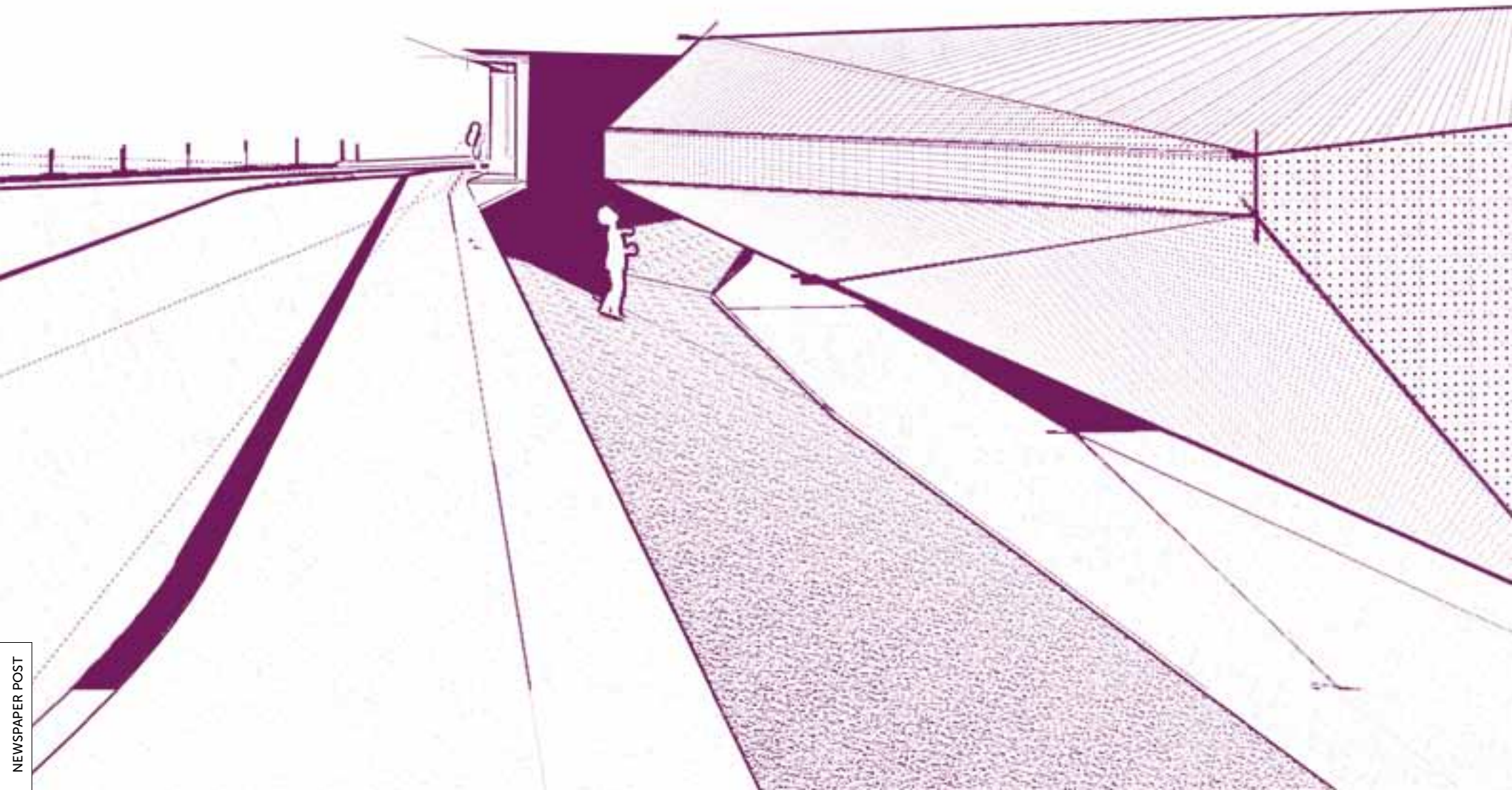


# the Architect

ISSUE NO. 52 | APRIL 2010

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE KAMRA TAL-PERITI



# contents

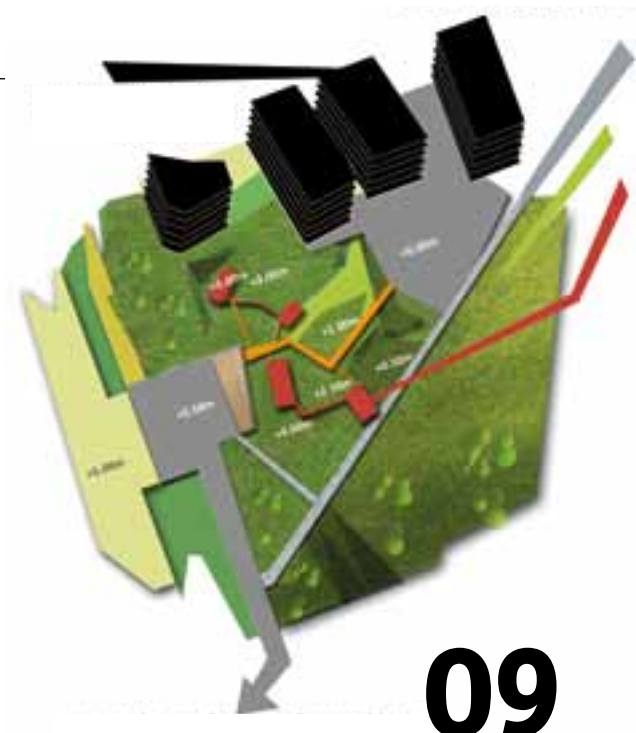
11



07



09



## ■ PRACTICE 04

- 4 EDITORIAL
- 5 KTP NEWS
- 6-7 PEOPLE & PROJECTS
- 8 EU DESK
- 9 SACES

## ■ FEATURE 10

- 10-15 ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION PROJECT
- 16-17 PETRA - ROCK CITY OF THE EAST

## ■ CURRENT 18

- 18-19 HERITAGE
- 20 MEPA REFORM
- 21 REVIEWS
- 22 INTERNATIONAL EVENTS



16

19



the Architect

**"Sustainable architectural design significantly reduces adverse human impacts on the natural environment while improving quality of life and economic well-being."**

— ACE (see page 8)



# Reform: to put or change into an improved form or condition\*

Spring is traditionally a time for renewal, and the air surrounding the *perit's* professional scenario is certainly going through a process of change – though it is not altogether clear whether this promises well for the seasons ahead. A number of reform processes have been undertaken over the past months, some of which have an important bearing on the profession and the way it operates.

Certainly one of the recent changes that will impact the profession is the proposed reform of the planning application process. New procedures are due to be implemented, and while most of these are intended to streamline the planning process and to cut down on delays and bureaucracy, only time and experience will tell whether these changes will achieve the desired results. It is up to all the players in the field to endeavour to make them work; yet there are clear risks that while the proposed system will result in a statistical victory for the efficiency of the process, the quality of the built environment will suffer further losses if the system and those implementing it are not radically transformed to ensure that it is better appreciated and safeguarded.

Notwithstanding, it is imperative that all *periti* acquaint themselves with the proposed changes prior to their implementation in order to ensure as smooth a transition as possible and in order to be able to guide their clients accordingly. With this in mind, the *Kamra tal-Periti* recently organised an information seminar for members of the profession, during which these proposed changes were outlined by MEPA representatives, giving those present the opportunity to make comments and suggestions and also to put down some of the proposals. The article on page 20 of this issue of "the Architect" outlines some of the proposed changes to the process.

Another recent change concerns the introduction of a new clause in Chapter 16 of the Laws of Malta under the section regarding Tariff K – Fees payable to *Periti*. This clause effectively allows *periti* to forego the provisions of the Tariff, and to enter into an agreement with their client to impose fees that are different to those laid out therein. This, however, is subject to the two parties entering into a written agreement in this regard.

The imposition of this change, which happened as a result of the transposition of the Services in the Internal Market Directive, came as a surprise and shock to most, particularly since the *Kamra* had been in discussions with various Government representatives regarding proposed amendments to the *Tariff*. These proposals, which had the approval of the *Kamra's* General Meeting, envisaged the liberalisation of some aspects of the *Tariff*, and changes in other cases, together with the introduction of a transition period which would allow the market to adjust itself before full liberalisation of fees would come about.

Government, however, chose to make a mockery of these discussions and the *Kamra's* proposals, and to steamroll ahead with its agenda. In a 'Talking Point' carried in The Times of Malta, the *Kamra* stated that "This suggests an attitude to the workings of civil society that is at best uncivil, if not downright autocratic. It underscores a belittling of those professions that are more wont to proceed in a civil,

professional manner rather than scream, throw tantrums and raise controversy. It is reflected in other decisions that have undermined the role of the *perit* in society, and revealed a lack of Government commitment to quality built environments, such as its reluctance to heed the *Kamra's* repeated advice on the need to champion design quality in the planning process, and by promoting design competitions and architectural excellence rather than lowest cost in the procurement of public projects. The *Kamra* does not expect to decide on all matters that concern the profession; it does however expect that its voice, as the legally established representative of all Warrant Holders, be given due weighting."

The *Kamra's* letter to the Prime Minister in this regard remains unanswered. Notwithstanding this, the *Kamra* is still in discussion with the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs on this matter and the rest of the proposals for the renewal of the profession approved by the General Meeting. Meanwhile, members of the profession are advised to take note of this change and to be aware of its implications. Reference should here be made to the circular issued by the *Kamra* in this regard. Meanwhile one wonders what effect this change will have on the profession and the quality of service it provides to society. The introduction of this clause provides an increased risk of lower tariffs being used for competitive advantage in the marketplace, with the risk of an impact on the quality of service provided. In the end, if this had to happen, it would be the consumer who would suffer the consequences – yet it is also the *Kamra's* duty to ensure that quality of service is upheld as per the *perit's* legal and professional obligations and the *Kamra* will be increasingly vigilant in this regard.

In the meantime, life goes on, with a number of new projects hitting the architectural scene. One such project comes as a result of an international design competition organised by Heritage Malta. This competition invited submissions for the design of a Heritage Park at the site of the Ggantija Temples in Gozo. Twelve proposals were submitted, and these are reviewed in the main feature of this issue of "the Architect."

Competitions such as this are healthy and deserve encouragement. The *Kamra* has, on a number of occasions, called for greater use of design competitions. In its publication "The Urban Challenge – Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment," it had stated that "In order to ensure that the public is provided with the best quality project possible, then it would be better if all government projects of scale and importance should be awarded on the basis of design competitions, backed by adequate funding and evaluated from the point of view of their contribution to the social and built environment, again promoting a commitment to good design." Let us hope that Heritage Malta's endeavour will not be an isolated case, but an approach to be implemented more often and with an increasing emphasis, foremost, on the quality of design.

**Simone Vella Lenicker**  
Editor

\* [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)



THE PROFESSIONAL CENTRE  
SLIEMA ROAD  
GZIRA GZR 06 - MALTA  
TEL./FAX. (+356) 2131 4265  
EMAIL: [info@ktpmalta.com](mailto:info@ktpmalta.com)  
WEBSITE: [www.ktpmalta.com](http://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 2010 consists of Vincent Cassar (President), David Felice (Past President), Simone Vella Lenicker (Honorary Secretary) and Council members Ruben Paul Borg, Jacques Borg Barthet, Keith Cole, Philip Grech, Anthony Fenech Vella, Danica Mifsud, Anton Valentino and Damian Vella Lenicker. The Architect is the official journal of the Kamra Tal-Periti. It is published on a quarterly basis and distributed with the Business Today newspaper. The Architect is not to be sold separately. The contents of this journal are copyright. Reproduction in part or in full is forbidden without the permission of the editor. The opinions expressed by writers of signed articles and letters appearing in the magazine are those of their respective authors, and neither the Kamra Tal-Periti nor MediaToday Co. Ltd is responsible for these opinions or statements.

