one is not suitably capable of doing and indeed only the foolhardy would dabble with structural design without the necessary skills or guidance.

A perit however is more than a structural designer, and the services we render to the public include urban design, space planning and architectural design, conservation, construction

technology and interior design. Many of these aspects of the profession, it would seem, we have largely forgotten about, in recent decades, perhaps under pressure from clients/developers and certainly to the detriment of society as a whole. Too much of what is out there, built by warranted periti, is aesthetically unsuccessful, poorly planned and of questionable construction merit. While the profession is making efforts to redress this trend, the warranting board's approach tends to render them as secondary in importance and to clearly place students who have spent their final years in the planning and urban design or architectural streams at a considerable disadvantage. The board's emphasis on adequate apprenticeship for first year graduates is more than legitimate; in practice however it may often present considerable challenges for employers and financial challenges for graduates – although it must be said that adequate apprenticeship will benefit both in the medium term. In truth it is

difficult to understand how we can really consider graduates with one year of work experience to be competent to cover all the relevant areas of expertise that the perit, by definition, is responsible for. We clearly do not as yet have the infrastructural capacity or perhaps the economies of scale to assess potential warrant-holders in a holistic manner such as that employed by the RIBA, for example. So until we do, does it make sense to limit the areas of specific concern to site work and structural design? As a profession can we afford to continue to relegate architectural work into second place and to warrant only those who show clear capability in the structural field? If we are to continue to uphold the notion of a profession where the perit is both architect and civil engineer, we must make an effort to recognise the skills of those who, knowingly, do not have skills in the structural field, but who are skilled architectural or urban designers or construction technologists.

In this light I hope that the warranting boards are judging applicants' ethical approach to their capabilities more than the capabilities themselves. If we look at our towns and villages it is clear that we cannot afford to be foolhardy with other aspects of the profession any more than we can afford to be so with structural design.

Yours Sincerely,
Perit Jacques Borg Barthet

Editor's Note: It may interest our readers to note that out of 34 applicants for a warrant in the last batch, 14 were not granted their warrant and were asked to undertake additional training, particularly in the structural design field. Of these, 8 applicants were from the Architecture Stream, 5 from the Urban Stream and 1 from the Engineering Stream. The Kamra tal-Periti has expressed its concerns to the Warranting Board on this state of affairs and is working to analyse the situation and to propose a workable solution.

Towards tomorrow's planning

The Kamra tal-Periti and MEPA have met this year to go through mutual concerns on planning policy, both existing and proposed, and to discuss any (many?) issues either party needs to raise. Fruitful meetings were held these past three months where representatives from the Kamra's Council and members of the standing committee for the Built Environment met with MEPA's senior officials. The main topics included the proposed amendments to the DC2005 document and the draft policy document to regulate tall buildings and the use of the FAR. Both documents have been available for some time.

The amendments to 'DC2005' are a welcome move and will help iron out at least a few of the inconsistencies in the document itself as well as in the manner of its interpretation. The Kamra has regularly called for more frequent updates to the document in acknowledgement of the ever changing demands of the industry and of the society to which it ought to respond. There is also a need felt amongst all MEPA's clients to feed into the policies any necessary amendments and clarifications originating from decisions taken at MEPA Board and DCC level which, until today, are not recognised as legitimate precedent and case law by the Development Control section of MEPA, the department responsible for ticking off our applications against DC2005 policies and guidelines (some would claim 'regulations').

The Kamra has submitted its comments on the proposed amendments and has included suggestions for other policies which may, or ought to, be revised as part of an updated draft of this document or in future revisions to DC2005. Of primary concern to the Kamra is the need to reinforce the recognition of the legitimate needs of the neighbourhood around new developments, so as to safeguard through these same regulations the quality of life of the existing residents. The Kamra also queried the rationale for the inclusion within subsidiary legislation of policies, even if only of a temporary nature, intended to regulate

the introduction of new provisions within the Local Plans (themselves controversial for precisely the manner in which they were thrust upon an unexpected public). The Kamra believes that a policy document to clarify MEPA's position on the manner in which the FAR policy is to be interpreted is welcome. The new document clearly expands on the principles to be adopted in interpreting the rule with very legible illustrated examples. On the other hand, (and no doubt tall buildings will be a controversial subject for years to come), MEPA's attempt to justify or otherwise the need for tall buildings falls rather short of expectations. It is perhaps understandable why tall buildings should be excluded from large parts of the islands. It may also perhaps be justifiable, though questionable, to use this document as a means to sanction decisions already taken by MEPA, or imposed on it through governmental decree. It is however inexplicable how the document fails to recognise the potential of the development of tall buildings to help regenerate and renew some of the country's most squalid areas (themselves representative of the failures of past and present planning regimes). It is surprising that the document (based on the UK's early to mid 20th century experience of tall buildings) fears the tall building to such an extent that it limits its introduction to precisely those same areas where an actual or presumed commitment already exists, all other possibilities being excluded. It is the Kamra's belief that this document requires further development in order for it to be a significant forward looking and visionary planning tool for the benefit of all. Further meetings are set for the near future to discuss the Local Plans and other issues. The Council thanks all of its members for submitting their comments for inclusion in our responses. We encourage you to keep writing in.

Perit Alberto Miceli Farrugia
Chairperson Built Environment Standing Committee



Practice of the Profession and Trade in Architectural Services Transposition of the Qualifications Directive

By Perit Simone Vella Lenicker

The Kamra tal-Periti is aware that Member States of the EU are required to transpose the Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) into national law by 20th October 2007. On this date, at the end of the transposition period, this Directive will replace fifteen existing Directives in the field of the recognition of professional qualifications, including the Architects Directive. It constitutes the first comprehensive modernisation of the Community system since it was conceived forty years ago and introduces new procedures and requirements that need to be fully and properly understood by all countries and in particular by the various Chambers, Registration Boards and Organisations that regulate the profession in Europe. A number of changes have been introduced compared with the existing rules, including greater liberalisation of the provision of services, more automatic recognition of qualifications and increased flexibility in the procedures for updating the Directive.

The approach being taken in each country for the transposition of the Directive depends on a number of factors including the legal structure of the country (e.g. federal or provincial), the responsible ministry (or ministries) in charge of the profession and other factors. Under the Qualifications Directive there are two groups of national officials that will be formed to work with the European Commission. The first is the Committee under Article 58, which will assist the European Commission in matters that arise in relation to the implementation of the Directive. The second is a Group of National Coordinators under Article 56(4), responsible for dealing with the recognition of new qualifications, so taking over a key area of the work of the Advisory Committee under the existing Architects Directive.

In both cases, each national government will appoint a representative, responsi-

ble for dealing with the many professions and trades covered by the new Directive. Because this wide scope will be covered by just one or two national representatives who will take up posts in these two groupings, it is a concern of the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), and also of the Kamra, that the standards of architectural qualifications may not be properly debated and upheld in meetings of these groupings unless the national coordinator and Committee nominee are adequately briefed by the architects' organisation(s) of his or her country in advance of any decision to admit a new qualification or remove an existing one. Each Member State is free to appoint the same person or two different persons as a coordinator under Article 56(4) and as its representative for the Article 58 Committee. However in both cases it is possible that the representative can bring an expert to any meeting in order to advise on specific aspects or topics on the agenda.

What is the Directive about?

The recognition of professional qualifications enables beneficiaries to gain access in host Member States to the professions in which they are qualified, and to practice under the same conditions as nationals of that Member State in cases where these professions are regulated. Any nationals of a Community Member State legally established in a given Member State may provide services on a temporary and occasional basis in another Member State under their original professional title without having to apply for recognition of their qualifications. However, if service providers relocate outside of their Member State of establishment in order to provide services, they must also provide evidence of two years' professional experience if the profession in question is not regulated in that Member State.

With particular reference to the architectural profession, the Directive states that

"Architectural design, the quality of buildings, their harmonious incorporation into their surroundings, respect for natural and urban landscapes and for the public and private heritage are a matter of public interest. Mutual recognition of qualifications should therefore be based on qualitative and quantitative criteria which ensure that the holders of recognised qualifications are in a position to understand and translate the needs of individuals, social groups and authorities as regards spatial planning, the design, organisation and realisation of structures, conservation and the exploitation of the architectural heritage, and protection of natural balances." In particular, the Directive sets out a list of knowledge and skills that a course in architecture is expected to cover as a minimum. These include:

- ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements;
- adequate knowledge of the history and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences;
- knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design;
- adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process;
- understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and of the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale;
- understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors;
- understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project;
- understanding of the structural design, constructional and engineering problems associated with building design;
- adequate knowledge of physical prob-

lems and technologies and of the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate;

- the necessary design skills to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations;
- adequate knowledge of the industries, organisations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning.

The Perit's Qualification

It is the Kamra's understanding that degrees conferred by the University of Malta in the field of practice of Architecture prior to Malta's accession to the EU, 1 May 2004, will be automatically recognised by other Member States. Furthermore, any persons awarded degrees following the successful completion of a course commenced in or prior to the academic year 2006/07 will also have their qualifications recognised by other Member States. So will any warrants granted to individuals who completed a course complying with any of these conditions be recognised.

