

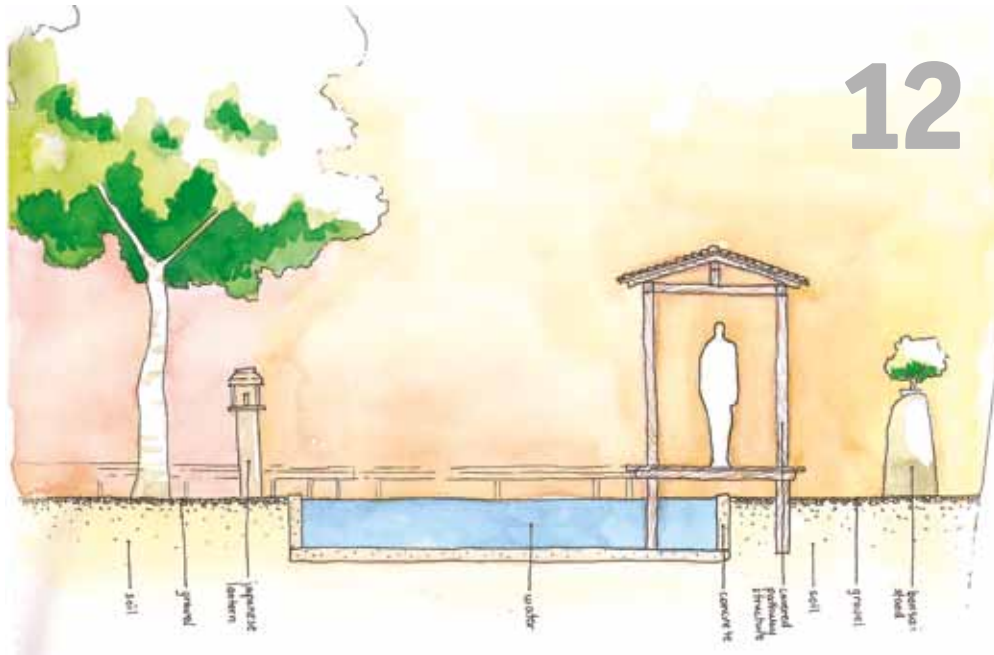
the Architect

ISSUE NO. 57 | OCTOBER 2011

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE KAMRA TAL-PERITI



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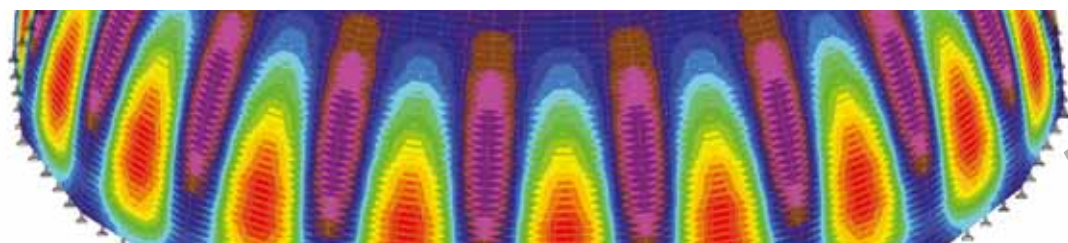
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the Architect

"Architecture is understood to go beyond the physical development of our built environment and considered a cultural reference to sustainable development."

National Cultural Policy, Malta, 2011

See Editorial for details

Summer is a peculiar season ... I welcome the late sunsets, the cool evenings by the seaside, the open air events that pepper the Maltese calendar at this time ... yet I dread the long hot days, the drone of my desk fan, the constant feeling that it will never be over. Despite this, the summer of 2011 brought with it two very welcome breaths of fresh air - the publication of the National Cultural Policy in July and the publication of the draft National Environment Policy in September - two important Policy documents through which Government has acknowledged the significance of our built heritage, not only that of the past but also that of the present and the future, as well as the need for promoting quality in design.

The National Cultural Policy takes note of the ACE's (Architects' Council of Europe) publication "Architecture and Quality of Life", and quotes from it: "Architecture is a fundamental feature of the history, culture and fabric of each of our countries; it represents an essential means of artistic expression in the daily life of citizens and it constitutes the heritage of tomorrow. A sense of belonging, of identity, is an important feature of human society and culture. Architectural expression is frequently the carrier of such cultural and social needs and it is therefore important that these influences are adequately accounted for in the design process." The Policy document further refers to the Kamra tal-Periti's publication "The Urban Challenge" (2007) wherein it placed emphasis on the need for a better quality of life and the built environment. In response to this, the National Cultural Policy states that "architecture is understood to go beyond the physical development of our built environment and considered a cultural reference to sustainable development. The quality of the built environment is key to the success of the creative industries in Malta and in this regard must be viewed as capturing the spirit of the times, and regarded as an indicator of Maltese way of life."

The Policy document goes on to speak about the need for the creation of a Centre of Architecture and the Built Environment as proposed by the Kamra tal-Periti, which would have as its main objectives "to bring architecture and urban planning issues closer to the general public and at the same time advance the profession and contribute to an improved design process," and "to foster better appreciation of our built heritage and to promote more sustainable development in future years. It should assist in raising the awareness of the importance of good design and quality in our built environment from both an economic and environmental point of view." The setting up of such a Centre is in fact listed as one of the 21 Key

Policy Actions presented in this document.

The draft National Environment Policy builds further on the above. It speaks about Government's commitment to continue to protect Malta's built heritage and to improve the environment in historic areas. It further identifies the need to "improve the liveability of urban areas in terms of pleasantness and amenity," listing as one of the key priorities in this respect the "promoting (of) quality in design." To this end the draft policy document refers to the need to "place more emphasis on quality in design in the spatial planning process, encouraging development that is design driven." Furthermore, it takes on board the Kamra tal-Periti's proposal for the setting up "of a voluntary scheme related to quality in design ... administered by Design Review Panels under a Centre of Architecture and the Built Environment ... Priority in operating the scheme will be given to design in public spaces, with functionality and usability in mind, historic urban areas, tourism zones and coastal areas." In this draft, Government also commits to "take the lead by launching design competitions for our own projects."

I cannot but applaud! And I am sure that many will applaud with me! Years of work by the various Councils of the Kamra tal-Periti and its members have been recognised and heeded, and it is indeed with enthusiasm that I look forward to coming to fruition of what have, up to now, been proposals on paper put forward for consideration.

In July 2004, during the launch of the redesigned version of this journal, the Kamra tal-Periti presented a discussion paper called "A National Policy for Architecture in Malta - Is it worth it?" The opening statement said: "Governance is a key tool: it allows the political aspects of effective cooperation between the actors of government, the professions and networks to be taken into account in new policies and legislative proposals. Culture is an intangible asset that has measurable impacts and therefore its inclusion in all policies is an unquestionable requirement." The intention was a clear one - the Kamra wanted to place high on the national agenda the debate on architecture and quality of life. This goal has, in principle, been achieved. What remains is its implementation and embracing by all sectors of society. The taking on board of these proposals by Government gives renewed impetus to the Kamra's endeavours in this regard, and one cannot but look forward to the realisation of these proposals and ideals.

Simone Vella Lenicker
Editor

References:

National Cultural Policy: www.maltaculture.com
Draft National Environment Policy: <https://opm.gov.mt/ambjent>



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

KAMRA TAL-PERITI

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

The Council of the Kamra Tal-Periti for the year 2011 consists of Vincent Cassar (President), Simone Vella Lenicker (Vice President and Honorary Secretary) and Council members Ruben Paul Borg, Jacques Borg Barthet, Keith Cole, David Felice, 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**
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.mt



COVER:

A Japanese Garden on the Bastions?
(see pages 12-13)

Seminar: External Thermal Insulation



A seminar about External Thermal Insulation in buildings was recently held at the Le Meridien Hotel in St Julians. Organised by Philip A Tabone in collaboration with the *Kamra tal-Periti*, the seminar was well attended and highlighted the particular benefits of external insulation in relation to the materials used.



An introduction by Philip A Tabone highlighted the importance of thermal insulation not only with regard to its financial benefits and lower household energy bills, but also because it improves the living conditions of a house and retains a healthy indoor climate.

Mr. Riccardo Ramina, commercial director of DiDonato SpA, followed with an over-



view of the legislative background to energy performance in buildings and relevant regulations in the EU. He further outlined all the materials which make up the 'a Cappotto' Thermal Insulation System and which are all produced in-house by DiDonato SpA. Mr. Ramina explained the set-up of the thermal insulation system and sequence of application while going through the company's entire range of insulation materials and their relative use.

The seminar concluded with a number of questions from the attending guests and the discussion continued at a reception held at the end of the seminar.

Manikata Church

Last August, the *Kamra tal-Periti* welcomed the decision taken by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) to schedule



the Church of St Joseph in Manikata as a Grade 1 property. However, while applauding this decision by MEPA, the *Kamra* expressed its opinion that this decision was taken too late in the day as such scheduling should have been declared before the development permit for additions beneath the church parvis was approved by the Environment Planning Commission on the 19th July 2011, and indeed should have been a material consideration during the processing of such application.

The MEPA Chairman was quoted as saying

that the "decision by the MEPA Board, to schedule as a Grade 1 property the St Joseph Church in Manikata, wraps up more than 2 years of intensive research, studies and consultation carried out by MEPA's Heritage Planning Unit in the scheduling of most of Malta's Parish Churches." The *Kamra*, in a statement to the press, asked "was the team responsible for the processing of the application and eventual permit not aware of MEPA's own efforts in this regard?"

In a subsequent statement, MEPA held that the scheduling "has safeguarded the Manikata Church and has ensured that any future interventions that may be carried out on this site will fully respect the rich and unique architectural value of this building. The Authority dismisses the statement made that the scheduling of the Manikata Church came too late to ensure that it will be protected. Scheduling prevails over any

permit irrespective of when a permit has been issued on site. The Authority confirms that the permit which was issued last month will now have to be re-evaluated in the light of the scheduling. Following this assessment, the Authority will take a decision on the way forward." One waits to see how such re-evaluation of the permit will be carried out, and what impact the scheduling will in fact have on the proposals.

Meanwhile, the *Kamra* wishes to draw MEPA's attention to the fact that there are many other properties that have remarkable

architectural quality and which deserve to be scheduled as Grade 1 properties in similar fashion to the Manikata Church. In its publication "Modernist Malta: The Architectural Legacy" the *Kamra* listed and described a number of buildings built in the mid 20th Century that symbolise the Modernist Movement in Malta.

The *Kamra* had without success campaigned against the partial demolition of the Qala primary school in 2006. However, in 2009 it was successful in halting the demolition of the Public Broadcasting Services' Rediffusion House in Guardamangia. Both these buildings are excellent examples of Malta's Modernist Movement architecture and, together with other structures of the time, deserve protection and retention.

Joint Summer Event

On the 29 July, members of the *Kamra tal-Periti* joined members of the Chamber of Engineers and the Malta Group of Professional Engineering Institutions at a Summer BBQ held at the Corinthia Hotel, St George's Bay. Although this event has been held for a number of years, this was the first time that the *Kamra* participated in this informal get together. It is hoped that this collaboration will continue in the future and that the *Kamra's* members will participate in greater numbers next year.

Ongoing discussions: MEPA Reform

Over the past year, the *Kamra tal-Periti* has been in constant discussion with MEPA in order to improve various aspects of MEPA's services from a procedural point of view. MEPA's Circular 3/10 issued recently, and which is available for download from MEPA's website, incorporates a number of suggestions made by the *Kamra* over the past months, particularly with respect to the application submission requirements and the availability of MEPA officials for one-to-one discussions with periti and applicants. Periti are invited to continue to forward any feedback they may have to the *Kamra* on mepafeedback@ktpmalta.com. Queries and comments submitted here are reproduced on the *Kamra's* website www.ktpmalta.com together with the relevant answers, where available.

Photo by Architecture Project



INSIDE FESTIVAL OF INTERIORS AWARDS 2011

"Inside" is a brand-new festival celebrating the finest interiors and their creators. Through a series of curated events, talks, installations and a prestigious awards programme, "Inside" will be a vibrant platform for creative thought, mutual inspiration and idea exchange, capturing the design zeitgeist in style over two days in Barcelona (02 to 04 November 2011).

The Festival includes eight categories: Bars and Restaurants; Creative Re use; Culture and Civic; Display; Hotels; Offices; Residential; and Retail. 143 projects from 79 practices in 21 countries were submitted, of which 41 projects were shortlisted. These will be individually presented to an international jury and will compete within their category as well as for the overall award for World Interior of the Year.

Local firm Architecture Project (AP) has been selected as one of the finalists in the Creative Re use category. The project consists of the remodelling of an old three storey house on



Photo by David Pisani (Metropolis)

St Barbara's Bastion in Valletta into offices and residential space. The need for separate entrances, and therefore, two staircases became the key design challenge for the architectural team. They applied the concept of the "double-helix" to the two staircases, thus enabling the entrances to be distinct, leading to the offices and residential unit separately, while the intertwining staircases are conceived as one sculptural mass.

For more information on the Festival and participating projects visit www.insidefestival.com.