Editor: **Simone Vella Lenicker**  
Consulting Editor: **Danica Mifsud**  
Design: **Zvezdan Reljic – ZED Creative**  
Sales: **Adriana Farrugia** Tel: **21 382 741** ext. **126**  
Printed at: **Print It**

Published by:



Vjal ir-Rihan, San Gwann SGN 4016, Malta  
Tel: +356 21 382 741, Fax: +356 21 381 992  
Email: [admin@mediatoday.com](mailto:admin@mediatoday.com)



**COVER:**  
Winning design by Perit Robert Sant in the Ggantija Heritage Park design competition. Refer to pages 10-15



Arbitration Seminar

## RENT REFORM SEMINAR

Dar I-Ewropa in Valletta was the venue for the *Kamra's* first event for the year, held on the 5 February. This event consisted of an evening lecture on the changes to the property rental regime in Malta, which changes have an impact on the *periti's* work, particularly in the field of property valuations. The Rent Law was amended last year and the amendments came into effect on the 1st January 2010. The packed hall was addressed by Dr. David Spiteri Gingell who was one of the prime movers behind the new Act, assisted by Dr Ray Zammit LL.D., who delved into the various amendments that have been enacted. Perit Denis Camilleri presented a number of scenarios in order to exemplify the impact of the changes to the Law on the value of property. Dr. Patrick J. Galea LL.D., Head of Civil Law at the University of Malta gave a critical overview of the new Law, highlighting a number of anomalies and possible loopholes. The discussion that ensued was interesting and vibrant, and many of those present put forward valid suggestions that may be taken on board by the authorities.

This event drew a lot of interest from the profession, and unfortunately, participants had to be turned down because of the limited space available at the venue. However, in view of impending changes to the Law, it is the *Kamra's* intention to hold an update seminar in the coming

future. Meanwhile, those interested in reading more about the Rent Reform can visit [www.rentreform.gov.mt](http://www.rentreform.gov.mt) for further information.

## PRODUCT SEMINARS

Two product seminars were also held in February. The first was held on the 24th at the Cavalieri Hotel, and featured a range of “Weber building solutions” products. The audience was addressed by Mr Mike Sinnott of St Gobain-Weber, UK who delved into the characteristics of a number of products. This event was organised by Coster Ltd in collaboration with the *Kamra tal-Periti*. The second product seminar was held on the 25 February at the Excelsior Hotel. This time the event was organised by JM Vassallo Vibro Steel Ltd, again in collaboration with the *Kamra*, and featured the range of ACO products relating to drainage and water treatment solutions. Perit Ruben Sciortino,



JM Vassallo Consultant, Mr Marco Cassol, ACO Commercial Director, and Ing Marco Pizzi, ACO Technical Manager, addressed the audience. Mr Raymond Vassallo of JM Vassallo Vibro Steel Ltd presented the *Kamra* with a donation of €300.

## ARBITRATION SEMINAR

On the 25th February, the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) organised a seminar on arbitration as an alternative means of dispute resolution in the construction industry. Perit John Ebejer, Chairperson of the BICC, chaired the session which was held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta. Those present were addressed by Dr Fiona Farrugia, Registrar of the Malta Arbitration Centre, and by Perit Godwin P. Abela, Member on the Domestic Panel of Arbitrators of the Malta Arbitration Centre. Further information on the operation of the Malta Arbitration Centre, the relevant legislation and procedures can be obtained from the Centre's website [www.mac.com.mt](http://www.mac.com.mt).

## REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION

Further to an extensive consultation process and to unanimous approval by members of the *Kamra* at an Extraordinary General Meeting, a document outlining the proposed changes to regulations and legislation governing the profession was presented to government in 2008. The Office of the Prime Minister assured the *Kamra* of its appreciation for the proposed changes and their prompt consideration. Yet after eighteen months of discussions, between the *Kamra*, the *Periti* Warranting Board and officials representing the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA), and where relevant the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment (MFEI), a full conclusion of the process has not yet been reached. Although much progress has been made on a number of points, some others are still being debated and discussed. Moreover at the end of 2009, government, without informing the *Kamra tal-Periti*, effectively abolished the Tariff of fees due to *periti* by amending legislation to allow a client and his *perit* to agree on any fee and the basis of the service on which the same fee is agreed. Council has written to the Office of the Prime Minister expressing its concern but is still awaiting feedback. An article entitled “Being civil to civil society” was also published as a Talking Point in The Times. Council Members attended a meeting on the 2nd of March with Minister George

Pullicino and various representatives of the Ministry. A number of points were discussed and some principles established. Discussions are still ongoing and it is hoped that some conclusions will be reached in the coming weeks.

## DUPLEX PROPERTY EXPO

Periti Vincent Cassar and Keith Cole acted as members of the judging panel for a students competition organised as part of the Duplex Property Expo last March.



In collaboration with the Faculty for the Built Environment, Duplex presented third year Architecture students with a challenging project. The aim of the project was to present ideas and designs for a low carbon footprint development. A number of architecture students submitted their projects to the Faculty, out of which twenty were shortlisted and displayed at The Expo. On Saturday 6th March, the judging panel awarded prizes to the ‘Most innovative and Energy Efficient solution’, to the ‘Best design’ and a first prize to the ‘Best Overall’. Four honourable mentions were also awarded.

## AIRMALTA OFFERS KTP MEMBERS A 10% DISCOUNT

Airmalta has kindly agreed to extend its agreement with the *Kamra tal-Periti* by offering a 10% discount on flights to all paid-up members. This discount will apply on published pricing for travel on Air Malta scheduled services. Travel validity is until December 2010. KTP Members can book online, by logging onto the Airmalta booking engine with a pre-defined user name and password, obtained from the *Kamra's* secretariat, to avail themselves of this discount. Electronic tickets will be directed back to the passenger via email. Discount does not apply on promotional ‘N’class fares. Members can make use of this offer by logging on to the KTP website ([www.ktpmalta.com](http://www.ktpmalta.com)) and following the link to the Airmalta login page.

[airmalta.com](http://airmalta.com)





### YEREVAN COMPETITION

In October 2009, Avangard Motors LLC in collaboration with the Union of Architects of Armenia and the municipality of the city of Yerevan, launched a single stage international competition for the design of a prestigious multifunctional complex in the centre of the city of Yerevan, Armenia. Strategically located in the heart of the capital on a site of over 4 hectares, the complex included a business centre, an Intercontinental hotel, housing and commercial spaces. The international jury examined the 274 projects that had been submitted. At the end of its deliberations, the jury unanimously decided not to award a first prize. The second prize was awarded to the French team Agence Search Caroline Barat, Thomas Dubuisson, in collaboration with Sériès et Sériès Benjamin and Thomas Sériès. The third prize went to Federico Ennas and Daniela Fucile (Italy). Chaired by Michael Rotondi, architect (USA) the jury was composed of Edward Avetisyan (Russia) President of Avangard Motors LLC, Gagik Beglaryan Mayor of Yerevan, and architects Mkrtich Minasyan, President of the Union of Architects of Armenia, Makoto Watanabe (Japan), Enrique Sobejano (Spain), UIA representative, Alexander Korb, President of the Belarussian Union of Architects.

### 2011 UIA CONGRESS

The next World Congress of the International Union of Architects will be held in Tokyo, Japan from 25 to 29 September 2011. The



UIA General Assembly will take place from 29 September until 1st October 2011.

Design 2050 is the theme of the congress, which is divided into three sub themes: environment, cultural exchanges, and life. The architects of the world are welcome to share their architectural visions for the second half of the century. The congress' site now presents a monthly newsletter as a video on youtube. The first edition introduces the Tokyo International Forum, a flagship building, which will host the Congress. An international competition for the design of the Forum was organised in 1989 with the UIA. Rafael Viñoly won the competition and realised the building, completed in 1996. For more details visit [www.uia2011tokyo.com](http://www.uia2011tokyo.com)

### WAN INAUGURAL PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

In March, WAN (World Architecture News) announced the winner of the Inaugural Product of the Year 2009 Award. Manufacturers from around the world were invited to take part in this quest to discover innovative building products by having their entries assessed by a top judging panel.

iGuzzini's direct lighting fixture for LED's with road optic was the award winner. With this LED public lighting fixture, electricity consumption can be slashed by up to 40% compared to traditional systems, improving the quality of light and reducing light pollution.

Featuring sophisticated optics, these innovative lights are regulated by smart and versatile electronic systems that can be applied to different road traffic situations and to a wide range of urban furnishings. The light emitted is directed onto the areas



to be illuminated with absolute precision, guaranteeing no upward dispersion, excellent uniformity on the road surface, minimum environmental impact and unsurpassed energy savings (to be precise: up to 464,000 KW/h and 195,000 Kg CO2 per 1000 points of light per year). In addition, they look good and can blend into any landscape: Lleida, Zurich, Modena and Prague are just some examples of all the European cities where Archilede has been installed.

### AIA FIRM AWARD

Founded in 1984, Pugh + Scarpa first received attention in the '90s and the first decade of this century for an imaginative series of Hollywood production company offices involving such unconventional materials as ping-pong balls and Dixie cups. In addition to designing such quintessentially "Los Angeles" projects, the Santa Monica, California-based firm has embraced risk and change by branching out into the residential and public sectors.



Partners Gwynne Pugh, Larry Scarpa, and Angela Brooks, together with their team, create buildings that are dynamic, many with colourful, angular, patterned facades that exude a sense of whimsical energy. Even at its most eye-catching, the work is also decisively rooted in function and energy efficiency. The firm has also established a substantial portfolio of affordable housing projects. This synergy of design excellence, community involvement, and attention to sustainability earned the firm the 2010 AIA Architecture Firm Award from the American Institute of Architects. In receiving this, the highest honour the AIA bestows on a firm, Pugh + Scarpa joins past award-winners including Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, Gwathmey Siegel & Associates, The Architects' Collaborative, and fellow Santa Monica firm Moore Ruble Yudell.

Source: [www.architectureweek.com](http://www.architectureweek.com)



### MAGHTAB LANDFILL PROJECT

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) Board approved the full development permission for the rehabilitation of the former Maghtab landfill. The project, which will be co-financed by the EU Cohesion Fund, will include the landscaping of over 200,000sqm, the capping of the entire landfill, the creation of a number of water reservoirs and ponds to cater for the irrigation of the entire area and a new access to the site that will eliminate the current inconvenience caused by heavy vehicles for residents living in the Maghtab area. The landfill capping system, which will also include a thick layer of fabricated soil, will serve to minimise the escape of any possible emissions of landfill gases within the area and prevent any rain from being allowed to infiltrate the accumulated waste of the former landfill. The piled excavation waste generated from the adjacent Ghallis engineered landfill, which is currently stored on site, will be used as part of the material required for the plantation of the trees. As part of the rehabilitation programme for this site, this permit complements the ongoing project and system for the extraction and treatment of hazardous combustion gases to reduce air pollution.

Source: [www.mepa.org.mt](http://www.mepa.org.mt)

### MIPIM AR AWARDS

The MIPIM Architectural Review Future Projects Awards are for unbuilt or incomplete projects spanning across eight categories. The awards have been running since 2002 and take place at MIPIM, the international property market, which will attract over 20,000 delegates to Cannes between 16-19 March, 2010. With a strong focus on creativity, these awards are a chance to showcase schemes that are examples of fine architecture, but have also responded to the client's development brief, and con-



**One New Change**

sidered the way in which they will impact and contribute to the community around them. With architectural awards and recognition commonly focusing on current projects and designs, the MIPIM Architectural Review Future Project Awards provide a unique and exciting perspective. Winners in the various categories were as follows:

**Big Urban Projects:** Amfora Amstel, Amsterdam, The Netherlands by Zwarts & Jansma Architects

**Mixed use:** One New Change, London, UK by Ateliers Jean Nouvel with Sidell Gibson Architects

**Offices:** Günesli Tower, Istanbul, Turkey by Suyabatmaz Architects

**Regeneration & Masterplanning:** Nordhavnen Regeneration, Copenhagen, Denmark by FXFOWLE Architects

**Residential:** 486 Mina El Hosn, Beirut, Lebanon by LAN Architecture

**Retail & Leisure:** Nebuta house, Aomori City, Japan by Molo Japan KK with D/DT and Frank la Rivière Architects

**Sustainability:** Town Office Tower, Vienna, Austria by Coop Himmelblau

**Tall Buildings:** Garden Tower, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia by Perkins+Will

**Overall Winner:** One New Change, Ateliers Jean Nouvel with Sidell Gibson Architects

## PRITZKER ARCHITECTURE PRIZE LAUREATES

Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, partners in the architectural firm, SANAA, have been chosen as the 2010 Laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. The formal cer-

emony for what has come to be known throughout the world as architecture's highest honour will be held on May 17 on historic Ellis Island in New York. At that time, a \$100,000 grant and bronze medallions will be bestowed on the two architects.