The situation seems less clear for those students commencing a course as from October 2007. It appears that Malta, together with the other states that joined the EU in 2004, must re-notify its course content, thus opening it up for scrutiny by the relevant authorities, and hence the automatic recognition of courses commencing as of October 2007, at this stage, is not guaranteed, subject to the approval of the course content. This, we understand, is the case for all courses at the University of Malta.

The ACE is also following the issue of the transposition of the Qualifications Directive closely, and in particular in the case of its Member Organisations where there could be some problems with the automatic recognition process.

New SACES Committee

Within the next few weeks in-faculty elections will determine the SACES Committee's new look, as students vote for the members they wish to represent them. This new group of students may look forward to a year of work, organisation, learning and satisfaction amongst various other aspects that form part of being a member of any student body. Also the current SACES Committee may look back over the past year of work and review its various successes and shortcomings.

The first formal event of the 2006/2007 committee was the Sand Sculptures competition held in July, brought back to life after a year of lying dormant. Apart from the quality and creativity of the entries, we were pleased to note the number of students from outside of the faculty who also took part. The end of the summer months also saw the launch of the new SACES Common Room after a full year of planning, repairs and works.

The new University term began with the yearly SACES Workshop of course. Held at the Cottonera Waterfront, the event was as successful as ever, with an incredibly varied range of results. Apart from other minor events, the Committee also organised the Christmas Drinks, staged within the faculty, attended by most students, staff and lecturers.

The upcoming Committee may look forward to organising events such as those mentioned above, as well as any other commitments they choose to undertake. Its agenda should also include a re-writing of the SACES Statute and the creation of a sub-committee to run the Common Room and its library. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other Committee members I have worked with over the past year and wish the ones still to be elected the best of luck in their endeavours over the year ahead.

Giancarlo Torpiano



Issues regarding the redevelopment of the Ta' Qali Crafts Village have been under discussion for quite a while now, making it a relatively hot subject. With so many opinions on how the project should take on its form, it was seen as an ideal student design project, intended to be a multi-faceted exercise, incorporating a variety of considerations that the practice of architect calls for throughout the design process.

The main goal of the project, entitled a Live Crafts Museum, was to increase general public appreciation towards local trades and crafts. The idea was to create a setting, where learning about the trades, crafts and heritage was more important than commercial productivity, by stepping away from the industrialised situation currently found at the Crafts Village, and creating a hands-on approach that elicits public sensitivity towards traditional crafts. Before setting out on the design process, preliminary studies were carried out on the variety of trades, to see what should be the main considerations to be taken into account when designing for some particular crafts. Yet task-specific design was not the ultimate goal of the project, but rather creating a space or environment which allowed for the trade to be experienced by both the craftsman and the layman, with a somewhat educational goal.

The development scheme of most, if not all, the concepts of the students was based on creating an urban sensitive scenario. Despite being almost completely detached from the common notion of an urban scene, it was clear that in being a public scene, the basic principles of public activity and spatial organisation, on a somewhat macro scale with respect to building location, craft location and flow of foot traffic around the live museum itself and how to attract people towards the space from the existing National Park, had to be respected. Hence many of the design solutions also involved the 'tying in' of the park with the museum. The exhibition of projects at Sir Temi Zammit Hall, held between the 5th and the 14th of March, showed the diverse approaches taken by the students. Some projects sought to create a mini-village scene, keeping alive the experience of Maltese tradition. Other students took a more theatrical approach with their emphasis being on how the individual and the craft could interact. From spatial organisation based on regular shapes and geometric ideas, to elaborate clustering of units and trade varieties, the project undoubtedly gave students a new appreciation towards the many aspects of the design process, with regards towards macro-planning, landscaping, holistic design and urban sensitivity. The resulting solutions and their variety are a testament to this, and to the new techniques the students have picked up after their first two years in the architectural and civil engineering course.

Marc Spiteri



ART AND WAR... ART OF WAR... ART VS WAR

An exhibition was held in the Faculty of Architecture & Civil Engineering between the 12th and 16th of the past month. This was set in the foyer and in the space most commonly referred to as "the Pit". The exhibition featured design projects by the 4th year architecture stream students.

Their task was not easy - the site given to develop their projects on was the controversial Fort Campbell in Selmun, which made the design exercise more motivating and challenging.

The scope of the project was to transform the mentioned site into a fictitious "Art Enclave", or in easier terms an Art City. Different groups were left free to interpret this theme in various master plans with some that stretched from Selmun Tower to the Fort and beyond. The master plans included a wide range of uses centred on the issue of Art. Projects integrated facilities like workshops for the general public and visitors to more complex uses such as the concept of A.I.Rs (Artists in Residence).

The design of the master plans was just a transition exercise which helped the students to focus more on the main part of the design project. The main objective was to design and detail the Visitors' Centre of the mentioned Art Enclave as due to limited time and the enormous site, it would have been impossible to detail the entire area.

The students had to consider the project even from a conservation perspective and this resulted in very interesting concepts which helped them understand the importance of British architecture on the Island. This was fruit of the thorough analysis and observation of the site prior to the design process. The final projects resulted in very interesting forms and shapes structured and wrapped in contemporary solutions in order to distinguish the new fabric from the existing, always following modern conservational issues.

As part of their conservation studies for the new semester these students will have the opportunity to go into more detail on the conservation of the existing barracks and their reutilisation, and who knows - maybe someday this will not just be part of an academic design exercise.

Christian Zammit

Vaulted spaces – reuse and respect

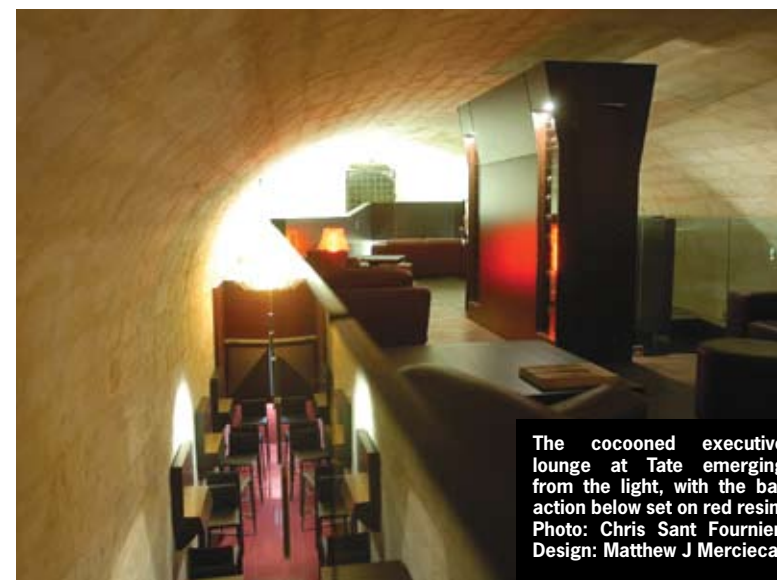
By Edward Said

The mezzanine lounge at Restore, Valletta, overlooks the central bar. Services are cleanly concealed with the vault's curvature. Photo: Matthew J Mercieca. Design: Matthew J Mercieca



Very often when selling an old house, estate agents invariably extol the type of ceilings employed in the construction, marketing it as a primary feature which gives added value to the property on sale. Certainly upon entering any old building locally, one is drawn towards the variety of ceilings and roofing systems present. The most commonly encountered types range from the all-limestone kileb (corbel) and xorok (suspended slab) system to use of wooden or metal beams supporting stone slabs. Also relatively widespread are systems using diaphragm arches designed to a variety of profiles and configurations. On a more limited scale and those being addressed in this article, are structures enclosed by means of vaulted systems. The dome and its adaptations are highly exclusive, normally restricted to sacred edifices.

Antique texts describe how important vaulting was in military architecture. This technique rendered rooms and chambers bombproof. This is clearly evident in the profuse employment of vaulted spaces in forts, towers, lines and



The cocooned executive lounge at Tate emerging from the light, with the bar action below set on red resin. Photo: Chris Sant Fournier. Design: Matthew J Mercieca



A historic vault at Cottonera converted into a contemporary restaurant, Two and a Half Lemon. Photo: Chris Briffa Architects. Design: Chris Briffa Architects

other military machines peppering Malta dating predominantly from the Knights' and British epochs. One must not omit the palaces, churches, magazines, basements and water storage systems in which these vaults often feature too. Barrel, groin and coved shells seem to have been the most widely chosen. Indeed in a given construction one can find examples of all types including the systems mentioned previously. And with every restoration project that is unveiled, more and more of these evocative spaces are brought to light. Generally they are a delight to admire in their stark nudity, devoid of finishes, fittings and furnishings, a true testament to the dexterous art of Maltese stonemasonry. Alas, today's exigencies command us to be less poetic and more practical!

Freezing a space in time and denying it any contemporary use is nearly always unfeasible. Thus briefed with a reuse, the designer is faced with a number of challenges, which essentially consist of space maximisation, adequate accessibility, the introduction of basic amenities and accommodation of services. Of course one cannot generalise here as with spatial typologies within old buildings there are rarely any rules of thumb or stereotypes. Furthermore there is a crucial criterion which sets the parameters for these interventions: is the vaulted space in question historically significant?