Photo by David Pisani (Metropolis)



BARBARA CAPPOCHIN PRIZE

The international Barbara Cappochin grand prix was awarded to the Spanish architect Fabrizio Barozzi, for the Headquarters of the Ribera de Duero Council, in Roa, Spain. The jury appreciated the simplicity that addresses the delicate relationship between the contemporary nature of the project, the landscape and the history of the place. Three mentions were awarded: to Maria Hurtado de Mendoza (Spain), for the local



Headquarters of the Ribera de Duero Council, in Roa, Spain. Photo by Fabrizio Barozzi

health care centre in Saint Blas, Madrid; to Jordi Hidalgo (Spain), for the Foundation of Rehabilitation and Conservation of Marine Animals in Barcelona; and to Claudio Nardi (Poland), for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow.

For this fourth edition, three hundred and eighty three entries were submitted to the international jury. Chaired by Leopoldo Freyre, it was composed of the following architects: Luca Molinari, Nikos Fintikakis, Doug Steidl, Ben Darmer and Matti Saaksenaho.

The aim of the Barbara Cappochin Prize for Architecture is to heighten awareness and associate the various actors of architectural creation, urban planners, developers and architects, with the promotion of environmental quality and construction in urban and natural situations. Organised by the Barbara Cappochin Foundation, this prize is part of the programme of the International Biennial of Architecture in Padua which will be held from 26 October 2011 until 13 February 2012.

PHILIPPE ROTTHIER EUROPEAN PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURE

Over the past 30 years, the architect Philippe Rotthier has searched around Europe for new architecture that is in keeping with the spirit of a site, meets contemporary comfort requirements and respects ecology; architecture that blends with a town and a landscape rather than destroying them; architecture that wastes neither space nor energy;

architecture that maintains a dialogue with the past and with history.

Philippe Rotthier undertook to pursue this quest by awarding an architecture prize. The works are selected by juries that have included such eminent European figures as the writers Adrien Goetz and Françoise Lalande, the journalists Sergio Frau and Katia Pecnik, the designer Matali Crasset, the historians Bruno Foucart, Charles Jencks and David Watkin, the visual artist Jean-Bernard Métais, and the architects Léon Krier, Michael Lykoudis, Dimitri Porphyrios and Oscar Tusquets.

The theme for this year's award scheme was The Age of Renovation, and sought to discover projects which helped to regenerate an urban setting. The jury of the Philippe Rotthier European Prize for Architecture, under the presidency of Maurice Culot and in the presence of Philippe Rotthier, founder of the prize, convened on 24th and 25th June 2011. After having reviewed the 101 entries, from 19 countries, the jury decided: to select thirty projects, of which seven successful candidates will share a prize of €30,000 prize, to award a special prize and to single out three projects for an honorary



Prize for the best museum restoration - Neues Museum Design by David Chipperfield Architects

mention, as follows:

- Prize for the best participative architecture: *Sil Platz Cinema in Ilanz, Switzerland*
- Prize for the best museum restoration: *Neues Museum in Berlin, Germany*
- Prize for the best conversion of a religious

building: *Elsa Morante library in Lonate Ceppino (Varese), Italy*

– Prize for the best mix of activities and urban integration: *The Refrigeration Depot and Ice Palace in Milan, Italy*

– Prize for the best housing renovation: *Oleanderweg social housing in Halle (Saale), Germany*

– Prize for the best industrial heritage conservation: *Rome's former slaughterhouse, Italy*

– Prize for the best social conversion: *The Casa do Médico de São Rafael in Sines, Portugal*

– Special jury prize: *The Boghossian Foundation for the Villa Empain in Brussels, Belgium*

– Honorary mentions: *The Chicago Tower, restructuring of the archives building of the Cour des Comptes as offices in Paris, France; Creation of a unified contemporary environment around the Temple of Diana in Mérida, Spain; Reconstruction of a part of Reykjavik's central and historic square, Iceland*

The above, together with the other 21 projects selected, will be displayed at an exhibition, which will take place from 16th October to 20th November 2011 at the Architecture Museum, La Loge, in Brussels, before being presented in Paris and other cities. They will also feature in the exhibition catalogue. Among these will be the project for the redevelopment of the seafront at Valletta, and creation of a cruise ship terminal by local firm Architecture Project (AP).

The jury insisted on selecting works that were still little known, that represented social progress or that encouraged a renewed dialogue between history, the past lives of buildings and the new activities they embrace. All of the contestants were congratulated on the high quality of the works they had presented. For further information on the competition, the winners and participants visit www.fondationpourelarchitecture.be.

EUROPEAN PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURE 2011

When Hurricane Katrina hit America's Gulf Coast in 2005 and left thousands of people homeless in its wake, GRAFT Architects sprung to action with an outdoor art installation that drew world attention to the environmental crisis and to the need to find affordable housing alternatives in the process of rebuilding New Orleans. Their 150 flamingo-coloured, solar-powered, and water-resistant houses were the 2006 kickoff



The Pink Project. Photo by Ricky Ridecos

for the fundraising effort, launched by American movie star Brad Pitt and philanthropist Steve Bing, a real-estate developer and film producer, to match up to \$5 million dollars and the start of the Make It Right Foundation.

For GRAFT Architect's deep commitment to humanitarian concerns in today's architecture and for their cutting-edge efforts to strive toward a unique design beyond the constraints of the envelope, The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies, together with The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design, have named them as the recipient of The European Prize for Architecture 2011. Founded in Los Angeles, California in 1998 by Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz, and Thomas Willemeit, GRAFT is a design studio conceived as a "label" for architecture, urban planning, exhibition design, music and the "pursuit of happiness." A second GRAFT office was opened in 2001 in Berlin, followed by a third office in Beijing in 2004, which is headed by founding partner Gregor Hoheisel.

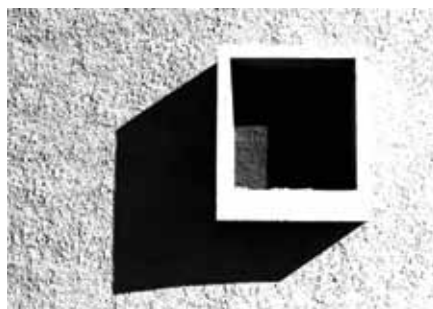
For this year's Prize, The European Centre received nominations from professional organisations and societies, museums of architecture, organisations and institutions throughout Europe. Members of The European Centre's International Advisory Committee served as the Nominating Jury for the Prize. "The purpose of The European Prize for Architecture," states Ioannis Karalias, Museum Vice President, The Chicago Athenaeum, "is to honour annually a living architect or architects whose built works demonstrate vision and talent and a body of work that has demonstrated significant contributions to art and humanity."

Nominations for the 2012 edition of the Prize are to be submitted by 01 June, 2012.

For further information visit: www.europeanarch.eu.

CICA BOOK AWARDS 2011

At the beginning of September 2011, CICA (International Committee of Architectural Critics) announced its shortlists in three categories of this year's edition of the CICA Book Awards. Among these was the publication titled "Between shadow & stone. A visual exploration of Richard England's architecture" which consists of a catalogue of archi-



One of the photos by Timmy Gambin depicting a detail of the Manikata Church reproduced in the Exhibition Catalogue "Between shadow & stone. A visual exploration of Richard England's architecture"

tectural photography by Timmy Gambin and includes essays by Gambin himself, Dr Conrad Thake, Prof Richard England and Fr Peter Serracino-Inglott. This catalogue was shortlisted for the Exhibition Catalogue Award.

At the end of the month, during the CICA Symposium held within the UIA World Congress Tokyo 2011, the winners were announced as follows:

- **CICA Bruno Zevi Book Award 2011:** Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani for "Die Stadt im 20. Jahrhundert. Visionen, Entwürfe, Gebautes, Wagenbach"
- **CICA Julius Posener Exhibition**

NEPTUNE

For decades, Malta has relied heavily on the unsustainable over-extraction of groundwater reserves and on reverse osmosis to meet national water demands. Although second class water produced from urban

Catalogue Award 2011: Aydan Balamir (ed.): for "Clemens Holzmeister. Çağın Dönümünde Bir Mimar. Architect at the Turn of an Era"

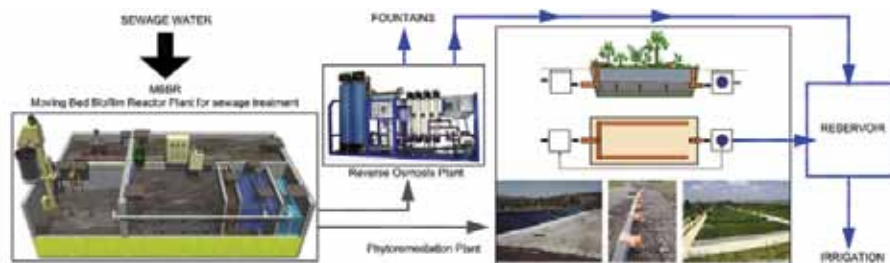
– **CICA Pierre Vago Journalism Award 2011:** Tom Avermaete, David de Bruijn, Joachim Declerck, Job Floris, Christoph Grafe, Klaske Havik, Anne Holtrop, Johan Lagae, Ruben Molendijk, Véronique Patteeuw, Hans Teerds, Gus Tielens, Tom Vandeputte (eds.) for "Oase # 81, Constructing Criticism"

The International Committee of Architectural Critics CICA has, since it was established in Mexico City in 1978, been closely associated with the World Congresses of the International Union of Architects. The inaugural meeting of CICA was held in the Joan Miró Foundation in July 1979 when Prof. Bruno Zevi (Rome) was elected the first CICA President with Jorge Glusberg (Argentina), Julius Posener (Germany), Dennis Sharp (UK) and Pierre Vago (France) as Directors. The current President is Prof. Joseph Rykwert and CICA Board Members are François Chaslin (F), Prof. Manuel Cuadra (Germany), Jorge Glusberg (Argentina), Louise Noelle Gras (Mexico), Süha Özkan (Turkey) and Jennifer Taylor (Australia).

CICA has held critical sessions since, in Warsaw, Cairo, Brighton, Rome, Vienna, Sydney, Barcelona, Istanbul, Paris, New York, London, Gelsenkirchen, Beijing, Berlin, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Kuwait, Vancouver, Torino and Tokyo. The next series of CICA Awards are set for the UIA Congress in 2014. For further information on CICA visit www.cicarchitecture.org.



Connecting the Three Cities through a sustainable landscaping project



further processing to be suited for individual reuse applications. However, sewage effluent may be sourced and treated locally, with specific on-site purification of the resultant water.

NEPTUME (No-Discharge Energy-Efficient Prototype for the Treatment of Urban Municipal Effluent) studies the treatment of municipal sewage using a compact ceramic membrane system with recognised advantages over conventional membrane systems. The treated effluent is subjected to a follow-on ecological and low energy phytoremediation process, polishing the water for use in public spaces and for irrigation

purposes, fountains and more. The project will set new standards for sustainability in landscaping schemes, agricultural activities, golf courses and recreational areas where sufficient water supply is not available.

NEPTUME combines research into the latest developments in flat sheet ceramic membrane technology with the nutrient-removal potential of follow-on biological phytoremediation processes, studying the benefits in the context of the regeneration of the derelict inner-harbour area around Dock One, Cospicua. Little data is available on the application of these technologies in the

local context. The project will assess the suitability of different macrophytic species, their ability to absorb specific excess nutrients from the water, and their potential as a source of biomass for fuel. The physical and chemical parameters of the water will be monitored continually, with real time data ensuring the efficient processing and polishing of the water.

The project was launched at Villa Bighi last September. Financed by the Malta Council for Science and Technology's National Research and Innovation Programme, NEPTUME was chosen from among 40 proposals. The €185,000 sustainable irrigation system is being jointly developed by Architecture Project Ltd, Water Services



The Malta Council for
Science & Technology

Corporation, the Department of Biology at the University of Malta and Argotti Botanical Gardens, which also falls under the university's umbrella. The next phase will see the setting up and testing of NEPTUME as part of the Dock 1 Landscaping project, utilising disused storage areas and open water ponds. If the pilot project is successful, it is expected that the concept will be developed for use throughout the island.

RIBA STIRLING PRIZE 2011

The Evelyn Grace Academy, London, by Zaha Hadid Architects has won the prestigious RIBA Stirling Prize 2011. This is the second year running that Zaha Hadid Architects have won the RIBA Stirling Prize after winning last year's edition with MAXXI Museum of 21st Century Art in Rome.

A highly stylized zig-zag of steel and glass, the Evelyn Grace Academy is squeezed onto the tightest of urban sites. The architects received a

Evelyn Grace Academy by Zaha Hadid Architects.

Photo by Hufton Crow



complex brief: four schools under a single academy umbrella with the need to express both independence and unity. The architects were strongly encouraged by the client to 'think outside the box'.