In announcing the jury's choice, Thomas J. Pritzker, chairman of The Hyatt Foundation, elaborated, "This marks the third time in the history of the prize that two architects have been named in the same year. The first was in 1988 when Oscar Niemeyer of Brazil and the late Gordon Bunshaft were so honoured, and the second was in 2001, when Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, partners in a Swiss firm, were selected." He continued, "Japanese architects have been chosen three times in the thirty year history of the Pritzker Architecture Prize — the first was the late Kenzo Tange in 1987, then in 1993, Fumihiko Maki was selected, and in 1995, Tadao Ando was the honouree."

The purpose of the Pritzker Architecture Prize is to honour annually a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combi-



**21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan. Photo by SANAA**

nation of those qualities of talent, vision and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture.

Pritzker Prize jury chairman, The Lord Palumbo quoted from the jury citation to focus on this year's selection: "For architecture that is simultaneously delicate and powerful, precise and fluid, ingenious but not overly or overtly clever; for the creation of buildings that successfully interact with their contexts and the activities they contain, creating a sense of fullness and experiential richness; for a singular architectural language that springs from a collaborative process that is both unique and inspirational; for their notable completed buildings and the promise of new projects together,



**Ryue Nishizawa and Kazuyo Sejima. Photo by Takashi Okamoto, courtesy of SANAA**

Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa are the recipients of the 2010 Pritzker Architecture Prize."

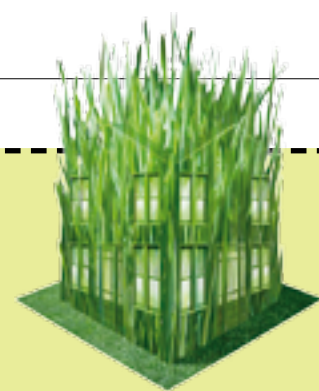
## ENVIRONMENT REPORT LAUNCHED

The Environment Directorate within the Malta Environment and Planning Authority recently launched its latest report on the state of Malta's environment. The Environment Report highlights the situation in a number of environmental areas including air, waters, climate change, biodiversity and policy responses to environmental issues. Results published in the report show that Malta has managed to achieve positive results in a number of key areas, such as the fact the 99 per cent of bathing sites around Malta and Gozo conform to the EU's bathing water standards.

The report also takes the relationship between the economy and the environment into consideration, showing that, the overall trend since 2000 has been towards a relative decoupling of energy consumption from economic activity, indicating that Malta's economy is becoming more energy efficient. The report also highlights a number of issues that need further attention. It delves into a number of key environmental challenges in areas such as waste management, further protection of Malta's biodiversity, water management, the control of traffic emissions, as well as the ongoing pressures on land. The report also highlights that there is significant potential for improving the overall efficiency of land use in the Maltese Islands, particularly given current over-supply in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors. The full text of the report can be downloaded from the MEPA website [www.mepa.org.mt](http://www.mepa.org.mt).

### Letters to the Editor

Letters from our readers to be considered for publication are most welcome. Letters for inclusion in Issue 53 are to reach us by the 25th May 2010. Please write to: The Editor, "the Architect", Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira GZR 1633 or send an email to [thearchitct@ktpmalta.com](mailto:thearchitct@ktpmalta.com). All contributions will be acknowledged.



## SUSTAINABILITY SNAPS

Keeping in touch with the jargon and what's going on

The European Commission launched the Europe 2020 Strategy to end the crisis and prepare the EU economy for the next decade. The Commission identified three key drivers for growth, to be implemented through concrete actions at EU and national levels: smart growth (fostering knowledge, innovation, education and digital society), sustainable growth (making our production more resource efficient while boosting our competitiveness) and inclusive growth (raising participation in the labour market, the acquisition of skills and the fight against poverty). This battle for growth and jobs requires ownership at top political level and mobilisation from all actors across Europe.

Progress towards these objectives particularly in the area of environment is highlighted in these key points throughout the proposal:

- The "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right).

- "Resource efficient Europe" to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernise our transport sector and promote energy efficiency.

- "An industrial policy for the globalisation era" to improve the business environment, notably for SMEs, and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally.





# Architecture and Sustainability

## Declaration by the Architects' Council of Europe

In a recent publication entitled "Architecture and Sustainability," the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) declared its position on the relationship between Architecture and Sustainability. The following is the full text of the declaration. In the next issue of "the Architect" we will also look at the Policy set out by the ACE on this matter, which also forms part of this publication. The Architects' Council of Europe is the European organisation representing the architectural profession at European level. Its headquarters and Secretariat are located in Brussels. Its growing membership consists of Member Organisations, which are the nationally representative regulatory and professional bodies of all European Union (EU) Member States, Accession States, Switzerland and Norway. Through them, it represents the interests of about 480,000 architects.

The principal function of the ACE is to monitor developments at EU level, seeking to influence those areas of EU Policy and legislation that have an impact on architectural practice and on the overall quality and sustainability of the built environment. Malta is an active Member Organisation, with Perit Vincent Cassar, current President of the Kamra tal-Periti, just having concluded his role as Treasurer of ACE for the past two years.

### DECLARATION

"We, leaders and representatives of the architectural profession... believe that the design of the built environment has a profound role to play in ensuring the survival of the human race and thousands of other living species, the integrity of the earth and its biodiversity and the heritage of future generations currently threatened by climate change and unsustainable development.

We are conscious that buildings account for almost half of the primary energy used in the western world, and if we add to that the impact of spatial planning on the movement of people and goods our responsibility as built environment professionals extends even further. Inequitable and unsustainable production and consumption patterns exacerbate environmental changes and aggravate poverty in many regions of the world. Can we find the collective wisdom to choose a more sustainable path of development? Sustainable architectural design integrates consideration of resource conservation and energy efficiency, healthy buildings and materials, ecologically and socially sensitive land-use, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and an aesthetic sensitivity that inspires, affirms, and ennobles.

Sustainable architectural design significantly reduces adverse human impacts on the natural environment while improving quality of life and economic well-being. Market forces alone cannot ensure sustainable development; indeed climate change has been famously described as the "greatest market failure ever". We urge governments to rapidly come to a binding, science-based and equitable agreement to arrest the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This will enable nations and regions to devise and implement the right financial measures and regulatory regimes, allow carbon trading and technology transfer so as to enable the innovation and development that we need and to which the architectural profession is ready to commit. We strongly believe that sustainability and

whole life value analysis of buildings are inseparable and together shift focus away from the short-sighted initial cost based approaches that have proved so destructive. Construction is a cultural act which always has a collective impact and which should fulfil human, social and technical functions.

The present environmental, economic and energy crisis and the need for sustainable urban development demands an approach to architecture and planning that addresses both the city and individual buildings as complex interactive systems which have symbiotic relationships with their wider natural surroundings. It is essential that quality of life is de-coupled from the irresponsible use of non-renewable resources. We believe that urgent actions are needed to address these fundamental problems and to reverse current trends.

Taking account of:

- The Declaration of Interdependence for a Sustainable Future of the UIA/AIA World Congress of Architects in Chicago, June 1993;
- The ACE Policy on Environment and Sustainable Architecture, April 2007;
- The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities adopted by the EU Ministers for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion, May 2007 and its follow-up;
- The Council Conclusions on Architecture: Culture's Contribution to Sustainable Development, November 2008.

Therefore, for our part, the architectural profession commits to take the following actions:

#### 1. Change our individual Professional Practices

Place sustainability at the core of our practices and professional responsibilities, promote and foster appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies and develop and continually improve practices, procedures, products, curricula, services, technology and standards that will enable the imple-

mentation of sustainable design; work to bring all existing and future elements of the built environment – in their design, production, use, and eventual reuse – up to sustainable design standards, working towards the achievement of a zero emission built environment.

#### 2. Promote Sustainable Design

Include energy and environmental performance information in all architectural competitions, public architectural awards and competitive selection processes, where appropriate as an assessment criterion and encourage similar information to accompany all published architectural reviews

#### 3. Foster Environmental Literacy and Competence

Support the creation of programmes to teach sustainable design skills to all undergraduate and graduate students of urban design and architecture, and encourage continuing professional education and research in relevant areas.

#### 4. Practice Institutional Leadership

Set an example of environmental corporate responsibility by establishing policies and practices of resource conservation, recycling, waste reduction, and environmentally sound operations in the professions' institutions and organisations.

#### 5. Collaborate for Interdisciplinary Approaches

Convene sister professions and industry interests to develop interdisciplinary approaches to curricula, research initiatives and industry practices that support an environmentally sustainable future; and seek to establish policies, regulations and practices in government and business that ensure sustainable design becomes normal practice.

#### 6. Broaden Service and Outreach Nationally and Internationally

Work with national and international organisations to promote a worldwide effort toward a sustainable future."

# SACES EASTER WORKSHOP

20 students from the Faculty for the Built Environment participated in a design workshop over the Easter recess. The workshop, which was organised by the Society of Architecture and Civil Engineering Students (SACES), gave the participants the opportunity to tackle three different projects during a weekend live-in at the faculty's design studio.

One of the projects was a landscaping area on the university campus which has been designated as a recreational space for students. This project was tied to the proposal for a multi-storey lecture building adjacent to the area. Other groups tackled the design for a shading structure at Hal-Safi Primary School's playground and will serve as a test project for further shading structures. The final project was that of a wind and rain shelter for Mater Dei Hospital, located at the entrance to the Outpatients Department.

A presentation was held after the weekend, attended by the University Rector, Prof. Juanito Camilleri and Precincts Officer Mr. Joe Camilleri.



Model of Safi School shading proposal

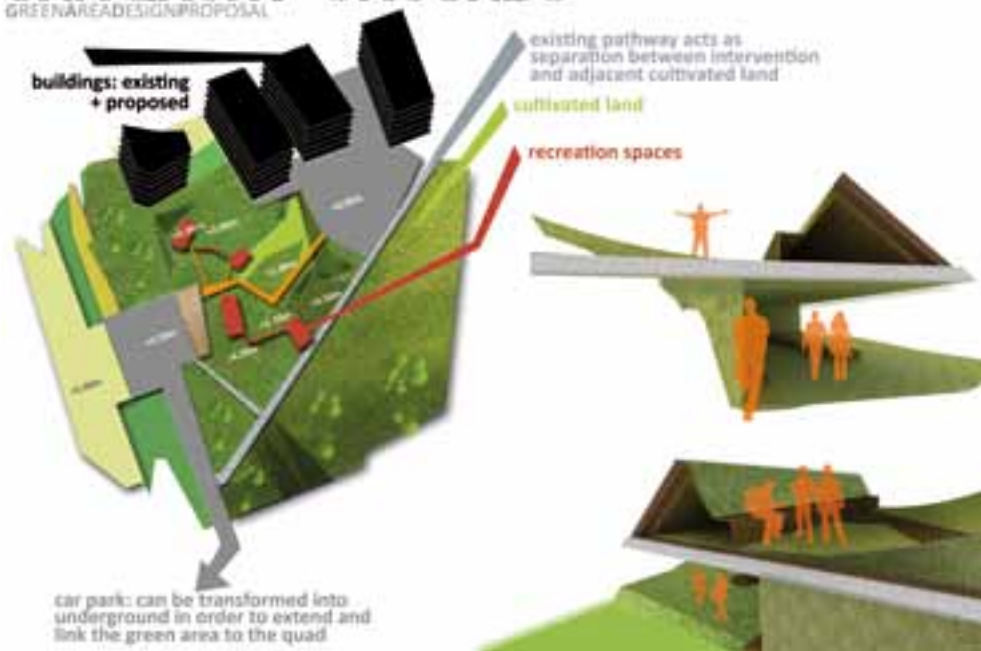


Rector



## UNIVERSITY GROUNDS

GREEN AREA DESIGN PROPOSAL



Green Area design proposal



Presentation to Rector and Precincts Officer



# ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION PROJECT



Malta does not have a rich culture of architectural design competitions, so when one is held locally it nearly always provides a breath of fresh air, exposing the quality of design that can be achieved and giving local firms and individual architects the opportunity to explore new ideas. **the Architect** here looks at the most recent competition to be organised locally, that for the design of an interpretation centre and connected ancillary facilities within the site of the Ġgantija Temples in Gozo. The descriptive text for each of the projects was taken from the reports submitted by the entrants with their projects. All information and images were kindly provided by Heritage Malta.