A very familiar scenario locally is the presence of series of barrel vaults interlinked to one another and typically having limited openings and access, these being usually located at the ends of the space. One can say that such a spatial typology is a ubiquitous feature in military structures and storage buildings. Also agreed are their historical and architectural value which warrants sensitive conservation. Their proposed reuse will thus have to involve the least amount if not complete abstention of permanent impingement,



Casemates at Fort Ricasoli

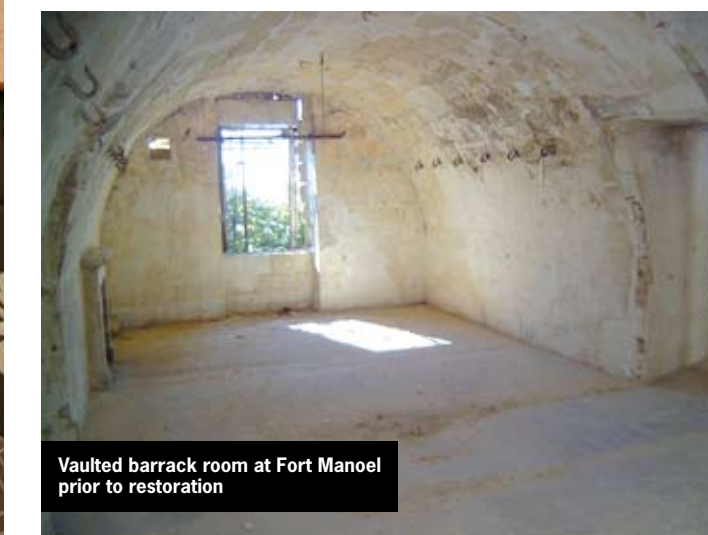
deformation or mutilation of the fabric. The order of the day is thus reversibility.

Therefore the problems mainly consist of: very limited intrusion on the surrounding shell; limitations by the awkward geometry of the walls presented by the curvature of the vault; contact with aged stonework that in many cases can be powdering, very restricted openings to be used as doors, windows or even access for services.

The solutions are numerous and push the designer's tactful skill to the limit: construction of mezzanine levels supported on stilts which rest on the ground without penetration and through which cables and pipework can be inserted; introduction of suspended floorings below which services may be passed freely; strategically designed partitions capable of receiving different finishes especially in the way of sanitary facilities. The commendable insulation characteristics associated with these vaulted spaces can present the opportunity to use innovative energy-saving environmental control systems. Exploitation of natural lighting on the other hand

is more challenging. Plaster, normally proprietary lime-based renderings, can be applied on the aging masonry in order to prevent powdering but will act sacrificially thus requiring frequent maintenance. Other products such as consolidants are available however their performance on local globigerina limestone should be professionally tested. The ideas are, as always, endless and are greatly conditioned by the space concerned.

Vaults have, in the last few years, successfully accommodated restaurants, bars, night-clubs, shops, art galleries and wine cellars. With current restoration works in progress at prominent historic sites, we are likely in the coming years to witness people residing in such spaces. This will be the ultimate design challenge! This has happened abroad and no doubt will be a success here too.



Vaulted barrack room at Fort Manoel prior to restoration

Stockholm Public Library International Architectural Competition

By Dr Conrad Thake

The Public Library in Stockholm designed by Gunnar Asplund has functioned as the main library in Stockholm since it was inaugurated nearly 80 years ago. The library is a world famous building, breathtakingly beautiful and an icon for "the library" as a timeless concept. There are few public buildings in Stockholm that are as well frequented by people from the entire Stockholm region. The value of Gunnar Asplund's Public Library increases with every generation of Stockholm inhabitants that uses it.

Stockholm is, however, an expanding city and the City Planning Administration estimates that there will be 150,000 more inhabitants by the year 2030. If this is the case, the city will not have a public library that lives up to the ambitions of a sparkling cultural city of knowledge. On the other hand, it would be disastrous to try to further adapt the Asplund Library building to present and future demands. In order to be able to maintain and develop the Public Library as the main library of the city and as a central public meeting place for learning and reading, new activities and functions must be added in a new extension to the Asplund building.

The international architectural competition with regards to the design of an extension to the Stockholm Public Library took the form of a two-stage competition. The intention was that the competition would result in a high-class architectonic composition and a combined library function, with the Asplund Library forming an integral part. The idea is that the library would more than quadruple the space currently available to the general public and that an extension for the learning of today and tomorrow will be built next to the present building with its special qualities and unique values. The library will become a lively public building open for all round-the-clock

and will stimulate meetings, discussions and study.

The design brief stated that it aims to select a proposal of high architectonic quality with a concept that is strong enough to withstand a dynamic implementation process, that provides a basis for the detailed planning process, and that provides the possibility of procuring an architectural service in accordance with the Swedish Act on Public Procurement for the subsequent planning and implementation of the project. The first stage attracted 1,170 entries making this competition one of the world's largest architectural competitions of all time. The main objective of the first stage of the competition was to find concepts and ideas to develop in stage two. The jury unanimously selected six proposals for further development to compete in the second stage of the competition. The City's intention is that the architect who wins stage two of the competition will be commissioned to develop and implement the project.

THE JURY'S WORKING METHOD

The large number of proposals demanded painstaking and goal-oriented work by the jury. The first step was to perform impact analyses of the various theoretical solutions put forward. The jury studied representative proposals of different types and familiarised itself with the various concepts. It then looked for proposals that embodied the qualities and the complexity called for in the competition brief.

THE JURY'S ASSESSMENT

In the opinion of the jury, all the competition proposals represented a large number of valuable designs and ideas that provided a sound basis for ensuing discussions. The solutions offered

demonstrated a very broad spectrum of ideas, many of which were of a very high quality. The proposals provided insights and provoked thoughts as to how this very difficult and challenging task can be achieved.

The jury ascertained that a new extension must be of such a stature, distinction and architectonic originality (i.e. artistic worthiness) as to justify its position next to the Asplund building while at the same time being in perfect symbiosis with this major icon. The new building must provide a new and distinct relationship to the hill, which should continue to be the dominant element of the townscape even in the future. This can be done in several different ways regardless of whether the annexes are preserved or not.

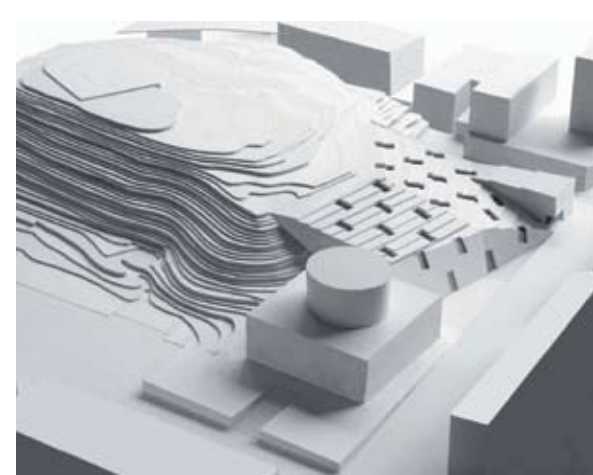
By studying the received proposals and the skilled visual presentations produced by the competitors, the jury closely examined the advantages and disadvantages of the different ways of handling the clarity and visibility of the new extension in the city landscape. The expectation in the competition brief is for an extension that has its very own special architectonic value that interacts with the world-famous Asplund building and that can put Stockholm on the stage of world architecture. The jury furthermore ascertained that the extension must leave its own mark on the townscape and clearly elucidate its function as a new public building in Stockholm.

THE SHORT-LISTED PROJECTS

The jury selected six projects to be invited to the second stage of the competition. The anonymity of the entries will only be lifted with the final announcement of the winning entry and hence, the nom-de-plume and registration number is being used for each of the short-listed projects.

BLANKET 0329

This proposal is based on a man-made ending of Stockholmsåsen in which the library is located. Without trying to imitate the landscape, it makes its own interpretation of the hillside, which respects the hillside's shape and height by creating entirely new urban facades. The proposal subordinates itself to the Asplund building and is in many ways



an urban hybrid between landscape and building which is easily recognisable with a character all of its own without any known predecessors. The large inner terraced room is very beautiful with its leaning pillars and varying shape, into which the light filters through skylights. The fact that the building is sunken reinforces not just the design of the room but also illustrates the architects' awareness of the importance of restricting the scale of the building.

THE BOOK HILL 0823

This project attempts to achieve two main objectives – to make the ridge accessible and to replace the impractical annexes with a well-functioning, continuously built-up library component. The aim of this project is not to create a new classical urban space. The meandering roof landscape/urban floor is a townscape that links the traditional



street space to the park and can guide people up onto the ridge. The library is omnipresent during the walk up the slope, which reinforces its expression as a public library open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The building is an object in its own right and does not therefore compete with the Asplund building or with other projects in the vicinity. The terracing creates opportunities for views and for providing much of the library with natural daylight.

CUT 0139

The cut into the ridge is a very strong and unique concept that reinforces the effect of the ridge as it will enhance the perception of its entire height. The project is based on a simple fundamental idea but at the same time contains major



complexity. Even though basically all the buildings on the site remain, the Asplund building is placed in a new context and its monumental character is strengthened. A series of varying outdoor spaces are created which reinforce each other both in quality and personality. The project is successful in its attempt to contrast with the Asplund building, creating a kind of Ying-Yang situation. The differences complement each other and reinforce the character of each of the various buildings. The new building has such a unique expression that it becomes the project's defining characteristic. It will represent both itself as a building and the library as an institution.