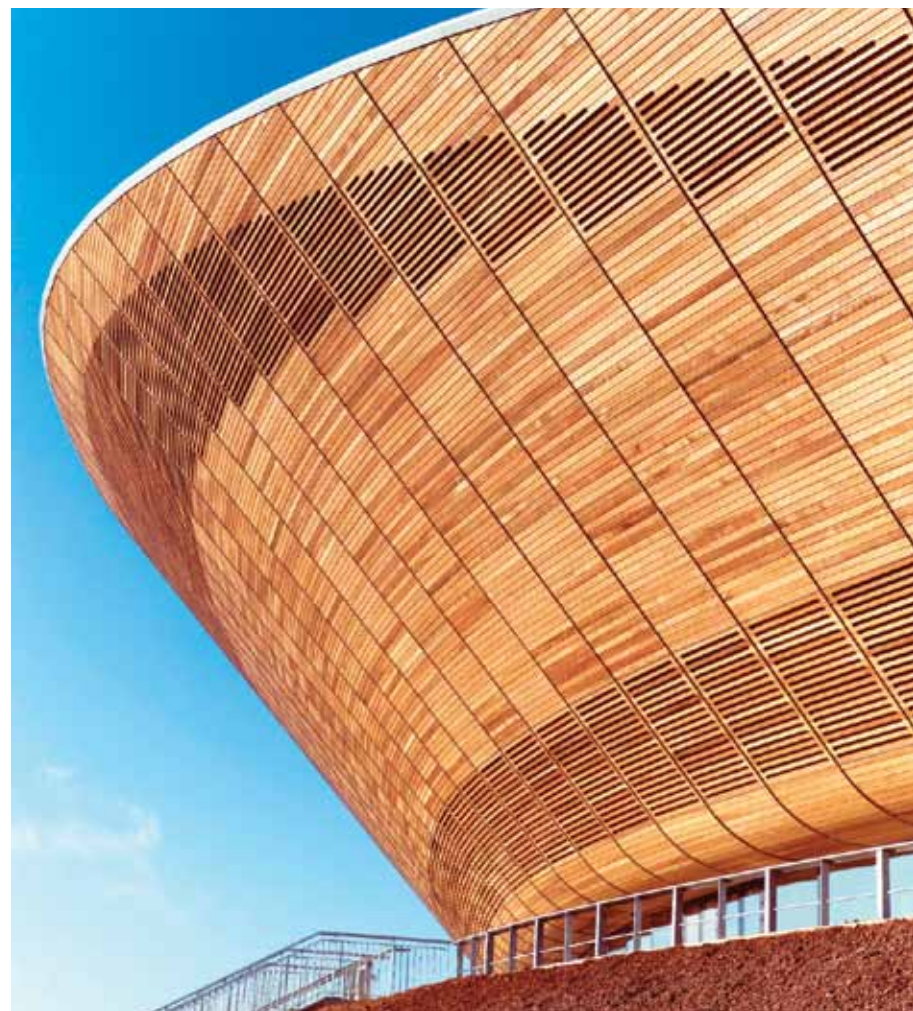
RIBA President Angela Brady said, 'The Evelyn Grace Academy is an exceptional

An Gaelaras by O'Donnell + Toumey.
Photo by Dennis Gilbert

The Velodrome by Hopkins Architects.

Photo by Richard Davies

example of what can be achieved when we invest carefully in a well-designed new school building. The result - a highly imaginative, exciting Academy that shows the students, staff and local residents that they are valued - is what every school





Folkwang Museum by David Chipperfield Architects
Photo by Christian Richters

should and could be. The unique design, expertly inserted into an extremely tight site, celebrates the school's sports specialism throughout its fabric, with drama and views of student participation at every contortion and turn. Evelyn Grace Academy is a very worthy winner of architecture's most prestigious award and I am delighted to present Zaha Hadid Architects with this accolade.'

Peter Walker, Principal of the Evelyn Grace Academy said, 'This visually stunning building makes a powerful statement to our students every day they attend school. As a new academy setting the highest expectations for all students, it is fitting that we have such an aspirational environment. The internal structure of the building supports the innovative nature of Evelyn Grace Academy's small school system exceptionally well.'

Zaha Hadid commented, 'It is very significant that our first project in London is the Evelyn Grace. Schools are among the first examples of architecture that everyone experiences and have a profound impact on all children as they grow up. I am delighted that the Evelyn Grace Academy has been so well received by all its students and staff.'

The project was one of six finalists which included An Gaearas by O'Donnell + Tuomey, The Angel Building by AHMM, Folkwang Museum by David Chipperfield



Royal Shakespeare Theatre by Bennetts Associates Architects. Photo by Peter Cook



The Angel Building by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris.
Photo by Timothy Soar

Architects, The Royal Shakespeare Theatre by Bennetts Associates and The Velodrome by Hopkins Architects.

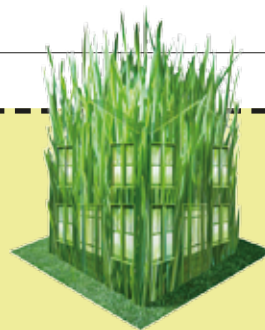
The RIBA Stirling Prize is the UK's most prestigious architecture prize. Every year it is presented to the architects of the building that has made the greatest contribution to the evolution of architecture in the past year. The prize is for projects 'built or designed in Britain'. Buildings are eligible if they are in the UK or European Union by an architect whose head office is in the UK.

The prize was set up in 1996 and is named after the great British architect Sir James Stirling (1926 - 1992). It is presented in association with The Architects' Journal and Benchmark, and the winning architect receives a cash prize of £20,000.

Buildings need to enter and win a RIBA Award for architectural excellence in order to be judged for the RIBA Stirling Prize. The RIBA Awards are announced in May each year and are judged by a regional Jury. A separate jury is then created to form the RIBA Stirling Prize shortlist. The winner is announced at the RIBA Stirling Prize Dinner, held in early October each year.

UIA WEBINAR

The first webinar, or online seminar, presented as part of the UIA (International Union of Architects) international continuing professional development programme was broadcast live on the 15 September for UIA Regions I, II, III and V (including Malta) and on 16 September for UIA Region IV.



SUSTAINABILITY SNAPS KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE JARGON AND WHAT'S GOING ON

"The EU Energy Policy: Engaging with Partners beyond Our Borders"

The EU imports over 60% of its gas and over 80% of its oil. It faces growing competition for fossil fuel resources, including from emerging countries and energy producers themselves. Growing population and rising standards of living could push global energy demand up by 40% by 2030. Rising energy demand is pushing up global prices, bringing energy poverty to many and playing havoc in countries where fossil fuel subsidies are prevalent.

A consistent and well coordinated EU External Energy Policy is therefore of fundamental importance to the EU's economy, industry and citizens. Past experience proved that bilateral energy relations between individual Member States and third supplier or transit countries can result in a fragmentation of the EU's internal market rather than a strengthening of the EU's energy supply and competitiveness. A coherent, dynamic and proactive external energy policy is also important to enable the EU and its Member States to establish a lead position in energy geopolitics, to effectively promote both EU and national energy interests beyond EU's borders, and to contribute to the competitiveness of the European industry.

To maximise this potential and to assert EU and Member State interests more effectively in changing world energy markets, a recent Commission Communication proposes a number of strategic actions and objectives, with the following priorities:

- Building up the external dimension of EU internal energy market;
- Strengthening partnerships for secure, safe, sustainable and competitive energy;
- Improving access to sustainable energy for developing countries; and
- Better promoting EU policies beyond its borders.

Source: MEUSAC



The webinar featured a presentation by Peter Rich who was awarded the South African Institute of Architects' 2010 Gold



Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre by Peter Rich Architects

Medal. He presented his Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre in Limpopo, named Building of the Year in 2009, and a magnificent example of respectful and sustainable by design architecture.

Your letters

Letters from our readers to be considered for publication are most welcome. Letters for inclusion in Issue 58 are to reach us by the 30 November 2011. Please write to: **The Editor, "the Architect", Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira GZR 1633**, or send an email to **thearchitect@ktpmalta.com**. All contributions will be acknowledged.



IN THIS ISSUE OF "THE ARCHITECT", WE TAKE A LOOK AT VARIOUS EU-WIDE AND WORLD-WIDE INITIATIVES FROM WHICH MALTA COULD BENEFIT, BUT IN WHICH THE ISLAND IS APPARENTLY NOT YET ACTIVE, OR BARELY ACTIVE. IT IS THE INTENTION OF THIS OVERVIEW TO SPARK SOME INTEREST AND TO ENCOURAGE VARIOUS SECTORS TO LOOK INTO THESE INITIATIVES WITH THE AIM OF BECOMING MORE ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATIVE IN THESE SPHERES.

Energy Cities

www.energy-cities.eu

Energy Cities is the European Association of local authorities inventing their energy future. From 2009 to 2011, Energy Cities is under the Presidency of the City of Heidelberg (DE), with a Board of Directors of



11 European cities. The association, created in 1990, represents more than 1,000 towns and cities in 30 countries. According to the listing on the website, no Maltese localities currently form part of this initiative.

Energy Cities' main objectives are to:

- strengthen cities' role and skills in the field of sustainable energy;
- represent cities' interests and influence the policies and proposals made by European Union institutions in the fields of energy, environmental protection and urban policy;
- develop and promote cities' initiatives through exchange of experiences, the transfer of know-how and the implementation of joint projects.

Climate Alliance

www.klimabuendnis.org

"Climate Alliance of European Cities with Indigenous Rainforest Peoples" is the European network of local authorities committed to the protection of the world's climate. The member cities and municipalities aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at their source. Their allies in this endeavour are the Indigenous Peoples of the rainforests in the Amazon Basin.

Climate Alliance aims to demonstrate the determination to act in favour of the global climate. By joining Climate Alliance, cities and



Climate Alliance

municipalities embrace the following voluntary commitments:

- to reduce CO2 emissions by 10%

every five years;

- to halve per capita emissions by 2030 at the latest (from 1990 baseline);
- to preserve the tropical rainforests by avoiding the use of tropical timber;
- to support projects and initiatives of the indigenous partners.

Founded in 1990, more than 1,600 cities, municipalities and districts in 18 European countries have since joined Climate Alliance. Regional governments, NGOs and other organisations are able to join as associated members. No Maltese localities currently form part of this initiative, as indicated on the website's listing.

Medcities

www.medcities.org

Medcities is a network of Mediterranean coastal cities created in Barcelona in November 1991 at the initiative of the Mediterranean Technical Assistance



Programme (METAP). The METAP, whose objective is environmental improvement in the

Mediterranean region, was established in 1990 by the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, the European Commission and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).

The creation of Medcities was a consequence of METAP's objective of strengthening decentralised actions involving technical assistance as the best means of promoting awareness of urban environmental problems and making those actions into a vehicle for empowering municipalities in developing countries in respect of management of urban environmental issues. Medcities continues offering this support. Afterwards Medcities extended its activities from the initial local environment to the wider local sustainable development field.

The Medcities network is a tool to strengthen

the environmental and sustainable development management capability of local administration, but it is also useful in order to identify the domains where a common activation could be the most useful mean to improve the regional environmental conditions.

The goals of the Medcities Network are the following:

- to reinforce the awareness of interdependence and common responsibility regarding the policies of urban environmental conservation in the Mediterranean basin;
- to strengthen the role and the means (institutional, financial and technical capability) of municipalities in the implementation of local sustainable development policies;
- develop awareness and involvement of citizens and consumers on urban sustainable development;
- set up a direct cooperation policy in order to implement the partnership between coastal Mediterranean cities.

Two cities per country are able to participate in this network. Currently, Gozo is listed as the only participant from the Maltese archipelago.

METREX

www.eurometrex.org

The majority of the people of Europe live and work in cities and urban regions. Within the wider Europe there are some 120 metropolitan regions and areas, which are the larger centres of economic and social life. They contain core business, cultural and governmental functions and their wellbeing is vital to the sustainability, competitiveness and social progress of Europe and its people. Many have severe problems, which also need special attention.

METREX, the Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas, provides a platform for the exchange of knowledge,



expertise and experience on metropolitan affairs, and joint action on issues of common interest. The Network has members from some 50 metropolitan regions and areas and partners in many others. METREX contributes the metropolitan dimension to policies, programmes and projects on a European scale. The Network is a partner of European institutions, the research community, governmental organisations and other networks. No Maltese localities currently form part of this network.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability

www.iclei.org

ICLEI is an association of over 1,220 local government Members who are committed to sustainable development. Members come from 70 different countries and represent more than 569,885,000 people. ICLEI is an international association of local governments as well as national and regional local



government organisations who have made a commitment to sustainable development. ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level. Its basic premise is that locally designed initiatives can provide an effective and cost-efficient way to achieve local, national, and global sustainability objectives.

ICLEI was founded in 1990 as the 'International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives'. The Council was established when more than 200 local governments from 43 countries convened at our inaugural conference, the World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future, at the United Nations in New York.

No Maltese localities currently appear to participate in this initiative.

LUKE LAPIRA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF SACES, GIVES OUR READERS AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT THE SOCIETY IS UP TO AT THE START OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR ...

As raindrops begin to pour and the days shorten, students around the islands prepare for the upcoming academic year with an array of emotions. Some sad about the end of the leisurely summer months, others excited to embark on a new adventure. This year marks an important year in the Faculty for the Built Environment's history, as it evolves into educating a new breed of professionals into the industry. Following its first year in providing the Diploma in Design Foundation Studies, students are now enrolled for the first time ever in a three-year Bachelor of Science (Hons.) degree in Built Environment Studies.

SACES 2011/2012

Changes are evident throughout the spectrum, including this year's SACES team, which is hard at work helping the students gear back into the university routine by hosting a variety of events, the first of which sees the return of the traditional calendar event – "Sand Sculptures." Located at Ghadira Bay in Mellieħa, the event saw the gathering of a total of 40 students, past and present, to design and construct a series of Sand Sculptures that were judged based on vari-



ous criteria. This small but successful event encouraged the students to get back in touch with each other and to interact with their peers throughout the Faculty.