Current entry point to the Ġgantija Temples site



Historical aerial view of the Ġgantija Temples.  
Photo courtesy of Heritage Malta

**The Archaeological Heritage Conservation Project** will see the upgrading and conservation of two sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the 'Maltese Megalithic Temples', Ġgantija and Tarxien Temples, as well as St Paul's Catacombs, which are an outstanding example of Malta's Catacombs.

One of the main elements of the €9.2 million project, part-financed through the European Regional Development Fund (85% EU funds; 15% National Funds) Operational Programme I – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 - *Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life*, is to present an organised, pleasant and sustainable experience to the circa 150,000 persons who visit the Ġgantija Temples annually, whilst highlighting the landscape setting of the site and the removal of past interventions which have a negative impact on the setting. On the other hand, the project, at the Ġgantija Heritage Park also includes a study regarding the structural stability of the Temple structure, archaeological investigations and monitoring of works.

A design competition for 'Enhancing the visitor experience at the Ġgantija Heritage Park World Heritage Site' was organised by Heritage Malta between October and December 2009. The brief for this competition was prepared in collaboration with the Scientific Committee for the Megalithic Temples. The Jury, appointed by the then Minister for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, included representatives from Heritage Malta's Board of Directors and Curatorial staff, the UNESCO Commission, the Scientific Committee for the Megalithic Temples and the Kamra tal-Periti. In all, twelve entries were received, including two foreign architectural firms and two entries that involved a collaboration between local and foreign firms.

The brief called for proposals for three main elements of the project, within clearly defined parameters, intended to give foremost importance to the respect and the safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Ġgantija Temples and their setting, as well as the impact on the surrounding urban context. The proposals had to include:

- an Interpretation Centre, which shall act an orientation point for the various cultural sites in Xagħra whilst including a permanent display focusing on Xagħra's prehistory;
- pathways to link the Interpretation Centre to the Temples, and the Temples to the 'Exit Point', including the rehabilitation and landscaping of the Heritage Park;
- an 'Exit Point' including a souvenir shop and other basic amenities for the visitors to the Heritage Park.

The winner of the Design Contest was Perit Robert Sant. The Jury also identified a further two proposals worthy of an honourable mention, namely Prof Alex Torpiano (TBA Periti) and Perit Martin Xuereb (Martin Xuereb & Associates and Politecnica Soc. Coop. – Firenze). When announcing the results, the Jury stated that it was impressed by the architectural quality of the proposals and the sensitivity shown by the contestants towards this unique site.

Heritage Malta thanks all contestants for submitting an entry for the Design Contest and would like to reiterate its appreciation for the hard work and effort that went into the preparation of the different entries.

**Project duration:** January 2008 to March 2013

**Project value:** €9.2 million

**Managing Authority:** Planning & Priorities  
Coordination Division ([www.ppcd.gov.mt](http://www.ppcd.gov.mt))



Operational Programme I – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013  
*Investing in Competitiveness for a Better Quality of Life*  
Project part-financed by the European Union  
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)  
Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds  
*Investing in your future*



# ENTRY BY PERIT ROBERT SANT

WINNER

“The design philosophy adopted for this scheme is one of respect towards the Megalithic structures which have stood within the Ġgantija site for at least five millennia. It follows that any contemporary intervention, no matter how innovative and technologically advanced, needs to respect our ancestors’ achievements whilst serving their function properly. Aesthetically, any structures and interventions need to be humble in scale and clearly reflect the contemporary period they were built in as well as the functions within them. Ideally the past interventions that were carried out on site impairing the setup and disrespecting the temple layout must either be removed or reinstated to a setup that does not impede their perception, and facilitate the experience of the temple complex within an environment and setup reminiscent to that it was built in. In any case, all new structures remain supporting facilities to the main object of importance which remains the megalithic temples.”

The main concept behind the proposal is to detach the visitor, for a short while, from the urbanised surroundings of the site, allowing one to concentrate and focus on the quasi-sacred temples structures without distractions. “The visitor is progressively led to the temples via an alternating sequence of static and dynamic spaces, instilling a sense of anticipation and awe towards the site and

what it represents.”

The Interpretation Centre houses two main uses; one part houses the very essence of the centre, comprising a main exhibition hall and audiovisual display, while the other part houses the main reception, foyer, ancillary and administrative facilities. These uses are separated intentionally, and the exteriors treated differently to reflect the uses within. The ancillary facilities are housed in a building that is very plain and linear, elevated slightly above the rock level. A narrow ramp leads from this structure to a separate building located at a lower level. This latter building houses the main exhibition areas, and perforated copper forms the exterior shell of this space, with an inner layer of glazing enclosing the spaces within.

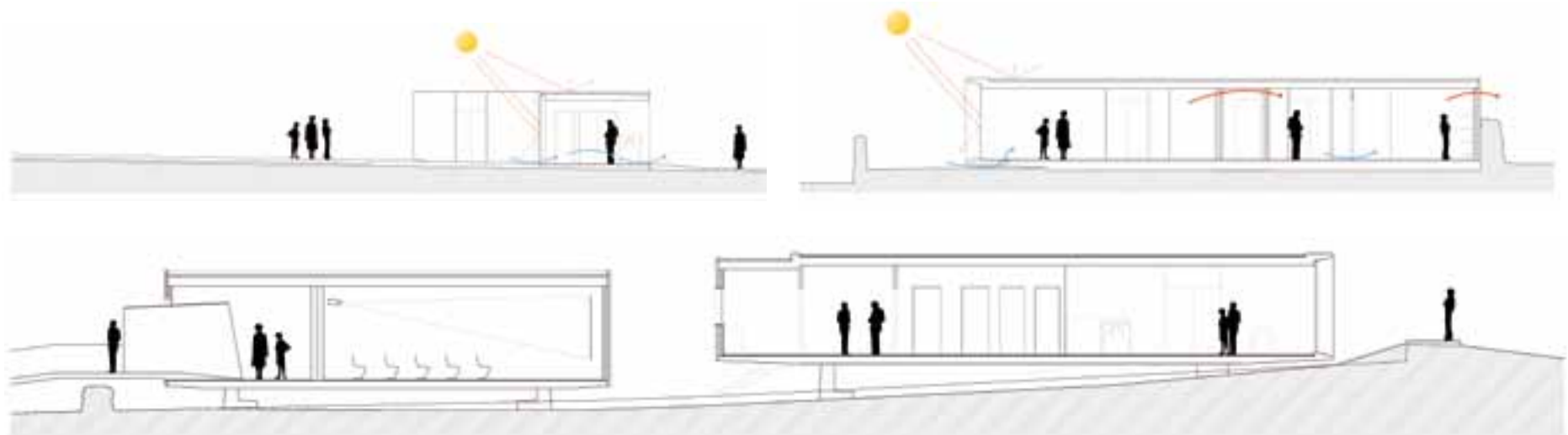
The pathway linking the Interpretation Centre to the rest of the site is split into three main sections. The first deals with the immediate surroundings, with the pathway being “immersed in nature. The visitor is exposed to the atmosphere, sights and smells that have accompanied man, including the temple builders through the ages. The short walk ends with a curious steel portal that is meant to instil a sense of anticipation.” After passing through the portal, the visitor enters the second section of the walk, where he/she is exposed to the landscape that forms the context of the temples. “The sea, surrounding hills and



settlements are framed within this portal and the visitor is left to absorb this scenery prior to the actual view of the temples.” The third section of the walk commences as the visitor passes through another portal which frames the first view of the temples. Here the pathway widens to offer an elevated vantage point for the visitor to observe the temple ruins.

The Exit Point is conceived as the entrance point to the urbanised environment outside the site. The building mass is divided in two by introducing a covered exterior space which can be used to allow visitors into a multi-function open air space located on the site of the existing temporary exit point for the site.

The environmental program for the proposal incorporated the use of recycled materials in order to reduce the carbon footprint of the project. Climate sensors throughout the building assist in regularising the microclimate within the building by directing temperature and humidity as required. Automated ventilators positioned at the low end of the walls and the underside of the slab will allow the inflow of cool air. Ventilators at the upper levels will regularise the amount of warm air flowing outwards. Natural daylight is an important factor of the project, and the perforated copper sheets with the inner glazed skin allow the penetration of light within the building, reducing glare.





## ENTRY BY MARTIN XUEREB AND ASSOCIATES AND POLITECNICA SOC. COOP. – FIRENZE

### HONOURABLE MENTION

“The entire design philosophy is based on gentle, meandering, flowing curves recurring through the passage of time. The primary sketches of this design evolved naturally from a thorough study of the structure and sinuous lines of this prehistoric place of worship.”

The proposal simulates the lobed architecture of the temples, thus introducing visitors to the architectural form of the temples before actually arriving there, creating a sense of mystery and anticipation and providing a suitable venue for visitors to appreciate Gozo’s prehistory.

Three routes lead to the temples, one for adult visitors, one for school children and another for people who are already well acquainted with the site. Along the routes, visitors are provided with information to enhance their understanding of their surroundings. The boardwalks comprise self sustaining recycled plastic components which eliminate the possibility of destroying and/or disturbing the natural flora.

The number “3”, arising from the presence of three altars within the temples, is used deliberately throughout the proposal. Further, the ten main walls within the Interpretation Centre reflect the ten curved walls of the temples.

Circular walls were chosen for their directional qualities, with each lobe giving visitors the time to acquaint themselves with the notion of entering a temple site. “The curvature of the structure guides the visitor to the entrance, and the gentle slope invites one to venture within.” Focused sound systems are proposed, providing isolated transmission of information at particular standpoints, eliminating the need to use headsets.



The roof structure is designed to act like a “shroud” thrown over the stone structure and supported on a woven lattice, evoking the smooth curves of one of the roofing systems thought to have covered the temple structures – timber beams with woven branches, possibly covered with clay.

The environmental program aims to minimise the energy consumption for the building operation and to optimise the thermal and visual comfort. The shape and orientation of the building, coupled with the external passages outside the external walls, allow natural ventilation to funnel through the building, while gaps at the upper levels allow hot air to escape. The external gabion

walls also act as solar control shields, reducing excess direct solar radiation. The walls include insulation which limits heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer, while trees planted at the entrances allow cool air to pass into the building in summer and act as a barrier to the wind in winter.

“The design philosophy has been developed strongly utilising renewable energies with the target of maximising efficiency, and seeking ways to minimise the need for the reliance of forced mechanical environmental control systems. This therefore minimises negative impact on the environment, creating a project designed to fit, as well as work with nature.”

## ENTRY BY TBA PERITI

### HONOURABLE MENTION

“The proposal finds its inspiration from a number of themes, in particular, (i) the site and its relationship with the village of Xagħra and with the landscape of Gozo, (ii) the archaeological significance of the site, and (iii) limestone as a building material of millennia, as well as representing a skill with masonry, that still survives, especially in Gozo.”