DELPHINIUM 0003

The proposal creates an entirely new composition together with the Asplund building, Stockholmsåsen and Läkarhuset. The north-face of the ridge is detached and becomes a key part of the library – the rounded outdoor area associates to the rotunda in the Asplund building. The excavated face can be transformed from



an abandoned interspace to a high-quality park that will be omnipresent in all parts of the new library extension. The narrow, tall building towards Odenplan relates to the 1960s complex to the west in both volume and height, whilst at the same time providing a backdrop to the

Asplund building. The largest volume of the extension is pushed up against the south-west corner of the site, which is well motivated since it then has a relationship to the existing taller buildings facing Odenplan and does not compete with the Asplund building. There are parallels to the Asplund library in the lightness and richness of detailing, even though it is much more abstract than the existing building. The ethereal lightness of the new extension reinforces, if anything, the concrete expression of the Asplund building.

DIKTHORNAN 1031

The concept of this proposal is to "harden" the north-east corner of the hill and make this eroded side into a backdrop to the Asplund building in a very elegant fashion. Most of the new library extension lies under the hill and two of the annexes are retained. Acting as a backdrop to the existing urban landscape and creating a new park that relates to the existing one facing Sveavägen, the area is given many new qualities. The possibility of walking on a new intermediate level in the park, on the roof of the new library extension is very attractive. The connection to the Asplund building over the corner is very elegant. Despite its setback position, the proposal exposes its facades both towards Sveavägen and, via an extended entrance area, towards Odengatan.



NOSCE TE IPSUM 0424

This proposal lies primarily behind the existing composition, keeping three of the annexes and locating another one on Spelbomskans torg. The concept itself is simple, shows respect for the existing composition and should therefore be considered. The project does not alter the existing urban composition to any



great degree but manifests the broken façade towards Odengatan by adding another annexe. The project "samples" Asplund's architecture in a witty and conceptual way and uses projects drawn by Gunnar Asplund himself, incorporated into the presentation. If implemented, these references will of course not be the project's distinguishing characteristic but will need to be given an expression that is feasible to implement using current construction methods.

Further information on the competition can be viewed on the website: www.arkitekt.se/asplund



MALTA STOCK EXCHANGE

A PRIME EXAMPLE OF A NEW LEASE OF LIFE TO A HISTORIC BUILDING



The clever conversion of the nineteenth century Garrison Church - a Colonial icon perched high upon the Valletta Bastions commanding the harbour below - into what is now the Malta Stock Exchange building, may be discussed with regard to several issues. The importance of this project in



particular lies in it being an excellent example of how the efforts of different disciplines working in symphony resulted in one complete design of a unique, poetic nature. Local firm Architecture Project collaborated with TBA Periti for structural design, Brian Ford for environmental control and Frank Franjou for lighting design in order to give Valletta a new icon, one worthy of all admiration. Daniela Valentino from tA's Editorial Team spoke to Perit Joanna Spiteri Staines of Architecture Project to find out more. The first aspect which is certainly worthy of praise in this project is that of RE-USE, which could also be applied to several of Valletta's buildings lying derelict and being eaten away by the passage of time. There is a certain magic which comes about, evident immediately to any passerby, when a building such as the Garrison Church is rescued and returns that which has been missing for so long - human



presence. Buildings are meant to serve people before they can have any other purpose, and in this case, the reborn Valletta building is now bustling with the activities of several Stock Exchange workers, over a total of six floors of offices. Who would have imagined that, knowing the Garrison Church as it was only a few years back? How was this feat achieved? In keeping with the architects' design philosophy of respecting architecture from the past yet translating it into something new for modern-day use, the main intervention consisted of inserting a steel post and lintel structure into the large void of the original stone shell, thus creating a clear distinction between the new and the old. This structure is in the form of two parallel office wings with glass partitions running along the length of the building and terminating in circulation towers, having visible steel bracing at the end of each wing. The wings are spanned in between with open office space. Thus the interior of the building is characterised by visually-communicating work spaces and overhead walkways in the full-height five storey atrium.

This project also involved significant excavation works in order to gain useful underground office space. Thus, a structure built by our predecessors over a hundred years ago which had come to waste through disuse now contains a technologically cutting-edge structure within it, which has the possibility of



being removed should the need arise in the future. Another necessary intervention consisted of restoring the original timber trussed roof which was rotting in several places. The architects chose to salvage the roof by remodelling the timber heads with steel shoes, strengthening the bottom tensile members with the addition of steel ties, and completely rebuilding the roof structure.

The second issue which is deserving of attention is that of ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL. The architects enrolled the expertise of Brian Ford of WSP Environmental in employing a simple yet innovative system known as PDEC - passive draught evaporative cooling - making the Stock Exchange the first building in Europe to make use of such a system. The huge internal volume of the newly and innovatively planned building called for an equally innovative cooling system, while air-conditioning using fan coil units was chosen as a cooling method for the cellular offices surrounding the central space as well as the meeting room at the lower level. The chosen system for the cooling of the atrium involves circulation of air by buoyancy forces without the need of fans. The mode of operation varies at different periods throughout the year. During the summer months when temperatures are high and relative humidity low, the system works with the use of misting nozzles situated at the lightweight steel ridge at the top of the roof, which draw in fresh air through the ridge ventilators. The air is then cooled by evaporation and a draught is induced, which drives airflow throughout the fourteen metre high atrium. When internal relative humidity



is high, the use of misting nozzles is substituted with that of chilled-water cooling coils found at the vents in the ridge of the roof. A draught is induced which replaces the warm air resulting from the workspace, which in turn rises up to the ridge and is cooled by the coils. At night, the cool air is taken advantage of - it is allowed to enter the building through vents in the underground level, rises, and exits through the vents at the ridge (1). In addition to this cooling system, the architects provided attractive timber louvered apertures, which are hinged horizontally, thus effectively controlling solar heat entry into the building.

If one had to think back to Laparelli's original masterplan for Valletta, and consider how environmental control was such an important issue in his designs, then one would appreciate even more the intentions of the architects in creating a somewhat 'natural' system of cooling as implemented at the New Stock Exchange. Laparelli affirmed:

"... a city in a hot, dry place must have narrow streets, whereas cities in humid climates should have wide streets so that the wind and the sun can take away the humidity. Narrow streets are cooler because they are not dominated by the sun. For windy places like Malta, it is necessary to find a way to break the wind with trees or high walls, but this cannot happen here because all the island and especially this place is bare and without trees, so it will help to make the street serpentine with sweetness like (medieval) Pisa..." (2) It is this extract by Laparelli, spoken so long before our times, which should remind

us, perhaps, that in nature everything has a purpose, and to exclude nature in our designs, and to consult instead our own man-made inventions, would bring about consequences in time. It is for this, that the efforts of the architects in seeking to adopt such a means of cooling should be praised.

When faced with a design challenge such as that faced by Architecture Project, one involving an historical building, especially one in dire need of a new lease of life, one cannot help but be weary of how much of an intervention would actually turn out to be just that - too much. It is at this point that the conscience of an architect is at work - how much of the building should be changed, replaced, removed, in order to adapt it to our own needs? In the case of the Stock Exchange building, the architects changed little of the original stone shell except for the opening of a large glazed window looking onto Upper Baracca Gardens and the majestic harbour beyond. It is due to this window, this single, mild intervention, that a person, strolling through the gardens on a warm summer's day, or sitting at the time-worn little kiosk glancing towards the old Church, can see the movement of people inside - the hustle and bustle of life in an office. Of course, as they sit there, amidst their surroundings which were once a playground for the Italian Knights, they are little aware of the

misting nozzles, high above the workers in the ridge of the roof, keeping everyone cool, away from the sweltering heat outside...

Another aspect of the project which is to be held in high regard is the contribution of the client, another determining factor in the outcome of a project. It is clear that the wish to halt the nasty effects of deterioration and save a historical building from the ravages of time was very much present. The fruits of this excellent team effort are crystal clear: several obstacles were successfully overcome, amongst them, the question of how to render an old, disused and forgotten building useful for our times without destroying its original fabric; and how to adequately render its internal environment comfortable without - as far as possible - resorting to mechanical means: a truly admirable, reversible endeavour worthy of praise. It is hoped, in the interest of the nation that this project serves as encouragement for other organisations or individuals interested in investing in and thus preserving our history.

References:

- (1) "Evaporative Cooling at the Malta Stock Exchange" in *EcoTech: Sustainable Architecture Today*, No.5, London, May 2002, pp.14-17
- (2) From Laparelli's codex as quoted by Roger De Giorgio in 'A City by an Order'.

PROJECT DATES: 1994-2001

CLIENT: Malta Stock Exchange

ARCHITECT: Architecture Project

CONSULTANTS: Building Services - Mediterranean Technical Services

Structural Design - TBA Periti

Environmental Control - Brian Ford

Lighting Design - Franck Franjou

PHOTOGRAPHY:
LEFT AND ABOVE BY KURT ARRIGO
FAR LEFT, CENTRE AND OPPOSITE PAGE BY DAVID PISANI - METROPOLIS

MARCH 2007

MARCH 2007



MUSE BOX

A recent local project has caught the attention of tA's editorial team; a striking black box has emerged out of one of Valletta's bastions on a bid to entertain and inaugurate revival on this neglected periphery of the city. The new restaurant / lounge bar by the name of 2 22, is the work of Valletta-based Chris Briffa Architects. Matthew J. Mercieca caught up with Chris Briffa and explored behind-the-scenes.