MALTA DESIGN WEEK

As part of its annual design exhibition, SACES was invited to take part in Malta Design Week (1st – 8th October 2011). Two separate events were held within this design expo. The first of these series of events was "Growth", an exhibition that aimed at analysing and dissecting the design process as

pursued by students in Malta. The exhibition displayed a series of works ranging from the first year diploma students up till the fourth year works, aiming at achieving one common goal: Good Design. In "Growth", one could explore an array of processes adopted, be they unique to the individual that pursued them, or inspired by celebrated architects. The journey from concept to final design sometimes contains unexpected twists and turns that lead to a design discovery, which "Growth" attempted to portray. The event was hosted in a unique location at 59, St. Dominic's Street, Valletta.

The second event, hosted in collaboration with GetUp StandUp, was entitled "Open" and dealt with a design challenge presented to third year students concerning the Marsa Open Centre. The brief

initially involved the design of a library for the centre, however it evolved into a project scope covering the rehabilitation of the site with a prime challenge – tackling design notwithstanding a lack of funds to fulfil expensive design. "Open" was an opportunity for the public to view the solutions to this design issue as proposed by five teams of students that tackled the various social challenges through cost effective architectural solutions. True to its name, the exhibition was held on location in a beautiful abandoned building, immediately outside the Marsa Open Centre.

PASSIVE HOUSE: BOTTICELLI PROJECT SITE VISIT

Sicilian Engineer, Carmelo Sapienza, forms part of a firm that is currently working on the first passive house in Sicily. Upon his invitation, SACES has organised a trip to visit this project prior to its completion in order to better understand its construction and



GROWTH - a satellite event organised by SACES during Malta Design Week in an attempt to analyse and dissect the methods pursued by Maltese architecture



the technology used in a climate that is similar to that which we reside in.

Unfortunately, the technology required in obtaining such a low energy footprint as is used by Northern European countries is largely inapplicable in climates such as our own.

Accompanied by

University Lecturer Dr. Vince Buhagiar, a team of 10 students embarked on this trip on the 24th of September.

NEW WEBSITE

SACES would also like to announce its new website – www.sacesmalta.org. In order to better get in touch with all its members, as well as announce important events such as the Workshop 2011 (14th – 16th October, location to be announced shortly), this new website aims at being a hub for all students within the Faculty for the Built Environment.



A JAPANESE GARDEN ON THE BASTIONS?

BY NICOLO' BENCINI

Many will be quite surprised to find out that there exists a society in Malta solely dedicated to the cultivation and nurturing of Bonsai trees. Let alone if they were to find out that this same society intends to build a Japanese garden right below St. Philip's bastions in Floriana. And even more so if they were to find out that this Japanese garden was designed by a group of University students.

It all began in the early months of 1991 when Mr Edward Sammut, president of the Friends of Japan Association, was looking to hold Malta's first Bonsai Exhibition at Palazzo Costanzo in Mdina. With

the help of Mr. Carmel Busuttill and Mr. Joe Casha who supplied most of the Bonsai trees from their personal collection, the exhibition was held on the 9th June 1991. The exhibition was a success drawing in hundreds of people, some of whom expressed great interest in the Bonsai tree culture. The following November, Mr. Casha and Mr Busuttill founded the 'Bonsai Culture Group' in response to the public's great interest following the exhibition. With the help of Mr. Joseph Busuttill, another local Bonsai enthusiast, the Bonsai Culture Group has since held yearly Bonsai exhibitions in order to raise awareness on the art of Bonsai.

In 2010 the Bonsai Culture Group was given a plot of land below the Argotti Gardens in Floriana to use for the cultivation and nurturing of their trees. The site formerly formed part of the Department of Lotteries stores in Sa Maison Street and consists of a dilapidated one storey building and an open garden surrounded by the St. Philip's bastions. The entrance to the site is located right next to Notre Dame Gate which was partly demolished in the past in order to allow for the flow of traffic in and out of Valletta.

The site garden itself was found in an abandoned state and unsuitable for use, therefore the Bonsai Culture Group in collaboration

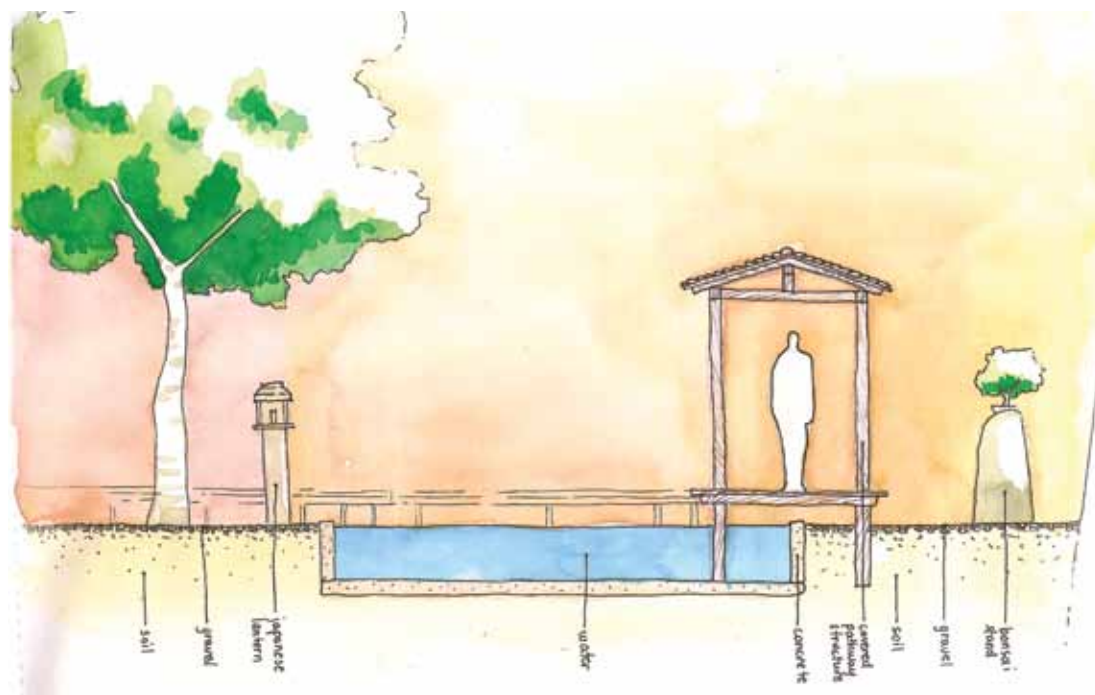


with the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs and the University of Malta set up a competition for the design and rehabilitation of the garden. Fourth Year students studying Landscape Design from the Faculty for the Built Environment were asked to propose a design for the layout of the garden based on Japanese Bonsai garden styles and philosophy. The students' designs had to respect the surroundings while at the same time adhere to the strict design philosophies and styles used in Japanese garden design. It was clear from the start that the main priority was not to build an entirely traditional Japanese garden but to design a garden which respects St. Philip's bastions and did not obstruct or infringe on them in any way.

Under the direction of their tutor, Perit Ramon Gauci, the students

eventually developed three different design proposals. All three proposals were exhibited at the University of Malta in the Faculty for the Built Environment, and a jury consisting of members from the Bonsai Culture Group, professional architects, University lecturers and an architect from the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs was assembled in order to decide which scheme would be selected. The winning design eventually chosen was that submitted by Jonathan Borg, Matthew Casha, Nicolo' Bencini and Sergei Mikhailenko, all Fourth Year Architecture students.

Initially the idea was to reserve the whole site for the Bonsai Culture Group in order to cultivate and nurture Bonsai trees, but the chosen design involved allocating an area for public use. It was decided that by allowing members of

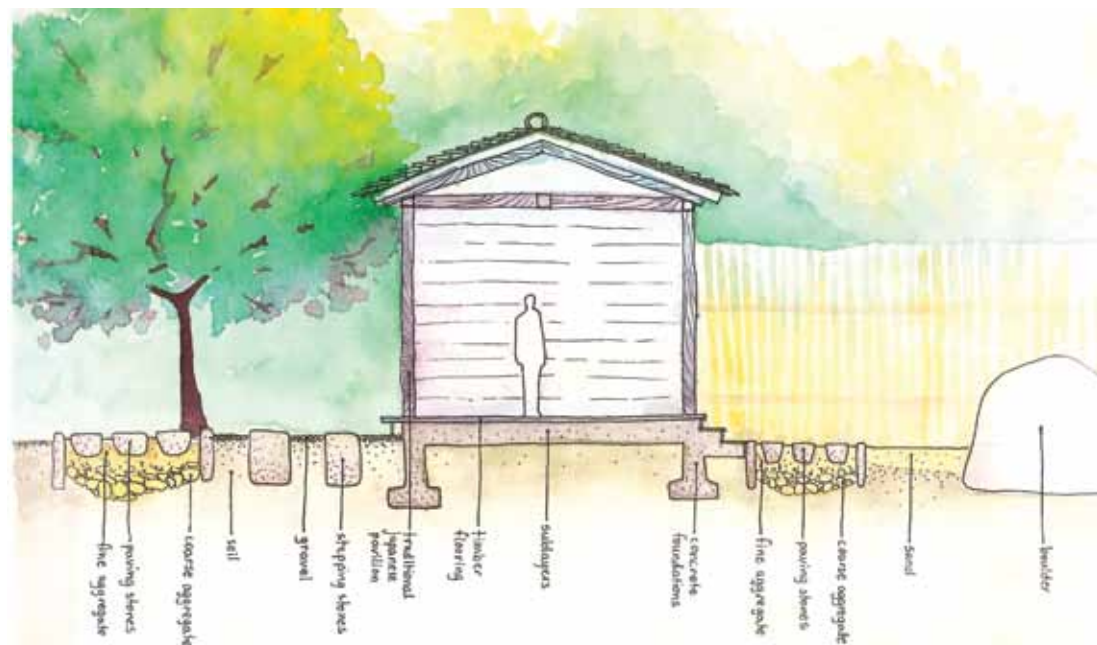




the public to access certain parts of the site, the Bonsai Culture Group would gain more public exposure than if they were to restrict the opening of the site to exhibition times only. This division of the site would also help the Bonsai group better accomplish its two aims simultaneously; 'to inform the general public about the art of bonsai and secondly to train its members on the basic and advanced techniques of bonsai training'.

The students based the garden layout on traditional Japanese gardens which are designed around the idea that the walk through it is a walk through life - with all its problems, obstacles, amazements,

feelings and experiences. In order to allow for this idea of exploration and discovery to be possible, the public area of the Bonsai garden was then further divided into smaller more intimate spaces. A bamboo fence was used to block off areas and focus views therefore prohibiting the viewer from seeing the whole garden at once. This along with the use of fragmented path ways gives the user the impression that the garden is larger than it actually is. The path is essentially a circular one which meanders around the central meditation space where the pavilion is located. This central space is not fully visible to the user until towards the end of the path add-



ing to it the sense of mystery and exploration that more traditional Japanese gardens convey. Bamboo fencing was used since the user may often glimpse hints of what is behind through holes or imperfections in the fencing, but never gets a full view. It is also a very natural and traditional material used in many Japanese gardens. Traditional furniture and flora which one might expect to find in a Japanese garden are present in the design, giving the space an oriental feel.

The play between land and water was also a key feature in the students' design. Since the site itself is quite small, it was not possible to have lakes or islands as in traditional Japanese gardens, therefore the students simulated this feature by creating a channel of water which follows the path way. The centre of the garden contains the pavilion and meditation space which is surrounded by the water channel in order to give the visitors the impression that it is on an island. People walking in the garden would have to continuously cross from one side of the channel to the other until they reach the pavilion.

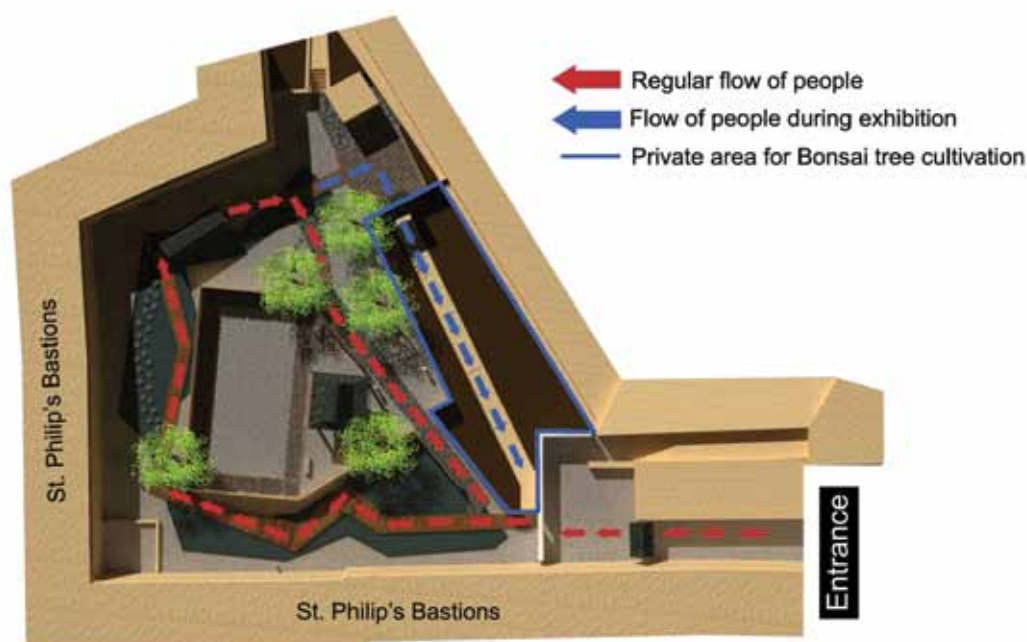
It was of paramount importance for the students that the Japanese garden would not ruin the view of St. Philip's Bastions as a whole. Therefore the design itself was kept low-lying and hidden from street view by trees and vegetation. In this way, the Japanese environment and culture may be enjoyed by people visiting the garden but, at the same time, will not be visible from the exterior of the site when viewed from a distance. Furthermore, in order to reduce impact on the site, it was decided that most of the indigenous trees found on site should be retained

and the garden built around them while various other trees and vegetation regularly used in Japanese gardens would be introduced to the site. The final result is a garden consisting of many small intimate spaces which encourage the user to wander freely from one space to the next and get lost in the oriental setting.