The Interpretation Centre is conceived as the “entrance to a magical tour,” enveloping the visitor in a spatial-sensorial experience. The building itself is conceived as a “celebration of limestone and of the craft of limestone masonry.” The visitor then enters a route which weaves through a “secret garden,”

guiding him/her down a series of undulating landscaped and stepped “ribbons” inspired from the forms of the Gozitan countryside. Visitors then move to the temples, which are presented to the visitor in as authentic a manner as possible. On the way out, visitors are guided back through the main path. The buildings at the Exit Point are simple and low profile, constructed in a reinterpretation of the traditional rubble wall construction.

Determined to exploit the skills of Gozitan masons, and to recall the tradition in prehistoric culture to decorate stone with messages or symbols such as pitting and spirals, the proposal incorporates a number of features that attempt to celebrate limestone as a

material and as a core aspect of the Maltese and Gozitan traditional built landscape. The Interpretation Centre consists of a series of faceted massive walls which can be built using conventional masonry construction techniques.

The interventions on the landscape consist mainly of repair and restoration. The route through the site passes through existing clearings between established trees, impinging as little as possible on the agricultural nature of the site. The proposed new landscape consists of a series of stepped and undulating terraces which incorporate casual seating areas and soft landscaped areas. The environmental program for the proposal includes the use of the thermal capacity of the limestone walls to reduce dependence on modern systems of cooling. This, combined with ventilation, allows for comfortable ambient conditions to be achieved within the building. The floor to the Interpretation Centre is raised, and



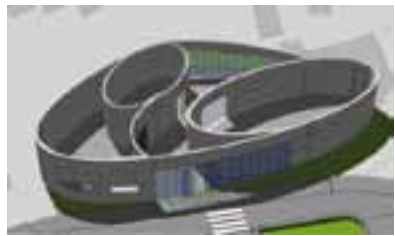
the underlying space is connected to two wind scoops which capture the wind and direct it under the raised floor from where it is controlled to enter the building through vents. North facing glazed apertures provide adequate levels of daylight, while the roof slabs consist of composite expanded polystyrene and concrete elements, providing a high insulation value as well as a recyclable roof structure.

In the words of the authors of this proposal, “the Proposal would not make sense anywhere else. It celebrates the culture of stone masonry in Gozitan society, and it celebrates the agricultural ecology and rural landscape of Gozo. It integrates with the existing rural landscape, retaining all existing trees, and reinforcing the planting in these areas. It finally provides an appropriate setting for better appreciating the Prehistoric Temples of Ġgantija.”



## ENTRY BY AONGHUS MCCANN ARCHITECTS

“The new building evolved as an organic curved entrance space in response to the shape of the site and the intended use of the building. The building’s function is to assist the pedestrian flow and subliminally orientate visitors on their arrival to the gateway of Ġgantija Heritage Park.” This building is conceived as a welcoming entrance space and meeting point which terminates the visual axis along Triq il-Mithna. Once inside the building, the visitor’s view is focused through a large planar glass façade onto the view of the Ġgantija Temples in the landscape below. The main space of the building is a sweeping entrance hallway



which orientates the visitor and acts as a reception and exhibition space located between an auditorium and children’s space. It is envisaged that this foyer could

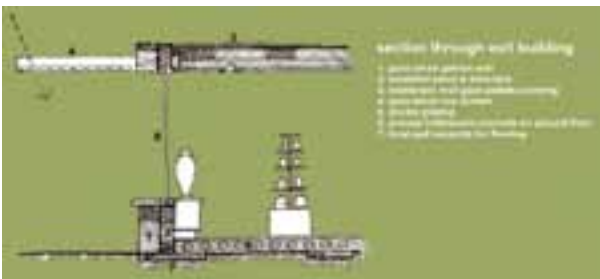
also contain occasional displays relating to the adjacent heritage sites.

The proposed footpath connecting the Interpretation Centre and the Temples is designed as a simple carpet overlaying the existing ground. This carpet of paving protects the landscape by controlling visitor movement in a subtle way. This footpath also creates a pleasant sense of anticipation.

The exit building addresses the functional requirements of the design brief while reflecting the language of the temple and interpretative centre in materials. This building provides a gentle full stop to conclude the visitors’ experience.

The building walls are conceived as steel caged gabions filled with local stone. This is essentially the re-use of building materials in a low tech, simple and at the same time aesthetically pleasing way. This construction echoes the materials in the temple without overpowering them. The walls also act as climatic filters through passive design by correctly locating and sizing openings. Other climatic considerations such as overhangs, thermal mass and skylights are also incorporated within the proposal.

The buildings will have a green roof that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil, planted over a waterproofing membrane. Green roofs are used to grow vegetation, reduce heating (by adding mass and thermal resistance value) and cooling (by evaporative cooling) loads on a building and filter pollutants.



## ENTRY BY ARC STUDIO AND MANGION & MANGION

“The design of a Heritage Park is always considered to be a challenge. In this case, this lies in the ability to combine designs carried out thousands of years apart; the creation of a ‘unity’ which encompasses a link between a structure



to be built in the near future with another one estimated to be constructed over 5600 years ago.”

The ideology of this proposal starts with its social context – it relates to Gozo, its culture, habits and peculiarities. “The experience starts at Mġarr Harbour, the Gozo countryside on the route to Xaghra, past Ta’ Kola Windmill and into Triq il-Mithna” where one first glimpses the transparent Interpretation Centre. The building is light, detached from the ground and apparently floating in air in parts. The sculptural quality is achieved through the angularity and fragmentation of the facades.

The pathway through the site speaks the same language as the building, with straight, sharp angles that pronounce a man-made route while at the same time merging with its surroundings. This path beckons the visitor to explore more of the site terminating in a deck that fully exposes the back view of the Temple. Constructed in timber, the path is suspended above the existing landscape and includes a number of energy saving features such as LEDs for lighting.

The exit building consists of a steel structure with timber cladding. This low profile, lightweight structure is conceived to be in harmony with the Interpretation Centre, while working in conjunction with the urban setting outside the site.

The project includes a number of environmental features such as projecting roofs to provide shading, south facing flat photovoltaic panels, solar water heating, double glazing, a suspended floor that allows for controlled ventilation, maximisation of natural daylight and rain water collection.



## ENTRY BY CHRIS BRIFFA ARCHITECTS

“Throughout our exploration of the brief, the analysis of the site, and, more importantly, the archaeological evidence from the Temples themselves, one aspect became very clear: Ġgantija has always been shrouded in mystery and myth. We concluded that the first impression upon arrival, should similarly introduce a mysterious undertone. Analogous to the Temples’ time-induced vagueness, we sought an intervention that although contemporary, is timeless in its form and aesthetic, and not attributable to any given stylistic inclinations.”

The visitor experience begins with a symbolic sculpture, a large monolithic object that serves as an “abstract vessel for interpretation.” This obelisk slowly reveals itself to be a building – the Interpretation Centre and is intended to represent the protector and curator of the temples experience that is Heritage Malta. “Its innovative fabric-formwork concrete texture will instil a strong sense of ‘hand built’ as a mark of distinction, illustrating concrete as a very contemporary process rather than just a centuries-old building material.”



The external experience of the Temples site starts in an outdoor piazza and proceeds to a covered exhibition space, an intimate shaded space where locals and visitors can meet, assemble and flow down the Pedestrian Pathway. A laser-cut site plan of Xaghra offers a strong orientation point when visitors look up at the ceiling of the hovering monolith. Outside the exhibition space is a Sculpture Garden, a paved area surrounded by low-lying garigue vegetation and deciduous trees. From here, a Natural Heritage Trail leads off to feature historical botanical and historical narrative of indigenous trees. Before reaching the Temples, visitors will walk down a curved ramp which leads to a roofed passage, “seemingly a tunnel ... enclosing them one last time before presenting them to daylight and framing the Temple view with a perspective, baroque experience.”

Local and regional building materials are proposed within this project, namely hardstone, sand and geopolymer concrete. The selection is based on considerations of function, appearance, durability, ageing characteristics and the environmental performance of the materials. Passive environmental systems have been incorporated included the use of thermal mass, orientation, natural daylight, natural ventilation, rain water collection, landscaping and choice of materials.





## ENTRY BY DEMICOLI & ASSOCIATES AND PLASMA STUDIO

“The task of the design for the visitors’ centre for Ġgantija requires an exceptional cultural depth and sensitivity. The design approach of this visitors’ centre is an integration of culture, structure, landscape, environment, circulation and experience; producing a building that is sensitive to this sacred ground. The scope of this building is essentially to prepare the visitor for a deep spiritual experience.”



The Interpretation Centre building is conceived as a series of planar and triangular forms and oblique walls that “evoke a sense of unfamiliar, which brings about a feeling of unworldly, quasi spiritual experience that transcends the realms of time. The journey in a ‘time machine’ is mitigated by the green familiar sights of Mediterranean landscape.”



The initial concept was to indent the mass of the Centre into the site and nestle it into the trees, combining the landscape and the history of the site into a hybrid public cultural garden, acting as a node to promote the rich heritage found in the Xaghra vicinity. The second main feature is that the Centre weaves through the open spaces within the trees, exploiting the natural cooler temperatures and shading, and camouflaging itself within the foliage. The building is created by a series of steel frames that support the roofing materials, shading devices, and walkways. The frames rest on reinforced concrete pads, with and underlying expanded polystyrene layer, that transfer the load to the rock.

As one progresses through the Centre, the physical experience of light, shadow, and air constantly change. The synergy between the location of the building and the natural shading of the trees reduces the need for mechanical cooling systems. However, critical spaces such as the auditorium and exhibiting space are climate controlled. A series of sinuous paths “extend the concept of the timeline into the landscape, taking the visitor on a journey back in time, enhancing the archaeological experience of the site, which allows the visitor to gradually soak up the landscape and acquire a greater understanding of the temple.”

The Exit Building is a second threshold that houses a souvenir shop, toilet facilities, and a farmer’s market. This farmer’s market is designed to connect the community of Gozo directly to the historical and cultural landmarks of Ġgantija.

by orienting the louvers accordingly is allowed to permeate through the building. The proposal also employs principles of natural ventilation, natural daylight, water collection, solar panels and a high insulation value green roof.

## ENTRY BY EQUINOX

“The proposal centres around the concept of creating a sequential and guided processional route back in time to the temple. The walking distance to the actual temple is considerably long. From a gestation point of view it was considered practicable to turn the Ġgantija Experience into a Modern interpretation of a lost processional route ... The architecture and general layout of the centre shall induce visitors to perform a series of culturally based rites.”

The authors of this proposal studied a number of cross cultural rites and routes, and identified three key stages: Initiation, Journey and Climax. In this proposal, “the entrance area is seen as the ‘cultural preparation area,’ the pathway represents a ‘journey back in time,’ and the temple tour as the Climax.”

Given the importance of the sun in the design of the Temples, visitors are introduced to the concept of sun worship by the rhythmic patterns of light created outside and within the building. Strong angular planes are used to create a deliberate and marked contrast to the curvilinear forms of the Temple. Light is used as a directional guide, with a “Ladder of Light” as a central dominant feature. Internally this takes the form of a segmented skylight, while externally a segmented canopy marks the approach route to the main entrance. The façade of the building makes use of translucent concrete which imparts a sense of solidity blended with a degree of lightness.

The pathway is conceived as a journey through time. The surrounding landscape includes a sculpture garden, and specific types of vegetation. The exit point shall be marked by a ‘Post a comment wall,’ strategically placed at the end of the experience through the Park.

The structural system proposed for the Centre is a braced lightweight steel frame system with a series of prefabricated infill panels. The skylight and adjoining roof flaps work in tandem to support the heat stack effect. In summer, the orientable louvers block direct sunlight whilst the side flaps allow hot air to escape. Conversely, the winter heat gain obtained



## ENTRY BY JBA

“A visitor centre must be developed around the experience which the visitor will undergo. However, since the site is both a very sensitive archaeological area, as well as a rural area on the limits of an urban area, this project is not only about bringing the visitors knowledge, it also involves creating a link between the urban and the rural landscape.” With this as its main statement, this project aims to achieve a balance between the urban landscape on one side and the rural landscape on the other.