Black and white and essentially pure enough to be described as one mass penetrating a vault – was this the generating concept behind the design?

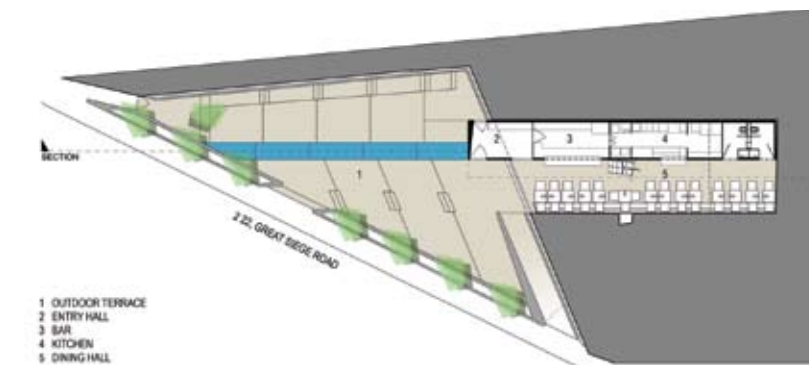
The main design concept centred more on inserting a contemporary function inside a dilapidated fortification: and rigorously containing this function inside one sober container. All the restaurant's services, lighting, power, sound, storage and food preparation had to be located inside the timber box. Not only as an act of conservation and sustainability, but also to aesthetically reinforce the idea of an alien pod which sits in a raw landscape in an attempt to regenerate it.

We wanted a pure, white space which could be used as a canvas for saturated colour lighting.

It's fascinating how different colours can affect one's mood, especially when mixed with the right music. The intricate box, in contrast to ongoing colour shifts, needed to be black.

Do you think the function followed form in some respects to create such a powerful and involving aesthetic presence?

I think that the biggest challenge of this project was to successfully contain its primary functions within the box. The brief was simple: to serve and entertain seated patrons through its various openings, while preserving the 100 square metres available. In section, its very notable inclined walls increased square metres upstairs, provided circulation space downstairs, and increased



space for precious storage, cables and ventilation ducts within the box. I guess in this sense its form totally followed its function, although the

bastions' inclined walls were also an important factor which stimulated the first sketches.

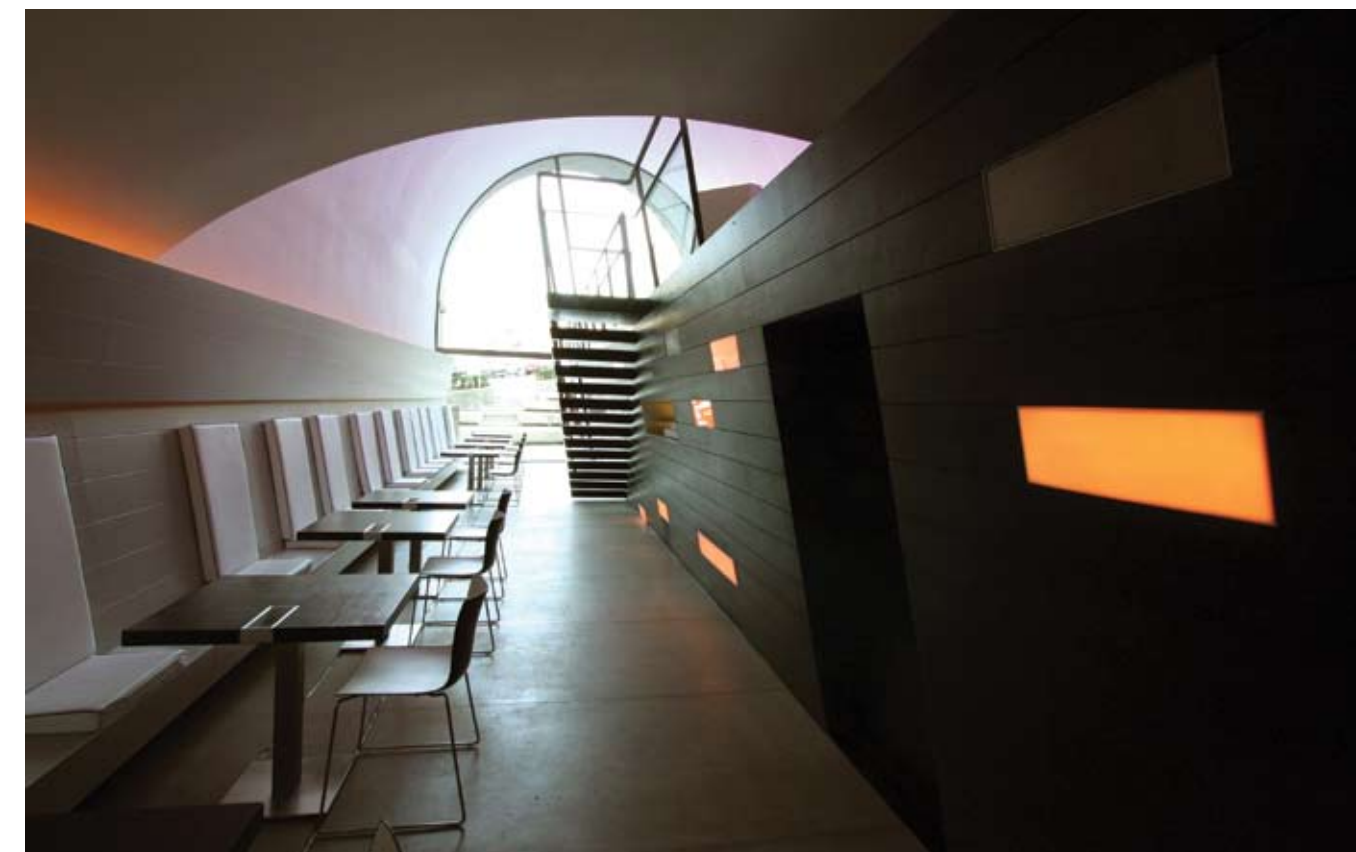
Some people thought that 2 22 was too daring a project to be ever permitted by MEPA. In fact how did you overcome the challenge?

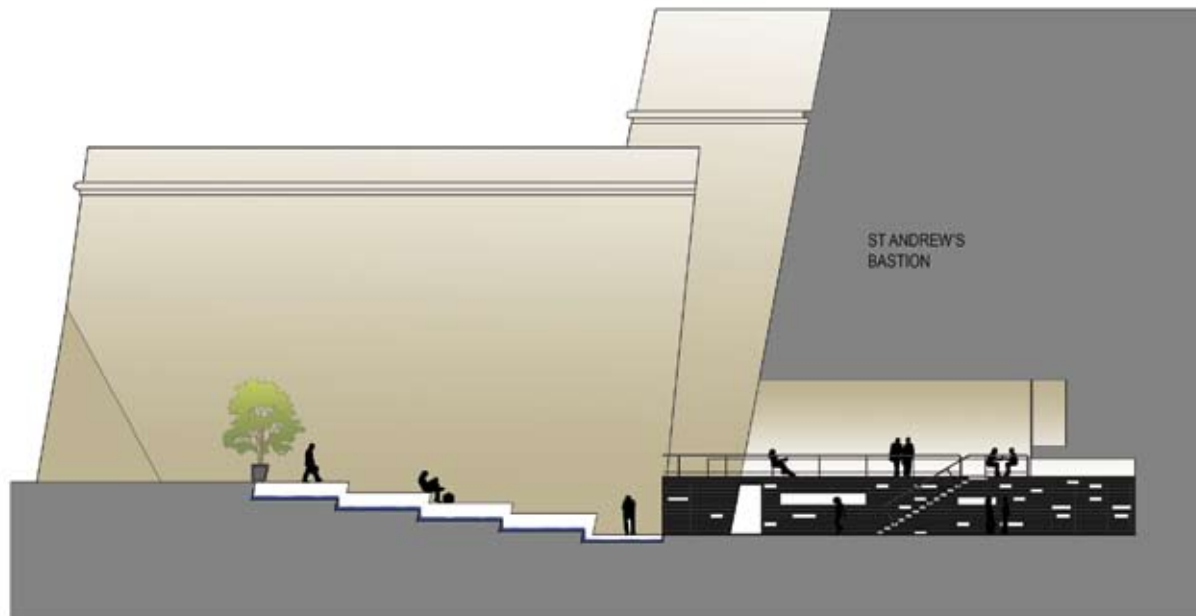
Most thought the site is an old vault. In fact it is the beginning of a tunnel, carved out of St Andrew's Bastion in the 1950s to make way for (the then inexistent) Great Siege Road. It was constructed out of a reinforced concrete shell supporting the bastion's fill, and we were told that the project was abandoned after 20m due to lack of funds. The outside terrace itself is built on fill, since the bastion originally descended all the way to the sea.

While initially recommended for refusal, DCC were especially interested in our proposal. The idea of a structure designed for a limited lifespan, whose protrusion from the bastion emphasised its provisional state, went down well. I think our scale model also helped the members of the board understand the project instantly and were very optimistic about its potential regenerative qualities in such a decaying area of the city.

What about the name & logo?

The name is simply the address; 222 Great Siege Road. The logo was designed in close col-





laboration with talented graphic designers inspired by our slanting lines.