Even though this was the winning design, the Bonsai Culture Group also identified successful elements from the other designs by Francesca Camillieri, Claire Galea, Nikki Zammit, Fabio Aquilina, Ruth Borg and Nadia Martinelli which are to be part of the final product. The final design will be the result of the input from all participants as well as input from members of the Bonsai Culture Group and comments made by the judging jury.

More information on the Bonsai Culture Group may be found on www.bonsaimalta.org



MALTA DESIGN WEEK

The recently published draft National Environment Policy addresses the need to improve the quality of the built environment through supporting measures for improved quality in design. "It is increasingly recognized that poor design has social implications: beauty as an element of quality creates psychological benefits that contribute to a balanced society, and to overall quality of life." The draft policy lists a number of proposed measures by which such goals could be achieved. Having a policy is one matter, implementing it is certainly an altogether different kettle of fish. Can such policies be achieved? Does Malta have the substance with which to achieve this aim?

The first eight days of October were punctuated by an event that was spread across various cultural and commercial venues: Malta Design Week (MDW). Its main goals: "to promote and celebrate good design" and "to provide a space and environment for the expanding local design talent to interact, experience, discuss and be inspired by multiple design disciplines." Exhibitions, talks, workshops and launches, featured on the MDW programme, aimed at appealing to a wide audience of local and foreign design-

ers, architects, artists, artisans, journalists, critics, academics and entrepreneurs. Over 50 events, installations and happenings formed the collage of expression under the MDW umbrella, including talks and workshops by various international promoters and creators of good design, such as Gilian Schrofer (Netherlands), Charles Knevitt (UK), Shelley Martin (US), Ralph de Lange (Netherlands), Gaspar Gonzalez (Spain) and Nicolas Roope (UK).

The main MDW events took place at the Old University Building in Merchants Street, Valletta, which was converted into a gallery for expression of all forms of art and design: architecture, fashion, photography, interior design, sculpture, to name but a few. A number of satellite events were also held in various other locations including furniture and design stores, run-down buildings, artists' and artisans' studios and showrooms.

In a statement to the press, the organisers commented that "The long-term aim of MDW is to establish Malta as a hub for Mediterranean creativity; through collaboration and cross-fertilisation, MDW will eventually develop into a biennial or annual event that will act as a vital contribution in developing healthy relationships between manufacturing businesses and designers. Ultimately, MDW hopes to put local design in closer contact with the realities of the international market. Given the proper resources and international coverage, MDW could also be geared to initiate a vessel of communication between art organisations and tourism-related entities promoting cultural tourism, with images of a creative Malta at its roots."

Unfortunately, this journal had to go to print mid-way through the event week, so there was not enough time to review MDW in detail. However, "the Architect" visited some of the events and managed to obtain a number of reactions from various participants, thus allowing us to give our readers a taste of what went on during the week. The reactions were varied, some positive, some not so positive. Nevertheless, one thing is



"Conjugal" at the Old University Building.
Photo by Matthew James Mercieca

clear: the need for making design issues more accessible to the general public and for creating fora of this type is evident, and it is events such as this which continue to fuel the discussion and to bring design, in all its forms, to the fore.

GROWTH

Dates: 02-08 October

Location: 59, St Dominic Street, Valletta

Organised by: SACES

Commented by: Emma Warrington

"GROWTH was a satellite event organised by SACES in an attempt to analyse and dissect the methods pursued by Maltese architecture students when creating innovative designs. It encompassed a collection of students' work from the Faculty for the Built Environment. The location itself, a crumbling yet stately old house, provided the perfect setting, mirroring the rawness of students' work. Exhibits consisting of models, posters and sketches were dotted around the house, offering fantastic insight into what goes on at the Faculty."



From "Window and In-Store Displays for Retail" by Gergana Ivanova

OPEN

Dates: 03-05 October

Location: Old Trade School, Xatt il-Mollijiet, Marsa

Organised by: SACES and GetUp StandUp

Commented by: Emma Warrington

"GetUp StandUp and SACES, together with the Faculty for the Built Environment, launched a competition where 3rd year students proposed designs for various spaces around the Marsa Open Centre. The winning designs will eventually be implemented. Held in the old tram station adjacent to the Marsa Open Centre, the location again provided the perfect setting, as it indicated the type of space competition participants had to work with. The results were impressive, comprising aesthetics, functionality, cost-effectiveness and innovation."

From "Open" organised by SACES and GetUp StandUp



Process was another of the events on the MDW calendar, and consisted of an exhibition set up by the University's Foundation in Design Studies students coordinated by their tutor, Anton Grech. This exhibition aimed to outline the many new experiences which design students of a wide spectrum of pre-acquired skills have gained upon their completion of the Foundation in Design Studies course. Rather than emphasizing the various sections of the course as finished products, the exhibition sheds a light on the extensive development process that led to the works which are being exhibited. As a result, it offers a taste of how autonomous individuals evolved in their abilities to visualize and clearly convey innovative concepts by virtue of realistic renderings, pertaining to chair and/or canoe designs, to understand the creative potentials and limitations that versatile materials such as clay, plaster, ink, woods and metals enable, to respect the relationship between 3D space and the nature of the objects inside it particularly through the task of the Sculpture house and to effectively capture the essence of both an urban and natural space through the lens of a camera. All of this is backed up by a solid foundation in the ability to sketch, manipulate text and objectively analyse and reference 3D forms in everyday life, in a creative manner



Malta Design Week

CONJUGAL

Dates: 01-08 October

Location: Old University Building, Valletta

Curated by: Matthew James Mercieca Design Architects (MJMDA) and Alexandra Manche

Sponsors: BMW, Learnkey CAD (Autodesk), Big Exhibits, Studio Seven and Intercomp (DELL)

Commented by: Matthew James Mercieca

"The aim of this exhibition was to bring together a number of architectural firms of high standard in order to exhibit their work dynamically on digital displays according to an underlying theme. The general idea was to better show that good architecture is not just a shell or a planning permit. Many layers are required for a good piece of architecture.

During the exhibition it was hoped that viewers would be exposed to and therefore appreciate some of these different layers in order to know how to seek out architecture



From "Window and In-Store Displays for Retail" by Gergana Ivanova

and design to satisfy their needs. The nine firms that accepted to participate in the exhibition exposed this theme very well each showing areas of the profession and projects they worked on. In order of clockwise appearance in the exhibition: Pace & Lautier Building Workshop, Matthew James Mercieca Design Architects [MJMDA], DeMicoli & Associates, Chris Briffa Architects, Bezzina & Cole, Forward, Godwin Vella, Martin Xuereb Associates and TBA.

Alongside two models submitted by Chris Briffa Architects and DeMicoli & Associates on a central mass, MJMDA set up an augmented reality display that visitors including kids enjoyed interacting with in order to further explore Still Kinetic, a prototype living machine by MJMDA, specially presented Conjugal in association with BMW."

WINDOW & IN-STORE DISPLAYS FOR RETAIL

Date: 04 October

Location: Old University Building, Valletta

Speaker: Gergana Ivanova

Commented by: James Muscat

"The lecture explained the importance of the display of merchandise together with in-store activities to encourage consumer spending by presenting a more cohesive and stimulating retail environment. While the lecture was, on the whole, a good introduction to the subject, it would have certainly benefited from a longer duration, to the extent that it would perhaps have been better off as a seminar since the topic is vast. Instead the lecture (which was short enough

already) was further shortened by scheduling and technical difficulties.

The result was a condensed explanation of the role of a visual merchandiser, generously illustrated by examples of Ivanova's work with department store John Lewis. A greater attempt to apply retail merchandising to the local scenario would not have gone amiss. Nevertheless, the insight into visual merchandising in larger retail spaces still proved interesting to those who wish to see greater attention to the aesthetic and sensory aspects of local retailing."

A THESIS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Date: 01-08 October

Location: Old University Building, Valletta

Organised by: Graduates from the Faculty for the Built Environment

Commented by: one of the students

"The students who have just completed the B.E.&A. course from Faculty for the Built Environment exhibited their thesis projects at MDW. The exhibition consisted of a series of proposals that attempt to squeeze the potential out of certain areas around Malta which are in dire need for some life and vibrancy.

The architecture students presented several projects that could inspire an architectural regeneration in, and around Valletta and Floriana – areas that have become part of daily conversation for having attracted a spur of altering urban interventions.

The urban design students presented a project that analyses the state of a local settlement (Xgħajra) and then proposes a few surgical interventions that are applied to a situation that is aching for improvement. This chosen locality has, in recent years, been blighted by rapid piecemeal developments and has found it very difficult for a local identity to assert itself.

The engineering students explored structural challenges presented through an infrastructural, cultural or industrial project. The process carried out involved architectural and structural design, unified using a sustainable approach."

UNDER A TILTED ROOF

Dates: 07-31 October

Venue: Camilleri Paris Mode, Rabat

Commented by: James Muscat

The exhibition displayed the work of three notable photographers, Kurt Arrigo,

From "Under a Tilted Roof".
Photo by Kurt Arrigo



Alexandra Pace and Anna Runefelt.

Kurt Arrigo's photographs of Bormla's Dock 1 showed the landmark prior to the commencement of construction works on it. One photograph portraying the waterfront building's reflection in the sea was particularly striking. Other photographs of the harbour against dramatic skies and seascapes were equally breathtaking.

In strong contrast, Alexandra Pace's black and white photographs portrayed intimate encounters with beautifully lit objects in compositions which often called to question the nature of the object itself. Pace's portrayal of glass was particularly appealing.

While Anna Runefelt's photographs of human figures were shot at some spectacular locations in Malta, she appears to have avoided allowing the places to dominate the subject of the pictures, instead allowing the images to emerge from a combination of props, outfits, place and of course the human subjects. Particularly delightful were a rope-based outfit and a miniature sailing boat which made frequent appearances throughout the photographic collection.

That there was no apparent relationship between the three photographers' contributions did not detract from the appeal of their collective display, perhaps because the exhibition's setting amidst a wealth of furnishings allowed for a certain degree of variety. Overall, the exhibition was certainly worth the visit.

– MDW was financially supported by the Malta Arts Fund, the Good Causes Fund and Bank of Valletta.

It was co-ordinated by Chris Briffa, Prof Alex Torpiano, Anton Grech, Stephen Vella, Matthew James Mercieca, Justin Schembri, Liliana Vella, Matthew Casha and Lisa Gwen Baldacchino.

– Partners included the University of Malta, MCAST, HalMann Vella, JP Advertising, S.A.W Ltd., FLOW, Pedrali, Ellul Wines & Spirits, 240 Ltd., Garden it, Absolut Vodka, Valletta Local Council, Nexos, one-percent, camilleriparismode, cre8, Facedisplays and iCentre.

– Further information is available at www.maltadesignweek.com

Housing Affordability

In a paper titled "A long-term analysis of housing affordability in Malta" published earlier this year, Perit **Denis Camilleri** analysed the trends and principal causes of developments in house prices in Malta over the 26 year period between 1982 and 2008, with a specific focus on the issue of affordability. The paper also derives projections for likely future developments in this context and proposes some policy options in this regard. The report discusses mainly the affordably housing category, though it also touched upon the up-market residential sector. The rental market, sustainable housing measures, housing densities and high-rise developments are also analysed in the report. Here, "the Architect" takes a look at some of the key findings of this report, which is largely based on data collected from National Statistics, together with databases held by the author's practice DHI Periti.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOUSING MARKET 1982-2008

The home-ownership rate registered in 1948 registered at a mere 23.1%. This has risen dramatically from just over 50% in 1985 up to 75% in 2005 (see Table 1). This high home ownership is comparable to Spain's 82%, Greece and Portugal's 72% and the UK's 70%. Other European countries with lower home ownership rates include Finland at 62%, the Netherlands, Denmark and France at 54%, and Sweden and Germany at 45%.

The report indicates that the home-ownership rate is expected to level out at 90% in the year 2065. This considers that 10% of all households would always require subsidience in order to be able to afford their own residence. In this regard, Camilleri comments that although various subsidy schemes were introduced over the report period to try to restrict the increase in prop-

erty prices, these often fuelled demand and/or curbed supply and resulted in stronger price increases in the property market within a period of some months.

Malta's real estate growth may be gauged from the value of an average property contract in 1982 which stood at Lm3,766*, to that of contracts in 2006 noted at Lm35,232, declining from the 2005 value at Lm41,632. This implies an annual average growth of 9.25% per annum, as compared to the annual growth of the GDP current market price/capita, which over the same period stands at 5.125% per annum.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing is normally related to the ability to pay. Financial institutions typically only lend money such that borrowers do not need to contribute more than 25% of the net household income towards mortgage monthly repayments.