The main aim behind the concept is to leave as minimum an impact on the site as possible, both from a physical point of view

as well as from a visual point of view. From a physical point of view, the main building was conceived to be suspended above the existing terrain; in this way the only intervention on the existing ground would be the removal of the soil and the provision of concrete pad foundations at intervals to support the columns forming the main vertical structural elements of the building. From a visual point of view, this idea of low impact is achieved by trying to integrate the building with its context as far as possible ... Camouflage... The use of globigerina limestone for the façade overlooking the urban area, the use of solids and voids to recall the built up landscape, and the use of rigid forms, squares and cubes allow the project to integrate with the urban landscape. The use of curves and flowing lines, coupled with the use of copper – a material which weathers and integrates with time with the landscape in brown and green shades – allow the proposal to integrate better with the rural landscape. The use of roof gardens and the retention of the natural landscape as much as possible allow for a pleasant experience of the park when viewed from the neighbouring buildings and from the air.



## ENTRY BY LOOP ARCHITECTURE



The proposal “treads carefully on the site,” using a suspended ground floor to minimise ground disturbance. The buildings “take their cue from

the shapes of neighbouring trees and create sheltered areas for the indoor and outdoor spaces.” The Interpretation Centre consists of timber clad structural columns which support the roof, and enclose within a number of spaces for reflection such as a central courtyard and terrace, as well as functional spaces.

The main visitor centre is conceived as a lightweight, prefabricated system that can be assembled without wet trades. “The system consists of large ballasted plates that are loaded up after placement to form a non-invasive foundation system. A series of beams are then used to connect the ballast plates together with lightweight hollow core floor plates which provide a level working deck for the rest of the construction. The principle prefabricated arches are assembled onto the ballast plate pins projecting through the floor deck to form the roof structure. Once the arches are connected together prefabricated roof plates are lowered on and wall panels erected to form the main enclosures. The building is designed to leave no trace when it is removed or replaced. The foundation system consists of large ballasted plates that are loaded with local earth and rocks to act as a reaction mass that resists wind uplift. These feet sit on the ground and have an adjustable mechanism to allow for the levelling of floor decks over a changing terrain. The ballast plate system avoids the use of piles and a piling rig.”

The floors are constructed from lightweight composite decks with hollow cross sections forming a labyrinth passive ventilation system that conditions the incoming air to be cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. The timber lined columns incorporate ventilation gaps up their length allowing warm air to rise up within them and out via damper controlled louvred vents at roof level. Cooled air from the floor deck rises through floor level ventilation grills up to the roof to replace the displaced warmer air creating a passive stack effect that cools the building without the need for large amounts of mechanical ven-



tilation. Daylighting is provided by open air courtyards, glazed areas protected from solar gain by large overhangs and roof lights in the deepest parts of the building.

## ENTRY BY PERIT PAUL CAMILLERI

In order to achieve a development that is truly sustainable, the design team for this proposal strove to address the three main pillars of sustainability, namely the environmental, social and economic stocks. In addressing the economic stocks, “it was immediately evident that the development must be designed / optimised in a way so as to maximise revenues from it. This would obviously be reliant on factors such as the aesthetic appeal of the building and its accessibility which are intertwined in other sustainable parameters.” It was also felt that the respect for the existing external environment was of paramount importance when addressing the environment stocks of the project, particularly in view of the project’s sensitive surroundings. Various elements were considered as the social stocks, including the neighbouring population of Xaghra, and more importantly all of society in view of the Temples’ heritage status.

A triangular relationship was revealed between the Kola Windmill, the Xaghra stone circle and the Ġgantija Temples. This triangular relationship was adopted as the basis for the design proposal for the Interpretation Centre, thus respecting each of the three sites in their own right. The flat roof is a direct offset of the triangular perimeter and serves to pro-



vide shading, reducing unwanted heat gains. A central courtyard invokes memories of traditional farmhouse buildings, and provides a recreational area within the building as

well as facilitating cross ventilation through the building. Transparency is an important aspect of the proposal, allowing natural lighting within the building. The use of solar panels is also proposed to generate electricity for the project. All concrete walls will be constructed using recycled glass as an aggregate replacement, and will include a thermal break in order to improve the thermal performance of the building. A pathway was designed to act as a reversible system employing the technology of bridges, with a system of wooden panels placed over a steel structure which would be simply placed on the ground, thus avoiding permanent anchoring into the bedrock.

## ENTRY BY PMA PERITI

The authors of this entry attempt to create a design that does not compete with its surroundings. While modern in design, the proposed buildings are intended to be in harmony with the peaceful Gozitan landscape. “The philosophy behind the design of this project is the full respect to the environment, consciousness of the archaeological sensitivity of the site and exploitation of natural and renewable sources of energy.”

The interpretation centre is roofed over with translucent laminated glass in order to allow diffused natural light to enter the building. Beneath, a system



of adjustable louvers allows for the control of the intensity of light entering the building, depending on the nature of the displays within. A permanent display area within provided an unobstructed and flexible space for presentations. The audiovisual hall is clad in sheets of copper which, once oxidised, are intended to camouflage the building within its surroundings. The exit point comprises two individual blocks that are “tied together” by landscaping, as with the Interpretation Centre.

Landscaping plays an important part in this scheme, and includes a cascading water feature and a scheme for the type of planting to be incorporated within, following the natural forms, site contours and the layout of the temples. A winding pathway, intended to be integrated in the existing landscape, floats over the agricultural fields. The pathway is raised on pilotis that are randomly angled, taking inspiration from the random growth of surrounding vegetation. Natural timber decking allows this pathway to merge with the earth colours. The layout of the pathway is planned in such a way as not to interfere with the existing agricultural activities within the site.

Besides the use of natural lighting and ventilation, the project also incorporates the use of renewable sources of energy. A membrane system of photovoltaic cells is proposed, which is less obtrusive than traditional systems since it can be laid flat on a roof surface.





# PETRA - ROCK CI

RICHARD ENGLAND RECENTLY VISITED PETRA. HERE HE EULOGIZES ON THE UNIQUE HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ITS ROCK CARVED ARCHITECTURE AND ITS DRAMATIC NATURAL SETTING, AND ILLUSTRATES SOME OF ITS KEY MONUMENTS WITH HIS DRAWINGS.

Some two hundred and fifty kilometres from Amman and a three hour drive through the arid flat desert between Jordan's capital and Wadi Musa (the legendary Biblical location of the spring created by Moses), before reaching the wild and alien Wadi Rum, described by T. E. Lawrence as "vast, echoing and god-like", one encounters a dramatic change in the topography of the landscape. The barren horizontality of parched vastness suddenly mutates into an undulating, pulsating, mountainous explosion. Landscape transmutes to moonscape and the terrain levitates into dramatic eruptions. Hidden within these motile outcrops lie the remains of Petra, the golden city of the Nabataeans, one of history's most magical manifestations of the fusion of the hand of man with the formations of nature. Viewing the convulsive agitation of this moonlike landscape, it is not difficult to perceive that the Nabataeans believed that it not only embodied divine power, but that their gods actually dwelled within it. In accordance with other ancient civilizations, the Nabataeans read land forms, as not only containers of divine power, but also as habitations of the gods themselves. Here, the nature of sacrality arose from a spiritual reading of the natural configuration of the land. Access to the city was always through the constricted defile of the Siq, a 1200m long narrow gorge, etched 200m deep in the stunning, rainbow-coloured, sand-stone. This channel provided an impenetrable, natural, defensive system for the city, which was originally founded by a nomadic people originating from the Arab peninsula who migrated to Jordan over 2,500 years ago. Carved out of the variegated Nubian rock, the city in its heyday must have presented a majestic coalition of natural scenery and architectural mastery. The terrain (the original home of the Biblical Edomites) was certainly a major contributing factor to the prosperity of the city. Situated on the main trade route, linking the Orient to the Mediterranean, the city functioned as a thriving cosmopolitan threshold; a market place bustling with the activities of hawkers,

**"A POEM-WORLD BETWIXT EARTH AND HEAVEN"** - Edward Lear



The High Place

merchants and passing caravans. In a hype of human activity, vendors and traders gathered to sell and barter their wares of bales, spices, ivory, amber, frankincense and myrrh. Through the wealth generated by trade and charge tolls, the Nabataeans were able to further embellish an already splendid geographical setting with an impressive architecture carved directly out of the natural rock. Never in history was the twinning of nature and the hand of man been better expressed. By the time of the birth of Christ, Petra already hosted a highly advanced civilization. Strabo, a Greek geographer of the time, refers to the city as being "well governed with a sensible people". Its unique architecture developed as

a particular combination of indigenous, negative, troglodyte built-forms layered over by imported influences from adjacent cultures. At such an active multicultural crossroad location, hybrid influences were to be expected. As such, the city hosted an architecture based on Graeco-Roman classical forms combined with imported Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Semitic overlays. At the peak of its development, it also boasted a sophisticated system of paved roadways, agricultural terraces, temples, tombs and theatres together with a complex water channelling system; the provision of water being essential for the passing traders. Through a number of dams and channels cut in the Siq, rain water was

carried to the city and stored in cisterns for the arid summer months, thus creating a veritable man-made oasis.

Even after the Roman occupation of 106 AD, Petra with a then thriving population of some 20,000 people, continued to flourish and prosper. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD however, the importance of the city had diminished and earthquakes in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century contributed to its further decline. From then on, apart from sparse information, little is known, until it was re-discovered in 1812 by the Swiss traveller Johann Ludwig Burckhardt.

Today, only temples and tombs remain as evidence of the Nabataeans' attempts to come to terms with the intangible realms of the

# TY OF THE EAST

divine and the dead. Although the abodes of the living have long since vanished, those of the gods and the dead remain, as if in defiance to the passage of time. Consequently, the city today is more of a necropolis. Throughout history, domestic buildings have always reflected man's temporality. On the other hand, when building for the gods or for his own after-life, man has always attempted to build for eternity. As such, the pages of the history books of architecture are scripted in the stones of tombs and temples.

Today, a visit to this splendid amalgam of man and nature provides a spine-tinkling spectacle. Even if the cradle that once gave birth to a powerful empire is now but a grave, the hand of time has not completely tamed the majesty of this ancient place; and although centuries have passed, the city still manifests a rich and unique potency of myth. Hidden in the bosom of its impenetrable mountain range, merging the geomorphic with the toil of human hands, the rose city still emanates a mystical and magical energy. As we stand in awe to gaze on its remains, we measure ourselves against the genius and grandeur of the wisdom of these people of antiquity, questioning in T.S. Eliot's words "where has all the wisdom gone lost in knowledge?"

Approaching the city, one still has to meander through the undulating processional Siq; that trajectory of promise, setting the tone, so well fulfilled at its climatic experience of



El Deir

the revelation of the superb architectural splendour that is the Khazneh. Threading through the canyon gorge with its encompassing walls acting as sound-boards to further amplify one's expectations, one emerges from this tortuous route to behold the magic and majesty of this spectacle; that ecstatic sand-stone poem, written by man and etched in the time scrolls of nature. Although carved out of the rock, the edifice is more a simulation of three dimensional architecture than a bas-relief composition. Leaving this desert jewel, with its eclectic juxtaposition of Egyptian and Semitic influences, overlaid with foliage, griffins, lions and Amazonian figures, one proceeds to visit the other treasures of this mesmerising ancient metropolis. After 500 years of silence and oblivion, the city re-emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to reveal once more the majesty of its ruins, even more resplendent, than in their original intact state.

Through the contacts of my Jordanian architect friend, the opportunity arises to experience the citadel by night. Deprived of the refulgent Arabian sunlight, the place is now a true *memento mori* metamorphosed into an eerie catatonic trance. Under the tenebrous light of the moon, shadows haunt and the city seems now to be inhabited by ghosts. In the absence of daylight, spectacle turns to spectre; anxiety prevails and the citadel now truly reads as a city of the dead. All is clothed in melancholy penumbra and

a disturbing calm overtakes and haunts the place, the only sound, reverberating echoes of my own footsteps reflected back from the surrounding somnambulant repositories of the dead. For a moment, time is stopped. It seems that in its hours of sleep, the city is willing to share its dreams.