I noted a rail in the concrete floor in the seating area: what's the idea?

It's a device designed to help the restaurant's staff keep all the tables in one line, parallel to the box. Sometimes, architects can seriously be infatuated by straight lines!

The seating on the mezzanine seems to be an offspring from the inclined planes you mention in the main mass. Were they custom made or bought off the self?

We saw them at a furniture fair (after the 2 22 designs were sub-



mitted to MEP), and couldn't believe our eyes; they fit perfectly with the form, and the client agreed. They're from Quinze & Milan, designed by Arne Quinze; a Belgian designer.

The Lighting design is again practically one expression. What technologies did you implement?

Yes, the lighting idea was fairly simple. The original concept required all internal sources be contained inside the box, a restraint which actually helped us understand the surrounding space much better. The colour LED lamps are controlled by a programmable mixer, and modify the light on the lounge upstairs and around the vault. The rest is dim rope-light softly washing white light on the dining area and around the outdoor terraces.

I felt like entering a dark digital world with flowing text and virtual images, not to talk of the surreal palm presenting perfume, when walking into the toilets. Pure entertainment! How did you manage to incorporate so many surreal elements successfully into the most sobering space of a club?

Over the past few years, there has been an increase in the num-



bers of designers and architects who are now perceiving the toilet as not only a purposeful area but one in which creativity can be given free reign. I find that nowadays the restroom is one of the few remaining rooms which offer you instant privacy. You have time to look at yourself in the mirror, to think about that particular situation, or just to use it as an escape from what's outside. We like to be playful in times of such human conveniences. The element of surprise adds a very evocative sense of subjective experiences.

The entrance seems to sit, frame and admire Valletta. Was this born out of your living and working in Valletta or otherwise?

I like working (and living) in Valletta because of its diverse contexts. In this case the site was a redundant space squashed between a road and massive bastions. This no-man's land coupled with the strong feeling of being on the edge of the city meant that the site could easily take a strong design statement, which exploits all views around it. I believe that Valletta has more to offer than what most people can foresee. I think the public in general is tired of grand projects which rarely make it off the drawing board. It is small, private projects like this one which exemplify the true efforts of believers, and are slowly moulding Valletta's revival.

PROJECT CREDITS

Design: Perit Chris Briffa, Darren Cortis, Jennifer Barth, Lawrence Briffa.

Structural Design: Perit Aldo Caruana

Services consultant: Eng. Fabio Stivala

Project management: Chris Briffa Architects

Photos: David Pisani

Civil works: Attard Brothers Co Ltd.

Timber works: SAW Co Ltd.

Steel & glazing: J Lautier Co Ltd.

Audio / Visual: Doneo Co Ltd.

'I Sassi di Matera'

— AN ITALIAN TROGLODYTE CITY GOES HIGH TECH



Matera is a city unlike any other in the world, carved out of white tuff and the blinding Mediterranean sun. The Matera of the "Sassi" is a city carved out of rock, formed by one of the most suggestive environments in the world and recognised as a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1993.

The Sassi, Barisano and Caveoso, set on the deep slopes of the valley, with the cavernous meanders and underground labyrinths, hide relics of a remote past rich in culture and history. Caves and underground architectures are connected by steps carved out of the cliffs and are enclosed by dry-walls bounding small vegetable gardens, authentic stone gardens to be tilled, where the fecund strength of the vegetable world reveals its utmost potency. Wandering along the streets of this underground city one runs into ancient places of worship used to celebrate in the depths of the earth the nuptials of sun and stone. To this archaic city fabric, medieval monasticism brought new sap: countless hermitages, churches,



and hypogean basilicas rise on the sides of the ravine and in secondary valleys. During the late medieval period, arose the superb cathedral built with the white stone of the nearby Vaglia quarries and towering over the entire city.

The historic area known as the "Sassi" is a cave city where some dwellings are little more than caves with a door on the front. Others have elaborate fronts hiding the cave quarters behind. In the 1950s, Matera was a slum city. Tens of thousands of people lived in the Sassi in unhygienic troglodyte conditions and malaria was prevalent. The prime minister at the time declared that it was Italy's shame. The famous Italian writer Carlo Levi, in his seminal book "Cristo si è fermato a Eboli" wrote about the impoverishment and social inequalities that characterised the inhabitants' living conditions in Matera and surrounding communities in the south. The government solution when it finally came was radical. All the population was evicted and accommodated in new apartment blocks built elsewhere. The Sassi were abandoned completed and left empty.

With the international recognition of the significant architectural and topographical significance of the Sassi culminating in the early 1990s, with UNESCO granting it the status of World Heritage Site, restoration works began in earnest. However the biggest challenge was not the actual physical restoration works per se but to what new uses could these former cave-dwellings be put to.

Information technology comes to the rescue in the most unlikely of places. Now the caves are coming back to life. There are large computer servers, with their lights blinking, tucked in cave rooms once occupied by people and animals. A call centre company called Datacontact has taken over a whole complex. Their computers are in one cave, the people answering calls are in others. It is as if the



hollowed-out rooms have jumped from the prehistoric era to the 21st century, bypassing much of the 20th century. The Datacontact call centre employs over 500 persons and is now the third-largest employer in Matera. A software house has also been operating in the caves for several years.

Pietro Laureano, one of the architects who led the rebirth of the caves is enthusiastic about the arrival of the high-tech companies. "Sassi di Matera is a prehistoric town. It is the future of technology and it's a town which can be linked to the whole world. It is very interesting to see the city go from Stone Age to the future age." he states.

Matera is also fast becoming a popular stop for tourists with atmospheric hotels and restaurants opening in the caves. Besides tourism, Matera has also been popular as a unique location for a certain genre of films. Because of the ancient and primitive scenery in and around the Sassi, it has been used by filmmakers as the setting for ancient Jerusalem. The following famous biblical period movies were filmed in Matera: Pier Paolo Pasolini's The Gospel According to St. Matthew (1964), Bruce Beresford's King David (1985), Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ (2004) and Catherine Hardwicke's The Nativity Story (2006).

But tourism and film-production are volatile and fickle as the Sassi might not be fashionable forever. The people of Matera have embraced information technology as the most secure form of investment for the future. They firmly believe that the digital servers blinking in the caves will be their best response to ending their long-term unemployment problems.

Dr Conrad Thake

Fort Campbell

David Grima
Thesis Project 2006

Built in Selmun in 1937, Fort Campbell is different to previously built forts, the main difference being that it was built on an irregular pattern so as to

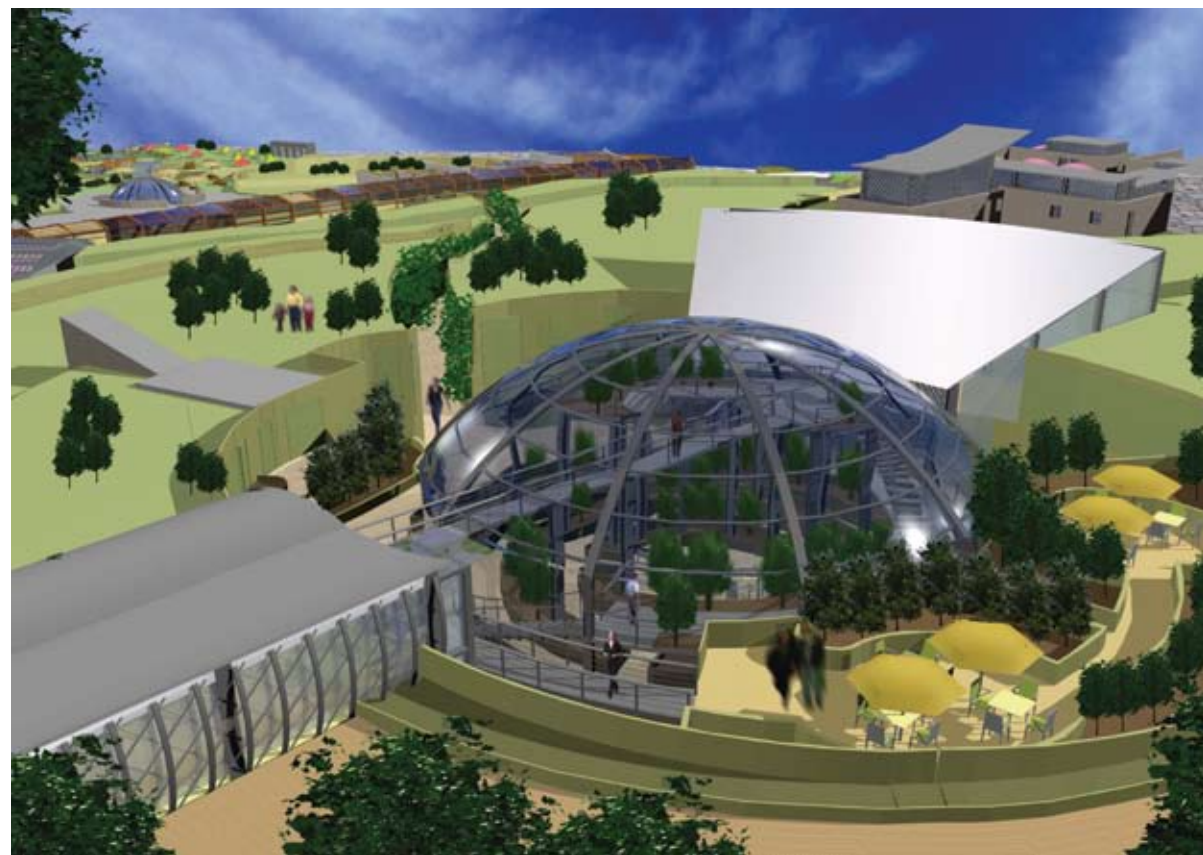
It was decided to leave the 'ruins' untouched and to design the centre around them, as the aim was for visitors to be able to distinguish between the old-



blend in with the surroundings. The barracks are found outside the boundary wall in order to keep the buildings within to the barest minimum whilst the boundary wall was constructed similarly to rubble walls to make it less conspicuous from the air and sea.