Year	1948	1957	1967	1985	1995	2005
%	23.1	26.1	32.0	53.9	68.0	75.2

Table 1 – Home ownership rate. Source: National Statistics Office (2007)

Year	Mortgage Monthly Payment		Medium Family Income**	Qualifying Monthly Income		Ratio of Qualifying Family Income		Housing affordability Index (HAI)		House Price: Earnings Ratio
	3bed	2bed		3bed	2bed	3bed	2bed	3bed	2bed	
1982	€140	€56	€229	€559	€391	1.3	0.91	77	110	4.28
1987	€161	€114	€564	€643	€457	1.14	0.81	88	123	4.23
1992	€252	€168	€745	€1006	€531	1.35	0.90	74	111	5.27
1997	€384	€247	€995	€1537	€988	1.55	0.99	65	101	5.80
2002	€394	€263	€1215	€1575	€1057	1.29	0.86	77	116	5.60
2006	€606	€429	€1665	€2119	€1500	1.27	0.90	79	111	7.22
2007	€673	€478	€1738	€1046	€1670	1.35	1.01	74	104	6.97
2008	€615	€410	€1798	€924	€1435	1.2	0.80	84	125	6.58
2009	€478	€319	€1871	€718	€1118	0.89	0.60	112	168	6.11
2010	€472	€315	€1914	€1652	€1102	0.86	0.58	116	174	5.99

Table 2 – Housing Affordability Index (HAI) for the Maltese Islands

An HAI of 100 according to the US National Association of Realtors' signifies that a family earning the median household income just qualifies for a median residence, whilst a HAI of less than 100 signifies that the median family has to do away with other necessities.

**the median family income is factored at 1 for 1982, and by 1.35 for 2002 increasing to 1.575 for 2009 to account for the effect of the 2nd wage earner.

Source: updated table Camilleri (2000)

The report states that between 1982 and 2008, "affordable house prices have increased by 625%, doubling in price over the initial ten-year period, doubling again in price over the subsequent ten-year period and then nearly doubling again in price over the past immediate five-year period."

Comparing data for various localities, the paper indicates that in 2007, the affordable three-bedroom and two-bedroom apartment averaged out at Lm45,000 and Lm40,000 respectively in Fgura, Paola and Zabbar. In M'Scala, these averaged out at Lm47,500 and Lm41,000 respectively. Prime areas such as Sliema registered averages at Lm85,000 and Lm50,000.

Furthermore, over the years, the affordable accommodation floor area has been shrinking, with a three-bedroom apartment in 1982 having an average floor area of 135sqm, reducing by 2008 to 115sqm, whilst a two-bedroom apartment in 1982 had an average floor area of 95sqm reducing to 80sqm by 2008.

The 2005 Housing Census lists the number of rooms per person at 2.5. On a European level, this varies from a low of 1.4 persons per room to a high of 2.6 persons per room. Malta's accommodation is at par with the Netherlands, UK, Luxembourg, Austria,

Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, France and Ireland, whilst it is superior to accommodation in Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

UP-MARKET HOUSING

According to Camilleri, Maltese up-market developments average around €5,000/sqm, to be compared with similar developments in London at €17,500/sqm, and Dublin and Paris at €9,500/sqm. Madrid, Sydney and Croatia attract the same Malta price tag, Phuket and Cape Town attract half the price, while Bulgaria attracts a quarter of the price. The wealthiest location is Monaco at €35,000/sq m (Knight Frank, 2008).

The prime residential property market is not subject to the same market influences as that of the affordable market. "As wealth increases, luxury products and services continue to rise in value, as they are more desirable, the more expensive they are, with prime property being the ultimate product."

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDEX (HAI)

Table 2 notes the HAI calculated for the period 1982–2008. For a three-bedroom median apartment, the HAI had in 2007 at 74 slid down from the previous year's 79. The worst period was in 1997 at 65, coinciding with the introduc-

tion of VAT in 1995. Over the years it has always appeared affordable to purchase a two-bedroom median apartment, with the HAI peaking to 123 (1987) and dipping to 101 (1997). With the present low mortgage rate era and decline in property values as anticipated up to 2012, an HAI extrapolation for 2012 works out at 138. This signifies that for Malta, the global credit crunch is beneficial to the first time homeowners. An improvement in the quality of life of the Maltese family is expected to occur, as a main job should be sufficient to support the ownership of one's home.

This has happened even before 2012, that a Maltese household does not require to work overtime to own their own home. In fact, for the first time in 2009 a three-bedroom apartment is affordable as the HAI has gone above 100 at 112.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

Based on information obtained from the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), there has been a surge from the year 2000 onwards in the number of residential permits issued (see Table 3). The author asks: has this increase in supply addressed the problems of affordability?

Although there has been a slowdown in the home ownership rate, this does not appear to

have deterred developers from undertaking residential developments. The number of permits issued over this period is to be compared to the Housing Requirement. A housing demand calculation undertaken in MEPA's Housing Topic paper (2002) stands at 2,850 units required per annum indicating that over the past five-year period, a higher supply had been provided, with possibly the increase in demand not being matched.

When one considers that the number of marriages over the period has averaged out at 2,250 annually, with separations/annulments averaging at 375 annually, it is expected that, in the coming years, the number of building permit applications for residential units will again revert to the pre-2002 figures.

The report also looks at the history of the control of building heights locally and its impact on housing supply. The Town Planning Schemes of the 1960s mostly indicated two floors above ground level, contributing to the predominantly low-lying compact urban form typical at the time. The Town Planning Schemes of 1988 indicated statutory building heights of two floors in most urban areas and four floors in exceptional cases. However, they included six- and eight-storey building heights for Sliema and St Julians.

"In 1993, a revision to the building heights policy allowed an additional floor in areas outside urban conservation areas with a height limitation of two floors, subject to certain conditions. In these same areas, together with areas that already had a height limitation of three floors, the recent amendments permitted an additional penthouse construction on a building height of three floors, instead as previously, allowed over four floors."

These planning policies have resulted in a reasonable residential density notwithstanding Malta's high population density standing at 1,298 persons per km². From a MEPA study (2002), the residential units per hectare vary from 8 up to 80, whilst the number of residents per hectare varies from 25 up to 150. This contrasts greatly with Singapore, for example, which has a population density of 5,454 persons per km², and a national average residential density at 142 units per hectare, with 82% of the population living in high-density housing at 215 units per hectare.

FOREIGN PROPERTY BUYERS

Since 1974, when a foreigner purchased property in Malta, such transaction requires registering via a law known as the immovable prop-

erty (acquisition by non-residents) Acquisition Immovable Property (AIP) Act. Just over 14,000 permits have since been registered, that is an average of 406 permits per year. These foreign resident purchases, peaked in 1989 at 899, then plummeted to 155 in 1998. The report indicates that towards the end of the report period, foreign buyers were purchasing property in the up-market range, peaking in 2005 at Lm971/sqm as compared to the affordable rate at Lm442/sqm. Commenting on 2002 to 2007 AIP data available, the author outlines that of the 4,574 permits granted to 86 nationalities, 70% of purchasers were British. These are followed by Irish buyers at 3.75%, Italians and Russians at 3%, and Americans, Dutch, Germans and French each averaging out at 2 per cent. From further AIP data over the same period, the Sliema/St Julians area at was the most sought after with 28.75% of purchases by foreigners, followed by the St Paul's Bay area at 21% and Mellieha at 9%.

VACANT DWELLINGS

The number of vacant dwellings in 2005 stood at 53,120, up from the 1995 number of 35,723. Thus, in 1995, 23% of total dwellings were vacant, whilst in 2005 this increased to 27.6%. Of these vacant units, one fifth are listed as holiday dwellings. The 2005 Census states that 43.4% of these vacant dwellings were in a good state of repair, 21.3% needed only minor repairs, whilst 5,274 units were in shell form, with a small percentage in a dilapidated condition. 65% of these vacant dwellings consisted of flats, maisonettes and penthouses.

Historically, this is not uncommon. According to the various census exercises carried out since 1861, vacancy rates were generally within the 20 to 30% range. The report also notes high vacancy rates at 23.1% in Cyprus, 35.44% in Greece and 29.5% for Portugal - these countries, like Malta, embrace good family ties, resulting in residential hoarding their offspring. At the other end of the scale, Sweden has a vacancy rate of 1.67%, the Netherlands at 1.97% and Luxembourg at 2.3%.

"For the proper functioning of the property market, a 4-5 per cent of vacant stock is neces-

sary. Thus, the above European statistics indicate that where the vacant percentage is below the 5 per cent mark, the market works inefficiently. Nevertheless, is this inefficiency carried over when the vacancy rate is as noted above, being in the region of a quarter of the total housing stock available? Considering Malta's scenario, this does not appear to be the case for the proper functioning of the property market, as property hoarding appears to be a favoured investment medium, due to property's perceived capital growth rates. This appears to be also corroborated by Cyprus, Greece and Portugal."

It had been noted by Hoekstra and Zad (2006) that Mediterranean countries are characterised by specific phenomena that contradict economic theory: high vacancy rates go together with high house prices, a high housing production rate, and a high rate of homeownership. "Thus, a high property vacancy rate has more of an adverse effect on our surroundings and built environment, considering our limited size, than on the proper functioning of the property market. On the plus side, these vacant properties would come to good use in the scenario that a natural disaster befalls Malta, as the homeless would then not find accommodation for years on end in tents or makeshift premises."

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Malta's national report on sustainable development presented to Johannesburg 2002 notes that "the construction industry should be directed to improve design for thermal efficiency and to adopt energy saving measures prior to being granted development permission. In this regard, there is the need to step up funding for research to improve knowledge on local materials and conditions." Document F Technical Guidance on Conservation of Fuel, Energy and Natural Resources (minimum requirements on the energy performance of building regulations, 2006) was issued by the Services Division Building Regulations Office Malta through a Legal Notice in 2007. However, the author notes, "as capital costs add onto the building constructions, this would further affect their affordability, although green buildings have

been quoted as being more affordable, as they can cut down on heating/cooling costs." He commends the Housing Authority on its initiative to construct an energy efficient block, while noting that "the economics of sustainable construction in Malta is still not delved into, whilst new cheaper sustainable forms of construction (are) yet to be introduced."

Globigerina limestone is an obvious choice of building material. Being a natural material "it is healthy, enduring and attractive", and poses little pollution risk. Quarrying, however, is visually and ecologically damaging, with large transportation energy costs involved. Camilleri notes that for buildings to be sustainable, the materials are ideally site produced or sourced within a radius of 10 km. Stone buildings can be more sustainable with particular emphasis given on the mode of quarrying/transporting the material to site with reduced dust production, together with greater importance given to its re-use.

"A glass clad high-rise building using as much energy as a whole town is not a sustainable solution for Malta. Local materials require the use of thermal mass to average out temperature variations. The West façade requires a closed gable wall, whilst the South wall should take advantage of the low winter sun for lighting and shading provided for the high summer sun. Orientation together with natural ventilation principles can reduce the energy intake by 30 per cent. It is possible to achieve thermal comfort by passive means not involving the use of energy. The utilization of basements as a passive form of cooling to the upper floors is virtually unknown. The internal yard concept, although appreciated, has lost its planning appeal. A residence requiring air conditioning for its comfort may be considered a design disaster. A good climatic orientation taking ventilation advantage of light breezes, a light coloured roof top, the provision of ceiling fans, together with humidity reduction with the help of a dehumidifier should create a comfortable environment for most days of the year."

Camilleri continues to note that "sustainability involves a frame of mind that thinks long-term rather than short-term. This strategic long termism should take account of the way indi-

vidual buildings may adapt to the changing needs of occupants - perhaps with the onset of illness or as an individual's age. Thus, it is noted that sustainable housing is not just an exercise in low energy design but brings together physical, social and cultural factors into a single agenda (Edwards and Hyett, 2001)."

CONCLUSIONS

Malta fits in within the Mediterranean housing context, characterised by high home-ownership rates which have increased steadily over the past 40 years. This has in turn led to above normal housing price growths and a supply that exceeds the needs of the population, fuelled by the demand for second homes by locals, together with foreigners attracted by our mild climate. Another characteristic is a high vacancy rate, which does not appear to interfere with the proper functioning of the market.

On the other hand, Malta varies from the Mediterranean setting in that its housing accommodation size is closer to that found in the northern countries. Another sector where divergence is again noted from its southern neighbours is in its larger amount of social housing provided.

The slowing down of the home ownership rate expected over the coming 50-year period may lead to a higher rental demand in future, alluring to a higher mobility factor, with more Maltese nationals taking up jobs abroad. The deregulation of the rental market, which should lead to a more efficient free open rental market, should translate into lower rentals; thus the rental option will further improve, as compared to the financial strain on taking out a mortgage. This should help towards preventing further households falling below the poverty line, so important for when the household's income goes below a certain proportion of the annual median wage.

The present excess housing supply on the market should address a required cooling period in house price growth. Expectations for addressing the affordable price differential from the trend value should occur within the coming three-year period. This cooling off period is not to be as drastic in prime property, with the wealth phenomenon fuelling the demand for luxury property.

*Lm1 (one Maltese Lira) is equivalent to €2.33. Malta joined the Eurozone in 2008, that is at the end of the report period.

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Approved permits	4,229	3,351	3,411	3,004	2,273	2,369	4,180	4,481	6,128	6,707	9,081

Table 3 - Development permits for dwellings. Source: MEPA

The Use of Finite Element (FE) Analysis in Reinforced Concrete Plated Structures

BY PERIT DAVID GRIMA

With the rising costs of building materials, both clients and structural engineers are well aware of the importance of minimising the costs of building structures. Within a building the one element that should be correctly analysed and designed is the floor slab as this is repeated at various levels and substantial savings can thus be made on the total cost of a building. Very often, due to time constraints and other factors, engineers analyse a system of irregular slabs as simply supported elements. By designing a 'connected' system of concrete slabs as simply supported structures, one is doing away with the utmost and fundamental advantage of these connected slabs: their continuity.