As dawn again tints all in aureate tones, one stops to reflect that this canyon of the divine really does possess "a presence in the back of the beyond that stuns everyone who sets eyes on it" (Desmond Morris). As Bedouins perched on camel and steed backs perilously speed to break the silence and stir the dust, the city re-awakens to welcome its daily sight-seers, souvenir-sellers and hawkers. In the emerging morning light, the numinosity of the place seems somehow further emphasized. It is indeed a city of dreams, or perhaps even one of Italo Calvino's 'Invisible Cities' made visible. According to David Roberts "the Arabs themselves" also attributed "the city's very existence to enchantment". While producing his superb delineations of 1839 the artist wrote "I am more and more bewildered with the aspect of this extraordinary city". The equally talented Edward Lear was also in awe of Petra, *I felt I have found a new world, but my art is helpless to reach it to others or to represent it to those who have never seen it*". Despite Lear's penchant for "pomskizillious and grophibberous" adjectives to describe locations he visited, it was his travelling companion chef's culinary description that perhaps remains the most apposite, "everything is made of chocolate, ham, curry powder and salmon".

Proceeding on my itinerary I reach the silent votive-funery Columbarium, its geometric patterns strangely pre-empting the 20<sup>th</sup> century Op Art compositions of Victor Vasarely and later the theatre, first carved by the Nabataeans and enlarged by the Romans. Cut into the hollow of the earth, it must have provided a strange combination of spectacles for the living overlooked by its surrounding sepulchres of the dead. One imagines this place as a strange precursor of Giulio Camillo's 16<sup>th</sup> century 'Teatro della Memoria', with each of its stepped layers storing all the then available knowledge information. Maybe, Petra's theatre is not that different; its cascading rungs housing the stratified

collective memory of the place.

After a heart racing arduous ascent, one arrives at the High Place, a series of platforms in the sky reaching out to the heavens. Towering over the rest of the city, this sacred arena was surely where the Nabataeans conducted ritualistic ceremonies and made sacrificial offerings to their gods. The notion of the elevated platform as a sacred locus is constant throughout history. Further up, spiraling out of the mountain side into the sky, one finds the monastery of El Deir; which, together with the Khazneh, remains the most stunning of the surviving monuments of Petra.

After visiting what has been described as "one of the most precious properties of man's



The Khazneh II

cultural heritage" and "one of the ten places you must see before you die"; my own reaction was that the city had totally possessed me. Calvino's luscious prose again comes to mind to best express my feelings "I don't know how long I have been wondering through this city; I no longer know who I was when I entered". Today, as we continue to drain, dominate and destroy our planet's natural environment, these carved and etched Nabataean narratives, provide a much needed didactic reminder of ancient man's harmonious and benevolent relationship with nature. The remains of Petra serve above all to remind us that man and earth are of the same essence.



Columbarium



# MODERNIST MALTA

## ...one year on

BY PERIT EDWARD SAID



White Rocks complex - gutted but still standing strong (Photograph by Nicholas Farrugia)

Over a year has passed since the exhibition *Modernist Malta: the Architectural Legacy* was launched together with a seminal book on the subject. The awareness triggered off by the Kamra tal-Periti and Din l-Art Helwa has been substantial, resulting in healthy debates and informative feedback. Regrettably however, little has been done since then to protect this newly valued herit-

age, in particular their urban contexts. The usual concoction of bad planning, bad taste and sheer nonchalance are precipitating the complete destruction of the urban qualities bestowed to us by some of the best examples of local modernist architecture. Here are some updates; most negative, some positive about the situation with a number of significant modernist sites:

### St. Joseph Church, Manikata

Prof. Richard England carefully designed the massing of this church to be so deeply connected with the rural setting around it, confidently respecting the contrast of the huddled cubism of the hill-side village and the garigue wilderness beyond. This context has now been largely raped by the continued sprouting of non-

descript *blokok* on one side and that ludicrous playing ground on the other, further isolated by exaggeratedly extensive expanses of black asphalt. The ruthlessly planted electricity poles, the colourful recycling skips and kitsch lamp posts complete this sad picture. Incidentally, the 'City of Towers' sculpture in the grounds of St. Joseph's will crumble away very soon unless it is tended to.

### Former White Rocks Complex, St. Andrew's

The fate of this complex is still hanging in the balance as a development application is currently being processed by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA). Built to the designs of architects Austin-Smith Salmon Lord Partnership in 1964, this was the last military barracks to be erected by



One of many modernist villas at Ta' Xbiex not included in the Urban Conservation Area scheme

the British establishment in Malta. It is highly regarded for the designers' sensitivity to site and attention to urban quality. At present the structures have been pillaged and superficially vandalised however they appear to be in the main structurally sound. The 'White Rocks development Brief' issued by MEPA in 1995 states:

*"The existing complex is considered to be a good example of 1960's development and the future owners will be encouraged to retain some, if not all of the existing buildings. This is not however a requirement and the site may be redeveloped. The bungalow area is considered the best example of 1960's development on site"*

Sadly, a precursory look at the latest proposals reveals that practically nothing will be

retained of the present buildings or their urban spatial design concepts.

#### 1960s villeggiatura, Xemxija

As a result of some quirk in the 2006 local plan, what was designed in Xemxija during the late 1960s and early 1970s as a sensitive hill-side development of summer holiday dwellings will be mutilated. These were conceived as a hierarchy of three floor apartment blocks and two floor semi-detached dwellings, designed to maximise the views of St. Paul's Bay. Special attention was given to soften the intensity of construction with the introduction of generously proportioned side curtilages and front gardens as well as sleek bridges and external staircases. The design of a number of these dwellings, particularly the lower residences attain noteworthy modernist traits.



St Joseph Church at Manikata being suffocated by apartment blocks, asphalt, Made-In-Taiwan lanterns and multi-coloured recycling skips



1960s dwellings at Xemxija facing demolition

In a bitter nutshell the new local plan will allow the two floors to rise to five whilst the three floors can only be redeveloped to two! The side curtilages can also be done away with!

#### Former Joinwell building, Sliema

Another creation by Prof. England dating to 1967; the new owners

of this landmark edifice clearly have valued its aesthetic qualities and have opted for deferential renovation. The interior has been extensively refurbished whilst the façade with its characteristic marble cladding and giant louvered screen was left as is. This building has now been turned into a leading department store. Landscaping works carried out

by government in the surrounding urban spaces have helped improve the image of this thriving commercial hub.

#### Villino Ellul, Ta' Xbiex

It is heartening to see a thorough restoration job currently underway on the Corbusieresque Villino Ellul at Ta' Xbiex Seafront. This is one of the earliest and most prominent examples of modernist architecture in Malta. Built sometime during the late 1930s it was designed by architect Salvatore Ellul as his own family residence. It has been compared to the almost contemporary Villa Savoye and in order to achieve its futuristic forms, Ellul employed reinforced concrete. In fact, it is probably the first time that this material was used prolifically in the construction of a private dwelling in Malta. The architectural importance and rarity of this building has been appreciated by MEPA who intend having it scheduled in the near future. Once refurbished, Villino Ellul will serve as stylish office premises for a law firm.

Selected bibliography:  
Miceli-Farrugia, Alberto and Petra Bianchi (Editors), *Modernist Malta: An architectural legacy*  
Thake, Conrad and Quentin Hughes, *Malta: War & Peace – an architectural Chronicle 1800-2000*



# Changes to the Planning Process

BY PERIT SIMONE VELLA LENICKER

Over the past few months, the Council of the *Kamra tal-Periti* has been actively involved in a series of meetings held between it and the team entrusted with the implementation of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) Reform process embarked upon by Government, under the auspices of Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, the Environment and Culture Mario de Marco. Although the Council endeavoured to put forward its views on the various proposals being made and to represent the profession as best it could, it was felt that it would be much better and more fruitful to open up the discussion to all the members of the profession. After all, these amendments will have a great effect on the day to day operation of *periti* and their practices, and it was therefore felt that participation in the discussion by those very people who will be working with the system would lead to a more streamlined implementation process. An information session for *periti* was therefore held on the 25th March at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, and focussed on the proposed changes to the procedures adopted by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) as part of the planning process. MEPA officials Dr Ian Stafrace, assisted by Perit Sylvio Farrugia, Perit Victor Sladden and Mr David Cassar, addressed the audience of over 120 participants and explained the various changes that are being proposed to be implemented, and that are included in a draft Legal Notice that is currently open for public consultation. This draft is available for download from the MEPA website [www.mepa.org.mt](http://www.mepa.org.mt) under the section entitled "Legislation and Policy"; the document is entitled "Development Planning (Procedure for Applications and their Determination) Regulations - Public Consultation Draft."

One of the main changes being proposed is the introduction of a pre-screening process. This will be obligatory for all developments, other than those that can be covered by the DNO (Development Notification Order) process. This pre-screening process will consist of a formal application to MEPA, followed by a meeting held between the Team Manager responsible for the process-

ing of application, the responsible *perit* and the applicant. The main aim of this process is to identify any aspects of the proposed development that, even at pre-screening stage, apparently go against the relevant planning policies as the case may be. The pre-screening process, which is intended to have a duration of 28 days, will result in a report which will determine:

- the classification of the development in accordance with the proposed Schedules 1 and 2 that will form part of the Legal Notice;
- the requirement or otherwise of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA);
- the major issues and policies to which the proposal does not conform;
- a list of additional submissions, reports and documentation that would be required to be submitted at Development Application stage;
- a listing of the consultations to be undertaken as part of the Development Application processing stage;
- the fees due to the Authority; the period of validity of the report.

The last item in the above list, namely the period of validity of the report, will vary between 3 and 6 months, depending on the nature of the project. In the case of large projects, the applicant and MEPA will be able to agree on a period that is longer, as the case may require. A Development Application must be submitted to MEPA within this agreed timeframe, failing which the pre-screening process must be entered into again.

Once the formal Development Application has been submitted, MEPA will be committed to process the application within fixed time frames. Schedules 1 and 2 of the Legal Notice list a number of types of development, and the period for processing of the application will depend on the classification of the development under these Schedules. Broadly speaking, applications for development that falls under Schedule 2A will be determined within 12 weeks, and those falling under Schedule 2B will be determined within 26 weeks. Those proposals for development which fall under Schedule 1 will be determined within a time frame that

will be agreed between the applicant and MEPA. Development which does not fall under any of the Schedules will be determined within 26 weeks for sites that lie in scheme, and within 52 weeks for sites that lie Outside Development Zone (ODZ). These time frames, generally speaking, cannot be prolonged, although there are a number of scenarios that may result in a prolongation of the process, such as a contestation of a recommendation or requirement made by one of the official consultees. These variations are amply explained in the draft Legal Notice.

A number of other changes are being introduced within the planning process. One such change involves the obligation of the *perit* to clearly describe the development, including the following parameters in the project description: height of development; type of development; existing and proposed use/s; number and type of units; in the case of alterations, a concise summary of the proposed works; in the case of extensions, the location of such extension and the number of additional floors; in the case of an amended permission, an outline of the differences between the original permit and the new proposal. Although, largely, *periti* submitted most of this information, MEPA felt it necessary to determine a list of parameters that need to be identified, and to enforce the submission of such information. Failure to provide any of the above information as relevant to the case may result in the application being rejected at the front desk.

Other changes to the process are related to the public consultation methods to be employed. Besides the affixing of a notice on the site relating to a particular Development Application, and the publication of the details of the Application in a local newspaper, MEPA will also affix the details of Applications onto a notice board that will be made available for this purpose by each Local Council. Thus, members of the public will be able to view this notice board on a regular basis and see what applications for development have been submitted to MEPA within that particular locality. Following the publication of these notices, the public will be allowed 20 work-

ing days within which to make their submissions in relation to the proposed development. The appointed consultees, such as the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage, Enemalta, the Kummisjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilita', and others as listed in Schedule 3 of the draft Legal Notice, will be allowed 30 days within which to make their submissions.