The aim of the thesis project was to design a family-oriented leisure centre. This was rather demanding, due to the fact that the site is found in one of Malta's unspoilt areas and commands excellent views of Mistra and St. Paul's Islands. Whilst most developers would encourage architects to bring out the maximum building potential from the site, environmentalists argue that it must remain unspoilt. To add to the challenge, the Fort is in a relatively bad state with certain buildings on the point of collapse due to vandalism and other activities.

er buildings and any new ones. Therefore, when it came to re-using the damaged buildings, an easily removable lightweight steel and glass structure was designed that fit inside the ruin, acting as a double skinned building with two skins belong-



ing to different epochs. On the other hand, 'undamaged buildings' were restored to their previous condition.

When preparing the design brief at the beginning of the project, it was decided to include time-share units, restaurants, shops and botanical garden within the centre. These had to be designed in a way that would make them stand out (as the place has to be commercially viable) without allowing them to detract attention from the historical and environmental features of the site. Buildings were designed to make the most of the steep slope with impor-

tance given to maximising sea views by designing a series of low lying buildings which also allowed their roofs to be used as gardens. Materials such as steel, timber and glass were widely used throughout. The focal point of the project, the botanical gardens, were conceived as a landscaped pit in the ground with a large circular glasshouse emerging from within, with a series of different levelled terraces linked by a revolving ramp. The main sites within Fort Campbell were linked by a system of landscaped trenches accessible to all.

ARCHITECTURE NIGHTS 07

Last year, the Kamra tal-Periti organised a series of architectural lectures and debates, entitled Architecture Nights 2006, in view of promoting good architecture and quality in design of the built environment to as wide and varied an audience as possible. This architectural series featured speakers from award-winning international practices Building Design Partnership, Llewelyn-Davies Yeang and Bennetts Associates Architects from London, together with internationally acclaimed Richard England from Malta. Following the success of this event, the KTP has once again decided to organise Architecture Nights in 2007, together with the annual Time for Architecture event which will be held later during the year. It was the Kamra's wish to do its utmost to invite world-renowned architects or architectural practices for this year's series and



expose the Maltese audience to the best contemporary examples in architecture present worldwide.

This year, the KTP has felt it opportune to concentrate on the theme "The stuff of architecture", or materiality since it has been felt that along the years the art of using appropriate materials in their right context has been lost. The speakers invited to Architecture Nights 07 will be discussing the sensitive and responsive approach they have adopted in their architectural designs and their decisions in choosing the most suitable materials in the process. The debates kicked off on Saturday 24th March with world-renowned Italian architect Manfredi Nicoletti, who delivered an enthralling presentation of his projects and theories to a packed house at the Aula Magna in Valletta.

Swiss giant Mario Botta will now follow



at the Powerhouse Theatre at the Valletta Waterfront on Friday 27th April at 1930hrs. This debate is being organised with the patronage of the Swiss Ambassador to Malta. For architects and architectural enthusiasts worldwide, Mario Botta certainly needs no introduction. Following an apprenticeship within the architectural studios of Carloni and Camenisch in Lugano, Switzerland, Mario Botta graduated in 1969 from the Istituto Universitario d'Architettura in Venice, under the supervision of architectural professors Carlo Scarpa and Giuseppe Mazzariol. During the period spent in Venice, he met and worked for architecture giants Le Corbusier and Louis I. Kahn.

His professional activity commenced in 1970 in Lugano. His first projects consisted of the case unifamiliari in Canton Ticino and subsequently numerous projects all around the world. He has always been



heavily involved in the educational aspect of architecture and has, in recent years, created and founded the Academy of Architecture at Mendrisio.

Mario Botta's work has been granted numerous international recognitions, of which the Merit Award for Excellence in Design by the AIA for the Museum of Modern Art at San Francisco, the IAA Annual Prix 2005, International Academy of Architecture of Sofia for the Kyobo tower in Seoul, the International Architecture Award of the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design and the "European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage Europa Nostra" for the restructuring of the La Scala Theatre in Milan. Needless to say, there have been several exhibitions dedicated to his work and research.

His most celebrated completed projects include: the theatre and 'House of Culture' in Chambéry; the art gallery Watari-um in Tokyo; the Mediatheque in Villeurbanne; the SFMOMA (Museum of Modern Art) in San Francisco; the Evry Resurrection Cathedral; the Jean Tinguely museum in Basilea; the municipal library in Dortmund; the Dürrenmatt centre in Neuchâtel;



the MART Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rovereto; the Kyobo tower in Seoul; the Tata CS administrative buildings in New Delhi and Hyderabad; the Bodmer Foundation museum in Cologne; the Giovanni XXIII pastoral centre in Seriate and the library in Bergamo; the celebrated restructuring of the La Scala Theatre in Milan, the Church dedicated to the Santo Volto in Turin and the wellness centre Tschuggen Berg Oase in Arosa.

From his projects currently underway the following projects merit due mention: the office and residential complex in Treviso, the University Library in Trento, the Bechtler Art Museum in Charlotte, the Art Gallery



and Museum of the Tsinghua University in Beijing, the Leeum offices in Seoul, the Underground railway stations in Naples, the new Auditorium in Rimini and the Architecture Museum in Mendrisio.

For the subsequent three debates, the KTP has so far secured the participation of Cesare Casati, Director of the renowned architectural magazine L'Arca, who will deliver what promises to be an exciting journey into the world of architecture on Saturday 26th May and world-renowned Austrian architect Peter Lorenz, who will conclude the Architecture Nights series in November.

Architecture Nights 07 is sponsored by HSBC, Attard & Co, HalMann Vella, Steel Structures, Modern Elegance and Auntie Lucy and is being organised in collaboration with Valletta Waterfront and with the patronage of the Swiss Ambassador to Malta. The KTP is also indebted to Professor Richard England for all his efforts and help, without which it would not have been possible to bring to Malta architects of such high standing.

Perit Antoine Zammit
Chairperson Events Standing Committee

Fort Ricasoli – a golden opportunity

Malta is to benefit from \$300,000,000 investment from the Smart City project – this is what the Prime Minister confirmed on national TV earlier this year. The deal is practically finalised and ‘Smart City’ has now become a household term. The location of this unprecedented conurbation is to be Ricasoli, for many a place synonymous with film production characterised by sweeping sets depicting Classical scenery. Others however do associate this place with a big fort built some few hundred years ago. In truth Ricasoli is one of the largest fortresses ever built in Malta, conceived in 1670 to guard the mouth of Grand Harbour together with Fort St. Elmo. It recently enjoyed the limelight after hosting a number of film productions including the epic *Gladiator*. Now Ricasoli is the new address of Smart City, though not in the fort itself but the vacant Ricasoli industrial estate. The fort has nothing whatsoever to do with it. This is worrying. In his comprehensive commentary during the harbour tour organised by the Kamra tal-Periti last October, Dr. Stephen C. Spiteri, Superintendent of Fortifications, gave a detailed historical and architectural analysis of Fort Ricasoli as we cruised by.



Blatantly obvious however was the critical state in which the fort stands. Dr. Spiteri pointed out that works were carried out on a curtain wall adjacent to the main gate by the Restoration Unit of the Works Division. Other minor conservation exercises financed by gains from the film industry were executed but were merely cosmetic interventions. Fra Giovanni Francesco Ricasoli's legacy stands abandoned with no



plans in hand to proceed with restoration. So what's new? One would argue that this is the same old fate that a lot of Malta's built heritage is facing. Fort Ricasoli is however an exception. As you read this article, its fabric is slowly being undermined by erosion predominantly through marine action. Entire sections of bastions have literally slid into the sea. Inside these disintegrating walls, barrack building roofs are caving in and the stonework of their graceful arcades literally melting away. The baroque Chapel of St. Nicholas of Bari named in honour of Grandmaster Nicola Cotoner stands abandoned with its carved vaulted ceilings slowly giving way.

In January of 1997 MEPA (then the Planning Authority) published a development brief for Fort Ricasoli. In its texts priority is given to describing the desired sensitive preservation of the fabric. A visit to the fort will reveal that this is by no means a straightforward undertaking. Furthermore, such investment without planning this restoration process around an agreed reuse for the monument is dangerous. In view of this,



the fort. Shoring up of collapsing masonry, pointing open joints to prevent water ingress, cleaning gutters, removing excess vegetation, are amongst the more salient of urgent interventions needed. There is no need for the intricate planning, costly reports and the back and forth process of bureaucracy that would consume the one thing that this monument no longer has – time. Can the government take this into consideration when sealing the Smart City deal? Surely this stunt will be a large feather in the caps of all those concerned. MEPA would call this a planning gain. Indeed it is a gain for all who have our built heritage at heart. And let's face it; it is this heritage which makes our country unique. Are there not other forts and battlements which one should invest in instead such as Valletta? Are there not other sites which might be historically or architecturally more unique? No! These arguments are NOT valid when we have a monument which with each winter that passes is fast disappearing. So, a plea to the government: as hands are being shaken over Smart City Ricasoli, do think about that gem of a fort nearby. This chance must not be missed!