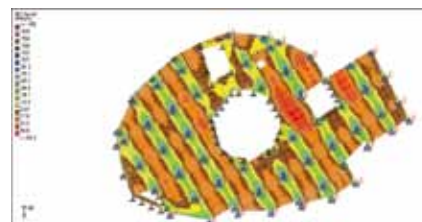
When analysing slabs as continuous plated structures, it is possible to make full use of their two way action and minimise the costs of the structural flat slab. Slabs are generally the most expensive part of a structure so through an efficient design, one can significantly reduce both the concrete section size and the amount of reinforcement within it. The design engineer must bear in mind that this type of interpretation of a slab is the correct way as a series of slabs arguably do not behave as simply supported one-way structures and it is extremely inefficient for them to be designed so. One of the best ways to design a reinforced or post tensioned concrete flat plate is through finite element analysis. Yield line analysis is also very efficient but considerably tedious and designers often feel

that finite element is both easier and less risky to use.

Finite element analysis is ideal for large floor slabs such as those within large commercial and office buildings and also when designing transfer slabs. It is also ideal when an engineer would like to design an irregular slab within a typical apartment building (for example) in a more economical and logical way. This latter example is particularly common in Maltese apartment buildings when the option of taking one metre strips (as is often done when analysing structures) would result in a gross overdesign as it does not account of the two way plated action in a slab. The FE analysis would also allow the designer to gain a deeper understanding of a particular structure as stresses and deflections can be monitored at various points within the model.

Various computer programmes exist such as STAAD Pro and SAFE that allow the engineer to use finite element methods in a flexible manner. It is important that the structural engineer is well experienced in the design of concrete structures as there are many pitfalls that can await the inexperienced when using FE Analysis.

Before checking and verifying the computer analysis results it is suggested that the engineer should roughly size up the structure. Basic checks, one of which could be to determine the expected depth, should be carried out and the Economic Frame Elements Manual (by Charles Goodchild) can also be



A typical finite element analysis output. The stresses are correctly displayed though are related to the input of the engineer. Correct support modelling and accurate meshes are fundamental.

used for this. The peak sagging moment of WL2/8 can also be calculated and should equate to the total moment between the maximum hogging and sagging moments. These checks are crucial in order to verify the results.

Unless an automatic mesh generator is available, it is important to correctly mesh the flat plate and the engineer must know the importance of the relationship between the mesh size and stress intensity. Large plates can result in a dangerous underestimation of peak bending moments whilst very small plates can result in a very long and unnecessary wastage of time both during modelling and computer processing. The accurate modelling of column joints is also imperative and one must ensure that the resulting bending moments at the supports and in mid span are realistic. It will also enable column moments to be derived so it is advisable that the stiffness of the column is correctly modelled.

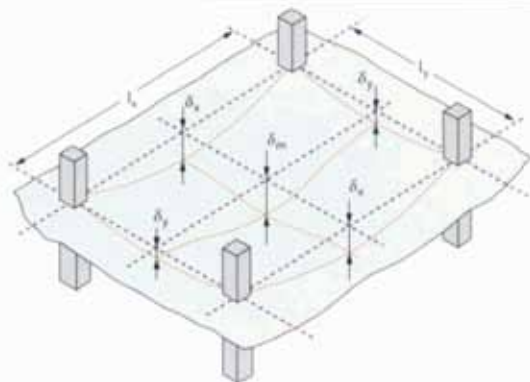
When deducing the moments and the rein-

forcement from a FE Contour plot one will notice very large peaks in bending moment at the supports. One should not provide reinforcement for these peaks as it is impractical and considerably inefficient. The moments will generally be distributed across a larger area and it is this area which should be designed for. Also, when deducing sagging moments, one must take the long term deflection into account which is due to creep and shrinkage. This should be correctly calculated and the sagging steel adjusted accordingly. The long term deflection can be as much as four times greater than the short term elastic deflection and hence are crucial when deducing the sectional depth of an element.

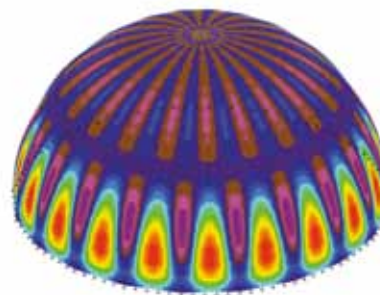
Finite element analysis is an extremely powerful tool for designing concrete plated structures. Plated structures allow greater efficiency which hence result in substantial savings. By taking advantage of their continuity and also the two way action of a system of slabs, very efficient systems will be deduced. Also, through this system it is also possible to correctly design both irregular and regular slabs. The engineer will also be able to place the required amount of reinforcement simply where required and not throughout the structure. Through experience, it is evident that minimal steel is often required in various areas within a floor plate so less accurate analysis methods can often be uneconomical for irregular grids. An accurate computer model would thus ensure that the client is cutting down on costs and benefitting from a greater return on his investment.

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2. *Fundamentals of Finite Element Analysis*: David V. Hutton: Mc Graw Hill Publishing: 2004.
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4. *Guide to flat slabs*: The Concrete Societ: April 2007



The use of finite element analysis shows that the bending moments consist of sharply peaked hogging moments at the supports. The magnitude of the hogging moments is often much larger than the sagging moment and the design should take them into account. This is applicable to all types of slab supports and includes line and point supports. (Figure is reproduced from Reference 4)



More complex shapes such as domes can easily be analysed using Finite element programmes and result in very economical and efficient designs.

EASA: a 'workshop' for architecture students?

BY ELAINE BONA VIA

Nineteen days after finishing my June design review, I packed my bags and caught a flight to Seville with six other architecture students. Three days later we arrived in the city of Cadiz, a port on the southwestern coast of Spain which, apparently - as we found out later - is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the Iberian Peninsula. This was not the typical sun, sea and sangria holiday though; we also went to Cadiz for EASA.

EASA is an acronym for 'European Architecture Students Assembly': a network of students throughout the continent who come together for two weeks every summer at a workshop where they exchange ideas, design and build things together, form relationships and explore each other's cultures. EASA constitutes a non-profit student-run organisation, which is also apolitical and non-institutionalised; its quintessential success and longevity is proof of the energy its participants commit to the idea. It is a chance for students to run their own workshop, lecture or perform and test their ideas in an international context. It is also a chance for students to take on huge responsibilities and learn how to address problems intelligently.

EASA brings together more than 400 students from more than 40 countries; every country sends a team of seven people, randomly selected by 'National Contacts' from the Faculties of Architecture. National Contacts would have already been on an EASA before, and they prepare the new participants for the event, taking care of fee transfers, giving general advice, passing on information from the organisers... and so on.

EASA started in 1981 when a group of students who formed part of the RIBA students'



'Environmental Response' Workshop – The Cube, by Elaine Bonavia and Lasma Grigone; EASA Manchester 2010

council organised what was known as the 'Liverpool Workshops' after a series of riots took place in Liverpool earlier that year. At that time, around 280 people gathered from Universities across Europe, one of which was a Maltese student of the University of Malta. An article in the Architect's Journal, July 1981 states that 'Groups looked at ways to alleviate unemployment; offered their services to local communities; made proposals for the re-use of old warehouses; designed a gate to the City and schemes for mending areas whose street patterns had been destroyed by redevelopment in the 1960s...'

One could say that EASA resembles a nomadic community: every year the assembly takes place in a different location that is decided upon two years in advance at an Intermediate National Contacts Meeting (INCM). The location is picked by the main organisers who propose an EASA: ambitious students who would have previously been participants. They decide how they want their EASA to be, what the general workshop theme is, which 'traditions' to keep and which new ones to introduce. A lot is learnt from the way things are run in previous EASAs, mostly through word of mouth and through a final report which the organizers prepare at the end of their experience. Over the years, EASA has been held in various bold and inspirational settings, such as a train travelling across Scandinavia, a renovated WWII destroyer moored in the centre of Budapest, and even on the Eastern side of

the Berlin Wall in 1988.

All in all, EASA is no less an educational experience than it is fun. Wherever EASA goes, local leading figures in the profession give the participants lectures throughout the two week assembly, exposing the students to a different perspective on design from what they may have experienced back home. Apart from that, this helps participants understand the city better in terms of both architecture and lifestyle. Participants also learn from each other: during workshop discussions different ideas and methods are brought to the table. Using power tools, learning how to construct things and how to work as a team are other things one can learn during EASA.

Workshop styles change each year: there are those which are solely discussion based or theoretical, there are construction workshops, there's Umbrella, the EASA newspaper workshop, EASA TV-production of a series of EASA episodes, photography... more recently there has been an EASA food workshop (Tapaland in Cadiz), EASA FM... Some workshops might be based on addressing problems in the city, or problems within the EASA community; others may seek to enhance the surroundings through installations; there are technical workshops dealing with energy consumption and contemporary issues and even concrete workshops have been done in the past. Workshops are run by students, graduates or young architects from any country in Europe who send



EASA Cadiz workshop. Photo by Marten Dashorst

their proposal to the organisers around six months in advance. All workshops will be linked to an underlying theme which is the cohesive factor in each EASA.

In the summer of 1998, after proposing their ideas on a train in 1997, a group of students organised EASA in Malta and called it 'Living on the Edge'. The theme focused around the notion of exchange of ideals, materials and goods which normally occurs on the periphery of towns, and in the case of harbour towns, at the water's edge - on that line which divides urban from maritime activity, local from foreign... Keeping up with contemporary legendary locations the students slept at Fort Manoel, which was still in ruins at the time, while workshops were held all over the island.

At the end of October, along with Sean Mayl, Nathalie Abela, and possibly David Buhagiar, Alexandra Manche and Eve Farrugia, I will travel to Azerbaijan in order to bid for EASA Malta 2013. Along with Justin Coppini, James Muscat, William Moran, Cheryl Ann Bonello and Lyanne Mifsud we have been working on the bid throughout the summer months, a task which involves finding a location for the workshop, coming up with a theme, and securing local support.

If we win the bid against Slovenia, we will bring this unique experience back to our shores, enabling us to share it with all the students from the Faculty of the Built Environment as well as anyone who lives within the realm of architecture and design.



Construction workshop 'Avanzada'; EASA Cadiz 2011. Photo by Gema Florido

Striving to preserve Maltese Modernist architecture

BY PERIT EDWARD SAID

This summer saw another milestone reached in the arduous struggle to salvage our nation's Modernist architecture. Richard England's Manikata Church, which is often regarded as an iconic example of this movement, is now officially equal in value to Malta's Baroque churches. Having said this however, much of its context has been completely destroyed by crass institutionalised vandalism through the permission of multi-floor residential development encroaching from one side and the construction of a hideous public garden on another. The planning application to modify the parvis is also a worrying threat to the church's original design. Its new protection will hopefully ensure the preservation of what is left of the surroundings and restrict any further development.

Similar action, however, needs to be taken on other examples of Maltese Modernist architecture of which we have only but a precious few. *Din l-Art Helwa* and the *Kamrat-Periti*, through their seminal publication *Modernist Malta* (2009), have identified a number of such buildings that warrant immediate protection.

It comes as no surprise to read the negatively-charged correspondence levelled against the listing of Manikata Church. One may argue that this reaction is not completely unjustified given the widespread association of modern architecture with



the cancerous urbanisation that devoured swathes of the ancient Maltese landscapes and urban fabrics in the past four decades. To those who have difficulty coming to terms with the word Modernism, in the local building scene it refers to the style first adopted by designers during the inter-war years struggling to free themselves from the Classical, Baroque language that

had governed the Maltese architecture for centuries.

This was typically done by stripping away practically all form of ornamentation and exploiting the ground-breaking benefits of new materials such as reinforced concrete, while maintaining a harmonious sense of proportion and massing as well as meticulously giving due consideration to context

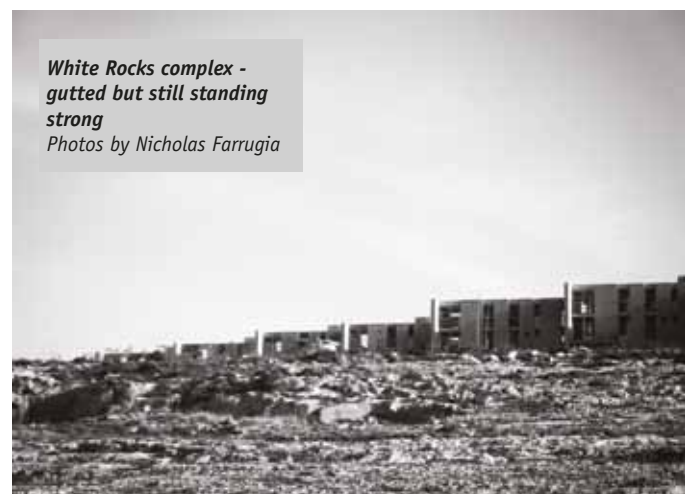
and functionality. This was successfully realised in projects by architects who travelled abroad and familiarised themselves with the International Style largely led by Le Corbusier.

Villino Ellul in Ta' Xbiex designed by architect Salvatore Ellul, which remarkably dates to the late 1920s (scheduled by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority some years ago), is a pioneering example. Architects such as Gustavo Vincenti, Silvio Mercieca and Alberto Laferla were some of the more prominent exponents in this movement, shifting from the somewhat affluent Art Deco to pragmatic Modernism.