Any request made by MEPA to the responsible *perit* or applicant during the processing of the application must be complied with within 21 days of receipt of such request. This includes any required changes to plans, as well as the response to the Report (currently referred to as the Development Planning Application Report or DPAR). Once an application has been determined, the result will be published in a local newspaper, and will also be posted on the relevant Local Council notice board.

The draft Legal Notice does not contemplate the reconsideration process as we know it today. Rather, a request for reconsideration will only be able to be made on a condition of the decision (such as the requirement for a bank guarantee). The current appeal process will remain in place.

The above is not intended to be an exhaustive rendition of the contents of the draft Legal Notice, but is rather intended to give the gist of some of the changes to the planning process being proposed. While the information provided in this article reflects the contents of the draft Legal Notice, some aspects may change by the time it is enacted, although any changes are expected to be minor and not related to the overall procedures to be adopted, but rather to the details. Furthermore, no indication is as yet available as to the date on which these changes shall come into force. The *Kamra tal-Periti* hereby invites all members of the profession to become acquainted with the contents of the draft Legal Notice and to put forward their comments and suggestions, which will be passed on to the MEPA officials for their consideration. Meanwhile the *Kamra* will endeavour to keep members of the profession informed and updated on any developments in this regard.



# Maltese-English Dictionary of Architecture and Building in Malta

with Biographical Notes on Maltese and Foreign Architects who worked in Malta

Author: **Michael Ellul**, ISBN: 978-99932-7-292-2, Printed by: **Midsea Books Ltd**

Reviewed by Simone Vella Lenicker

BOOK

Who knows what a “Żgorbja” is? Or a “Ċanta”? And “Inġara”?

The preface to this publication states that “This book owes its origin to a chance remark made during a Heritage meeting by a young architect colleague of mine who asked for the meaning of an archaic word relating to building in Malta but which is now completely out of use.”

Michael Ellul’s recent publication aims to address this vacuum, and is therefore the book you must get hold of if you need to know the meanings of these words. Malta has a rich history of building, dating back to the prehistoric era, and therefore it comes as no surprise that the Maltese lan-

guage includes a vast number of terms to describe the various tools, processes and parameters that form part of the construction industry.

This dictionary includes over 2,500 entries, giving the Maltese terminology and the equivalent meaning in English. The entries also include a number of short biographical notes on architects, both Maltese and foreign, who worked in Malta.

Many of the words defined in this dictionary are still in common usage today, and most will sound familiar – however one may not always know the exact definition of such terminology. Other words are no longer in use, or have been relegated to the

minds of the older generations of builders and other actors in the construction industry, to be replaced by their English or Italian equivalents. Other terminology, particularly for words relating to more modern methods of construction, borrow directly from other languages, with a Maltese twist to the spelling and pronunciation.

This book is of particular interest to *periti* who may come across terminology being used on sites, and not always being aware of the exact definition of a term. It is also of interest to the public at large, who at some time or another will come into direct contact with the construction industry and may feel at a loss when certain words

are used. The publication also includes a number of definitions of words that are legal in nature, relating to matters of ownership and rights over property.

Although in no way complete, by the author’s own admission, this publication serves as a basis on which to build a more complete and detailed lexicon in future years. This dictionary is available from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, which sponsored the publication, as well as from Agenda Bookshop.

Oh, and a “żgorbja” is a “tool used for the formation of mouldings in stone”; a “ċanta” is a “plot of land or small field” and “inġara” is the “dressing of stones”.

<http://architectureforhumanity.org>

and

<http://openarchitecturenetwork.org>

“Climate change will displace 1 billion people by 2050. It’s time to do more.” With this as its opening appeal, [architectureforhumanity.org](http://architectureforhumanity.org) offers a number of options for assisting populations hit by natural disasters. Architecture for Humanity is a nonprofit design services firm founded in 1999. By tapping a network of more than 40,000 professionals willing to lend time and expertise to help those who would not otherwise be able to afford their services, the organisation brings design, construction and development services where they are most critically needed. Each year 10,000 people directly benefit from structures designed by Architecture for Humanity. The various opportunities include active participation

in rebuilding projects, such as in the reconstruction of structures in Haiti; the possibility of sponsoring architects/designers working on a project; the participation in various competitions with the aim of showing how design can make a difference to the various communities within which it takes place. The organisation has also launched the Open Architecture Network, which is the first website to offer open source access to design solutions dedicated to improving the built environment. It empowers architects, designers, builders and their clients to share architectural plans and drawings - including CAD files. All plans are shared through an open-source model and can be freely downloaded by all.



## Can you identify this building and the architect who designed it?

The winner of this competition will be entitled to a signed copy of the book reviewed above. 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](mailto:thearchitect@ktpmalta.com). The first correct entry drawn on the 1 May 2010 will win. Only residents of the Maltese Islands are eligible to participate. Members of the Editorial Board and their families are not eligible to participate.

*The winner of the competition carried in Issue 51 was Veronica Bonello. Congratulations.*

WEBSITE

COMPETITION





NOW TO 03 MAY 2010; RIBA, LONDON, UK

### PICTURE THIS!

The RIBA organises and runs competitions to encourage excellence in design on behalf of a wide range of clients – both public and private – which have resulted in a variety of built landmark projects and iconic structures. These range from major public projects such as London's Wembley Stadium to the small and interesting such as The Halo, Rossendale and Blackpool Swivelling Wind Shelter. This exhibition features a selection of built projects all of which have originated through the RIBA Competitions process. [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)



NOW TO 13 MAY 2010; DANISH ARCHITECTURE CENTRE, DENMARK

### MIND YOUR BEHAVIOUR

Architecture can get people talking together. Architecture can calm children in the classroom. Architecture can make passive people more active.

Architecture can shape corporate culture. Architecture can encourage people to find new paths, discover new aspects of their city – and of themselves. In short, architecture can shape your behaviour. MIND YOUR BEHAVIOUR invites you to step in behind the scenes at one of the largest and most successful architectural companies in Denmark, 3XN, known for prestigious projects such as: Ørestad College, the new Denmark's Aquarium, 'The Blue Planet', Saxo Bank's award-winning head offices and the Danish Embassy in Berlin. [www.dac.dk](http://www.dac.dk)



NOW TO 16 MAY 2010; ARKITEKTURMUSEET, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

### GRETA MAGNUSSON GROSSMAN - A CAR AND SOME SHORTS

Arkitekturmuseet presents the first major retrospective exhibition on Swedish-American designer and architect Greta Magnusson Grossman. The exhibition includes architectural commissions in Sweden as well as Northern and Southern California and designs for the many companies she worked with including Barker Brothers, Ralph O. Smith and Glenn of California. The exhibition also includes exemplary pieces of furniture and lighting, prototypes and textiles, original drawings and photographs, film clips as well as a 1:1 reconstruction of an interior. [www.arkitekturmuseet.se](http://www.arkitekturmuseet.se)



NOW TO 16 MAY 2010; NAI ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

### ARCHITECTURE OF CONSEQUENCE – DUTCH DESIGNS OF THE FUTURE

24 architecture designers take the lead. Assessing what society needs now. Pursuing strategies the market is hesitant to explore. The designs that are presented are the fruits of an ambition to find sustainable designs for the future. [www.nai.nl](http://www.nai.nl)

NOW TO 22 MAY 2010; THE ARCHITECTURE CENTRE, BRISTOL, UK

### SPRING GREEN 2010: WATER AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY

From rivers, canals, harbours and the sea, to drains, sewers and treatment plants, water is at the heart of our infrastructure. This year's Spring Green season at the Architecture Centre focuses on water and built environment sustainability, encouraging debate around this crucial and topical area. Through a season of exhibitions, events and lectures Spring Green highlights the importance of the network of water that forms the infrastructure to urban environments and the key role it plays in shaping our understanding of our climate and environment. [www.architecturecentre.co.uk](http://www.architecturecentre.co.uk)



NOW TO 30 MAY 2010; MUSEUM OF FINNISH ARCHITECTURE, FINLAND

### WOODEN CHURCHES – TRAVELLING IN THE RUSSIAN NORTH

Postcards from some hundred years back inspired English photographer

Richard Davies to travel to northern Russia in 2002 to find out what was left of the wooden churches depicted in the cards. The churches had been photographed by the Russian artist Ivan Bilibin in 1902–04, and already then the photographer had been worried about their condition. The cards had been published in 1911 by a Russian charity in order to raise money for its work. Davies has made further trips every year. Many churches have been lost. Those that remain are in varying states of decay – through neglect and the stripping, looting and wrecking of interiors – and sadly many are beyond repair. Still, much is left to celebrate. The integrity between the landscape and the architecture is as striking as before, the simple log cabin construction with extravagant decorations is just as startling, and even in decay these churches have a spiritual presence commanding respect. [www.mfa.fi](http://www.mfa.fi)

NOW TO 6 JUNE 2010; DESIGN MUSEUM, GENT, NETHERLANDS

### THE SCANDINAVIAN TOUCH IN BELGIAN FURNITURE: 1951-1966

The exhibition visualises the results of the investigation into the influence of Scandinavian furniture on Belgian designers in the post-war period, and treats the significance of Scandinavian modernism and its influence on Belgian modernism. Based on stylistic and technical parameters, a selection of Scandinavian furniture was made which served as an inspiration for a specific Belgian furniture item within the 1951-1966 timeframe. <http://design.museum.gent.be>



NOW TO 28 JUNE 2010; CCCB, BARCELONA, SPAIN

### THE CCCB ARCHIVE - CITY AND PUBLIC SPACE

Since it was set up, the CCCB has reflected on the urban condition of the contemporary world, seeing the city not just as the object of architecture and planning but as the space of modernity, the site of the social, artistic and literary dynamics that define our world. By means of exhibi-

tions, debates, festivals, screenings and other cultural activities, the CCCB promotes its own view of the city and urban culture. In the framework of Cerdà Year, this latest exhibition of the CCCB Archive allows the public to consult all the materials related to activities at the CCCB that have contributed to reflection on the many and varied aspects of the contemporary city. [www.cccb.org](http://www.cccb.org)

NOW TO 03 SEPTEMBER 2010; DESIGN MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

### URBAN AFRICA – DAVID ADJAYE

One of the leading architects of his generation, David Adjaye has stepped out of his regular line of work to photograph and document key cities in Africa as part of an ongoing project to study new patterns of urbanism. Often regarded as a continent defined by underdevelopment, poverty, war and tourism, through this exhibition Adjaye presents Africa in a different light, examining the buildings and places which have a special resonance with his preoccupations as an architect. This detailed survey will reveal a unique snapshot of life in Africa today, documenting the nature of urban life in a developing continent, a unique geo-cultural survey profiling the African city in a global context. [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org)

19 JUNE – 04 JULY 2010; LONDON, UK

### LONDON FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE

The Architecture Foundation delivers The London Festival of Architecture 2010 in partnership with RIBA London and New London Architecture. The Festival will be a city-wide celebration of architecture in the capital. As London gears up for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games the Festival looks at ways that planners, architects, clients and local communities play their part in the development of 'The Welcoming City'. [www.architecturefoundation.org.uk](http://www.architecturefoundation.org.uk)

NOW TO JULY 2011; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

### AESTHETICISM: BEAUTY IN ART AND DESIGN 1860-1900

This will be the first international exhibition to explore the unconventional creativity of the British Aesthetic Movement (1860-1895). Featuring superb artworks from the traditional high art of painting, to fashionable trends in architecture, interior design, domestic furnishings, art photography and new modes of dress, this exhibition traces Aestheticism's evolution from the artistic concerns of a small circle of avant-garde artists and authors to a broad cultural phenomenon. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

06 – 29 MAY 2010; RIBA, LONDON, UK

### THE THREE CLASSICISTS

An exhibition of architectural drawings by three young practitioners, all with a passion for classical architecture and draughtsmanship. Ben Pentreath, George Saumarez Smith and Francis Terry exhibit drawings of built works ranging in scale from new urban settlements to full size decorative ornament, demonstrating their belief in the classical language of architecture and the importance of drawing in the modern world. [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