Edward Said
Edward Said graduated as an architect and civil engineer in December 2005. He is currently reading a masters degree in conservation of masonry buildings at the University of Malta. Edward Said sits on the board of trustees of Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna (Malta Heritage Trust).

MEPA clearly defines a number of objectives for its possible use through this brief, now a decade old. Hitherto no serious interest has manifested itself for investment at Fort Ricasoli. So where does Smart City come in?

Very simple: out of 300,000,000 dollars is there possibly no way that something could be spared to carry out emergency works on

ARCHITECTURE REBORN

THE CONVERSION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BUILDINGS

Kenneth Powell, ISBN 1-85669-129-2; Hardback with 253 illustrations; Price: 45 sterling

'Architecture Reborn' presents a detailed investigation into the adaptation and conversion of existing buildings as a distinctive area of design. Forty-four international schemes have been chosen to demonstrate that reuse is a positive – even essential – way to achieve a forward-looking architecture. Rather than preservation, or deference to old buildings, the message here is transformation; a physical rather than a historicist approach to constructing new form from old fabric. The transformation of building now constitutes a major element in the workload of architects worldwide: as well as making environmental sense, a conversion is often a simpler and more economic process than a new-build project. Rehabilitation schemes have generated some of the

most intelligent and innovative architecture to come out of contemporary practice: included is the work of a wide range of leading architects, from Renzo Piano, Richard Rogers and Norman Foster, to Eric Owen Moss and Bernard Tschumi, as well as that of smaller practices. The book shows how today's architects have called on historical structures and brought them back into everyday life: the legendary Fiat factory is transformed into a cultural and commercial complex; an armaments factory is reused as an art and media centre. Whilst the original structures are often not historically or architecturally outstanding, many – including a sixteenth-century cathedral, a nineteenth-century propeller factory and the former headquarters of the Nazi youth movement

– make intriguing stories in themselves. The author, Kenneth Powell, is an architectural critic and journalist based in London. He is a frequent contributor to architectural journals, magazines and newspapers in Britain and abroad and has been architectural correspondent to the Daily Telegraph. Powell has been actively involved in the field of architectural conservation for several years and was secretary of SAVE Britain's Heritage from 1984 to 1987. Powell's strongly argued commentary, supported by carefully researched illustrations, contains imperative information for anyone involved in architecture, planning and regeneration, as well as the layperson interested in keeping up to date with the fast-moving area of design.



www.archi-urgent.com

Founded in April 2001 during the floods of the Somme in France, Archi-Urgent (or Emergency Architects) is a non profit organisation. It is constituted of Architects who have decided to dedicate their experience, skills and know-how to bring assistance to people in difficulties in France and abroad. It is also committed to preserving cultural heritage. The website is split into 6 easy to follow sections. "Presentation" gives an overview of the organisation, its objectives and principles, while "History" presents the board of directors and the statute of the organisation. "Actions" lists a number of projects both in France and worldwide that the organisation has been involved in, and also include a photo gallery and press section. The section on "Participation" includes a list of current initiatives that one can opt to take part in, while the section on "Training" gives an overview of the type of training one could expect to be exposed to through these experiences. "Help Us" is the online donation section of the website and also offers the opportunity of yearly membership of the organisation. The site is easy to navigate and offers a good opportunity to learn how architects can make a difference by contributing their knowledge and experience in times of need.



WEBSITE

COMPETITION

Q: ON WHICH BUILDING FAÇADE IS THE DOVE SHOWN BELOW SITUATED?

CLUES

- The dove, together with several others like it, is part of an ornate assembly of façade decorations
 - These doves are located above every window of this Valletta palazzo
 - Contrary to most austere Valletta façades, this façade is lively and flamboyant
 - During the 17th Century, the building was the residence of Grand Master de Verdalle's nephew, who also owned the neighbouring smaller corner house
 - The building takes the name of its 17th Century owner, and is inscribed above the main door
- The winner of this competition wins a copy of the book reviewed above: *Architecture Reborn*. This book is available from **Agenda Bookshop**, the



sponsor of this competition and review page.

Send your entries to:
The Editor, The Architect Competition, Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira

or by email on
thearchitect@ktpmalta.com

Include your name, postal address and email. The first correct entry drawn on the 30 April 2007 will win.





Now to 22 April 2007; Gallery 2, NAI, Netherlands
MODERNITY IN THE TROPICS
 Architecture in the Dutch East Indies
www.nai.nl

Now to 22 April 2007; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK
**THE CATHEDRAL THAT NEVER WAS:
 LUTYENS' DESIGN FOR LIVERPOOL**
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Now to 28 April 2007; Main Gallery, New London Architecture, UK
SUSTAINABLE LONDON
 Sustainable London will present the challenge, the response and examples of real progress being made towards a sustainable 21st Century city
www.newlondonarchitecture.org

Now to 07 May 2007; The Lighthouse, Glasgow, Scotland
THINKING INSIDE THE BOX
 Interiors in the 21st Century: New Visions, New Horizons & New Challenges
www.thelighthouse.co.uk

Now to 6 May 2007; Gallery 1, NAI, Netherlands
**ARCHITECTURE OF THE NIGHT:
 LUMINOUS BUILDINGS**
 Artificial light has brought about a major change in the way we experience the city: the night has come to life.
www.nai.nl

Now to 6 May 2007; Sonneveld House, NAI, Holland
**VILLA PHOTON : KINETIC
 LIGHT-OBJECTS**
 Kinetic light objects, sculptures and films are being integrated in the modernist decor, thus shedding a particular light on the historical interior of this villa.
www.nai.nl

Now to 13 May 2007; Gallery 3, NAI, Netherlands
BUILDING PORTRAITS
 Twelve talented young photographers have been commissioned to portray the relations between a building, its conceiver, its builder and its user.
www.nai.nl

Now to 13 May 2007; Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK

MERCHANT PALACES

Liverpool and Wirral mansions photographed by Bedford Lemere
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Now to 27 May 2007; V&A, Architecture Gallery, London, UK

ON THE THRESHOLD: THE CHANGING FACE OF HOUSING

www.architecture.com

Now to 28 May 2007; Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK
**ALVAR AALTO THROUGH THE EYES
 OF SHIGERU BAN: EXHIBITION**
www.barbican.org.uk

Now to 25 June 2007; V&A Museum, UK
JAMES 'ATHENIAN' STUART, 1713-1788
 Widely recognised for his central role in pioneering Neo-Classicism, Stuart developed his influential career across various fields: interior decoration, sculpture, furnishing, metalwork and architecture.



www.vam.ac.uk

Now to 7 October 2007; Gallery 3, NAI, Netherlands
NEITHER TOWN NOR COUNTRY
 The messy zone of transition zone where city and farmland meet has time and again evaded the customary orderliness of Dutch spatial planning. This exhibition uses maps, drawings and photographs to give viewers an image of the unpredictable ways these spaces tend to develop.
www.nai.nl

11-13 April 2007; Izmir, Turkey
**DANCING WITH DISORDER: DESIGN,
 DISCOURSE & DISASTER**
 7th Annual Conference of the European Academy of Design
<http://fadf.ieu.edu.tr/ead07/>

3 May – 23 June 2007 ; Main Gallery, New London Architecture, UK

RETAIL

This exhibition looks at new mixed use locations in London such as White City, Brent Cross/Cricklewood, Lewisham Gateway, Canada Water and Kings Cross to see how these fit into the retail environment.
www.newlondonarchitecture.org

7 May – 10 May 2007; Milan, Italy

EUROPEAN WIND ENERGY CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

This Conference will address major issues of importance for European and Global wind markets and will look at the prospects for the wider uptake of these technologies in society.
www.ewec2007.info

18-20 June ; Valencia, Spain

BEX 2007

Third international conference of real estate and built-environment professionals.
www.b-e-x.com

31 August – 1 September 2007; Jyväskylä University, Finland

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY

A seminar on Today, Tomorrow and Design
<http://www.alvaraalto.fi/designseminar/>

15-18 September 2007; Agia Pelagia, Greece
**2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
 ON PASSIVE AND LOW ENERGY
 COOLING FOR THE BUILT
 ENVIRONMENT PALENC 2007**
<http://palenc2007.conferences.gr/>

17-18 September 2007; Beijing, China

**5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
 ON CURRENT AND FUTURE
 TRENDS IN BRIDGE DESIGN,
 CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**
www.bridgemanagement2007.com

16-18 October 2007; Stuttgart, Germany
**CIB W102 3RD INTERNATIONAL
 CONFERENCE**
 "Information and Knowledge Management - Helping the Practitioner in Planning and Building"
<http://cib-w102.iconda.org/conference2007stuttgart>

05-10 November 2006; Paris Expo, France
**BATIMAT INTERNATIONAL
 BUILDING EXHIBITION 2007**
www.batimat.com