The socio-economic circumstances that the post-war Maltese architectural scene found itself in led to an increasing popularity of this style particularly in the construction of schools and touristic facilities. It was sometimes successfully employed in the design of a number of large-scale social housing projects such as Santa Luċija.

Architects such as Joseph Spiteri, Renato Laferla, Carmelo Falzon and Richard England contributed significantly at this time. Simultaneously the works by a number of foreign designers such as Hans Munk Hansen's "Danish Village" are equally important. The Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq Officers' Married Quarters (parts of the ex-White Rocks complex) designed by the consortium Austin-Smith, Salmon and Lord Partnership, was one of the last British construction projects in Malta. Its design was so highly regarded that it featured twice in the prestigious *Architectural Review* soon after completion.

Maltese Modernist architecture ought not to be confused with the "modern" non-descript, greed-driven, pseudo-vernacular constructions that regrettably plague our islands today. Buildings which truly deserve to be called Modernist are a select number of well-designed structures (and their associated urban spaces) which deserve the same recognition and protection as any baroque palace. Their mutilation or destruction would be a negation of one of the most important periods in Maltese architectural history.



White Rocks complex - gutted but still standing strong

Photos by Nicholas Farrugia



www.sustainablecities.dk

Sustainable Cities™: Best practice database



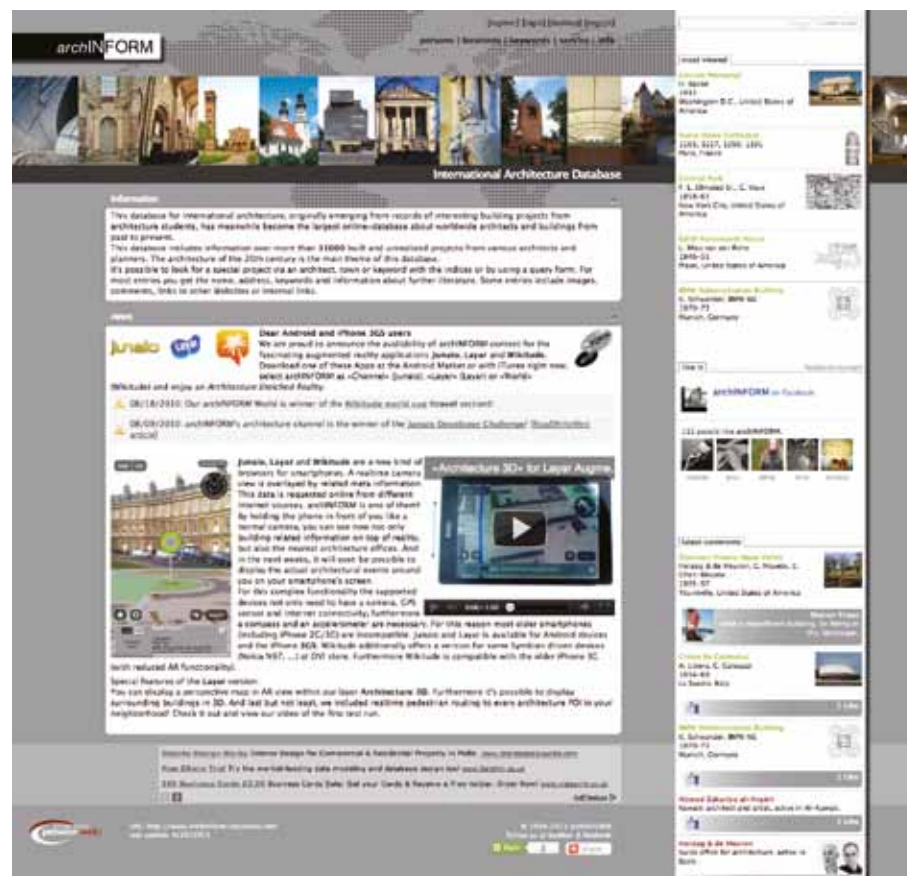
Sustainable Cities™ is a database providing knowledge and inspiration on the sustainable planning of cities and best practise cases from various cities. The database was launched at the 11th International Architecture Biennale in Venice in September 2008.

The aim of Sustainable Cities™ is to inspire politicians, architects, city planners, businesses, NGO's and citizens all over the world to learn from each other and to collaborate with each other to transform the world's less sustainable cities into the more sustainable cities of future.

Sustainable Cities™ collects and disseminates knowledge on cases and initiatives from cities all over the world. You will find inspiration in twelve categories; Energy, transport, water, food, waste, green, social, buildings, masterplans, education, economy and health. Read the cases, dive into learning points, study the facts, learn from the experts and watch images and films. New cases and blogs are continuously posted on the site.

The development of the Sustainable Cities™ database was sponsored by Realdania. Today the operation of the database is financed by Danish Architecture Centre (DAC).

www.archinform.net



This database for international architecture, originally emerging from records of interesting building projects from architecture students, has meanwhile become one of the largest online-databases about worldwide architects and buildings. The database includes information on over more than 31,000 built and unrealised projects by various architects and planners.

The architecture of the 20th century is the

main theme of this database. One can search for a specific project by architect, town or keyword through the indices available or by using a query form.

Once the desired project is located, the site provides basic information such as project name and location, as well as information about further literature. Some entries include images, comments, links to other websites or internal links.

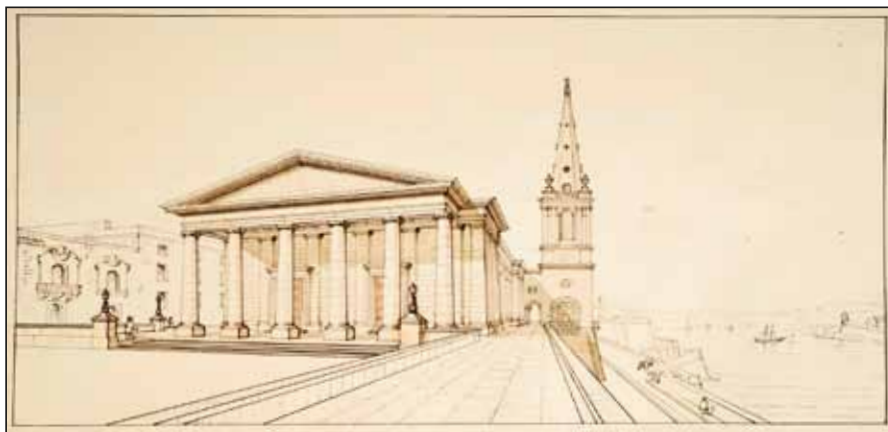


Image courtesy of Mr Joe Borg, MidSea Books. Source: Wignacourt College Museum, Rabat

Can you identify this building in Valletta and who was the architect who supervised its construction?

The winner of this competition will be entitled to a copy of the book "Modernist Malta: The Architectural Legacy." 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. The first correct entry drawn on the 30 November 2011 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 56 is Mr Emanuel Muscat. Congratulations! The image published shows the site of the Hotel Excelsior prior to its construction.

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NOW TO 6 NOVEMBER 2011; THE ARCHITECTURE CENTRE, BRISTOL, WALES, UK

ALTERED LANDSCAPES: DESIGN RESEARCH UNIT WALES



Design Research Unit Wales (DRUw) is a young, research-led practice combining award-winning design, teaching, and research,

based in the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff. DRUw has attracted a number of commissions in which research-based design is married to notions of sustainability, tectonics, material innovation, environmental and functional performance, and economy. This exhibition presents recent projects from inception to completion, including Margam Discovery Centre, located in a registered historic landscape outside Port Talbot; and an Environmental Resource Classroom, located in a post-industrial landscape in Ebbw Vale. The projects will be illustrated by sketches, photographs, drawings and models demonstrating how research and sustainability are embedded in the way the practice works. www.architecturecentre.co.uk

NOW TO 27 NOVEMBER 2011; BENAKI MUSEUM, ATHENS, GREECE

THE BANK OF GREECE: THE BUILDINGS

The Bank of Greece was established in 1928, in accordance with the Geneva Protocol of September 15th, 1927, and constitutes the sole Bank authorised to issue banknotes in the country. Almost immediately after it was established, provision was made to house the bank's headquarters in Athens, as well as those branch offices deemed necessary in the Greek provinces, that would allow the bank to pursue its policies. In order to build the central branch in Athens and the two minor branches in Piraeus and Thessaloniki (where the Bank is housed in the same buildings as the National Bank of Greece), architectural competitions were held, in which the major architects of the Interwar Years participated. The remaining branches were built over the next fifty years by the Bank of Greece Technical Service. The exhibition presents the entries into the three major competitions for the headquarters and the Thessaloniki and Piraeus branches, as well as drawings and photographs (of that time as well

as more recent) for the rest of the Bank branch offices throughout the country. Also on display will be drawings of details, interior decoration, furniture etc., designed alongside the branch buildings, as well as furniture of the era from the central offices on Panepistimiou Street in Athens. www.benaki.gr

NOW TO 31 DECEMBER 2011; CARNEGIE UNIVERSITY OF ART, PITTSBURGH, USA

PALLADIO AND HIS LEGACY: A TRANSATLANTIC JOURNEY

Explore the life and work of one of the most influential architects in history in an exhibition that reveals the indelible mark his legacy has left on American architecture. Andrea Palladio, 1508–80, drew inspiration from classical architecture, crafting a new style that met the functional and aesthetic demands of his age. His buildings were realised in a small area of northern Italy, yet his enduring influence on the western world can be attributed to the impact of his book *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*. The exhibition is centred on 31 original Palladio drawings and a number of books from the RIBA's unrivalled collections, alongside bas-reliefs and architectural models. It traces Palladio's architectural development alongside the enormous impact his work had on the architecture of the United States, resulting in new and original interpretations from grand formal buildings to smaller utilitarian structures. www.architecture.com

NOW TO 19 FEBRUARY 2012; BARBICAN ART GALLERY, LONDON, UK

OMA/PROGRESS

This autumn Barbican Art Gallery is transformed by an exhibition on OMA, one of the most influential architecture practices working today. Known for their daring and unconventional ideas and strangely beautiful buildings as much as their contagious obsession with the rapid pulse of living today, the work of OMA and its think tank AMO anticipates the architectural, engineering and cultural ideas transforming our material world. Founded in 1975 by Rem Koolhaas as the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, OMA now comprises a partnership of seven and a staff of around 280 architects, designers and researchers of more than 35 nationalities working in close collaboration from offices in Rotterdam, New York, Beijing and Hong Kong. OMA/Progress is the first major presentation of OMA's work in the UK and coincides with the opening of their first buildings there, Rothschild Bank HQ in the City of London and a Maggie's Centre in Gartnavel, Glasgow. www.barbican.org.uk

NOW TO 12 MAY 2013, DANISH DESIGN CENTRE, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

DENMARK BY DESIGN

The exhibition 'Denmark by Design' shows the development in Danish design from 1945–2010. Decade by decade you will be able to follow Danish design's



focus on the individual, the home, the workplace, the public space and resolutions to societal issues. The exhibition explores the trends that has been over time and how these trends have influenced the designers' solutions and modes of expression. The exhibition also explores the new generation of designers and companies that will design the decades to come - and maintain Denmark's position as a leading design nation. www.ddc.dk

2 – 4 NOVEMBER 2011; CCIB, BARCELONA, SPAIN

WORLD ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL

World Architecture Festival is the world's largest, live, truly inclusive and interactive global architectural awards programme. It is a unique meeting point for architects, suppliers and clients, attracting hundreds of entries and visitors from all over the world. www.worldarchitecturefestival.com

16 NOVEMBER 2011 – 04 MARCH 2012; DESIGN MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

TERENCE CONRAN – THE WAY WE LIVE NOW



The Design Museum marks Sir Terence Conran's 80th birthday with a major exhibition that explores his unique impact on contemporary life in Britain. Through his own design work, and also through his entrepreneurial

flair, Conran has transformed the British way of life. As well as this, his design studio and architectural practice have a world wide reach. The Way We Live Now explores Conran's impact and legacy, whilst also showing his design approach and inspirations. The exhibition traces his career from post-war austerity through to the new sensibility of the Festival of Britain in the 1950s, the birth of the Independent Group and the Pop Culture of the 1960s, to the design boom of the 1980s and on to the present day. www.designmuseum.org

NOW TO 15 JANUARY 2012; CENTRE FOR FINE ARTS, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA

Almost 20 years after Oscar Niemeyer, the creator of Brasilia, Paulo Mendes da Rocha (born in 1928) became the second Brazilian architect to be awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize (2006), the profession's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. He is the star of europalia.brasil, which is devoting a monographic exhibition to him this autumn. In the early days of his career his Gymnasium for the Paulista Athletic Club (1958) won a Grand Prix at the São Paulo Biennale (1961). He continued to build in São Paulo and teach at the university there, in line with the principles of the Paulista school founded by João Batista Vilanova Artigas. Persecuted by the military regime in 1969, he nonetheless designed the Brazilian pavilion at the Osaka World Exhibition (1970). In the 1980s and 1990s he went on to achievements such as Saint Peter's Chapel (1987), the Brazilian Sculpture Museum (1986), and Patriarch Square in São Paulo (2002). Often described as a brutalist architect because of his radical use of crude materials, architecture's social impact and its relationship to the environment are key considerations in his approach. www.bozar.be