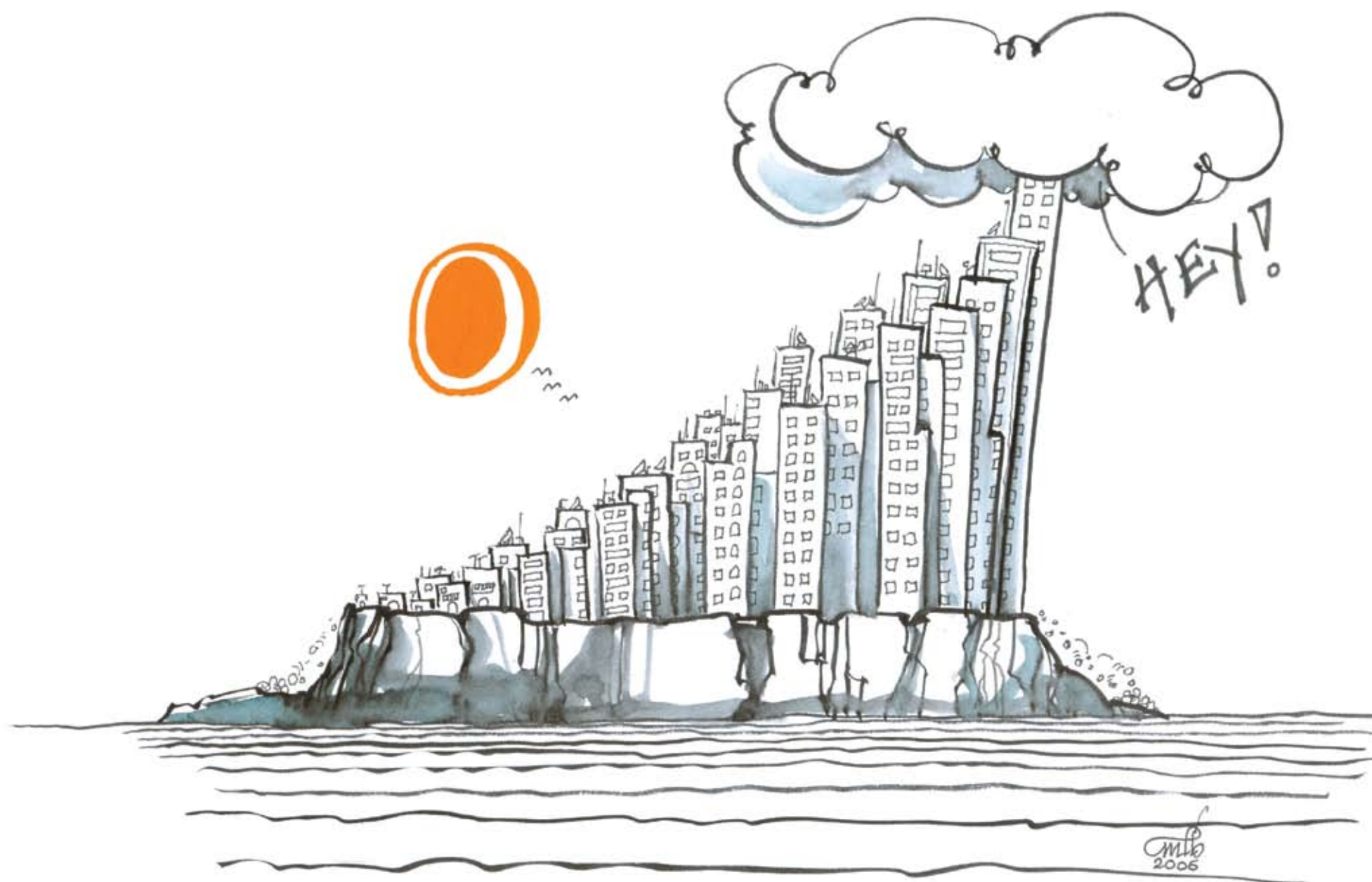


the Architect

The official journal of the Kamra tal-Periti



Issue no. 44 | April 2008

KAMRA TAL - PERITI

NEWSPAPER POST

IN EVERY ISSUE



- 4 Editorial
- 5 KTP News
- 6 People & Projects
- 9 Events
- 10 EU Desk
- 11 SACES



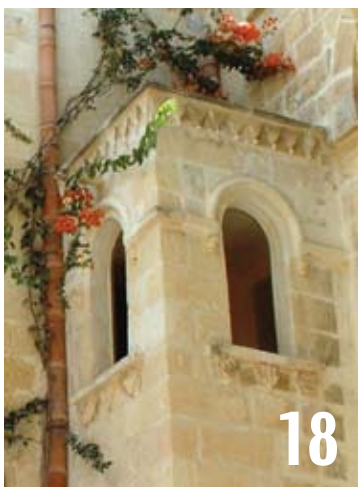
- 12 Manoel Island & Tigne
- 14 Villa Francia
- 17 Joinwell building
- 18 Palazzo Falson



- 20 AGM - EGM
- 22 Nalizpelra
- 24 Heritage
- 25 Reviews
- 26 International Events



9



18



12



14

"Do Board members have to be non-periti to ensure that they are beyond reproach?"

David Felice
See page 7

BACK TO BUSINESS... BUT IS IT BUSINESS AS USUAL?

MEPA, its reform, its Boards, its Auditor, leaked reports, police investigations, en bloc resignations, detained DCC Board members, a disco in Mistra, a supermarket in Safi... all of these made the headlines at one point or another during the recent run up to the General Elections, and during the days following the 8th of March. Now that the country has come out of the temporary phase that accompanies an Election, where a number of things are put on hold in anticipation of the electoral result, it is hopefully back to business as usual, if with the hope of some much required change.

The Prime Minister, as promised during the electoral campaign, has taken the Malta Environment and Planning Authority under his wing. The Kamra tal-Periti welcomed this move and expressed its support for the commitment being shown towards the environment, sustainable development and the reform of the MEPA. While pledging its support of this initiative, it called upon the PM to commit to striving for better quality in architecture and urban design, and to higher standards in the construction of buildings and urban spaces for the benefit of society. It also called upon the PM to endorse the Kamra's policy document on the state of the built and natural environment, The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment.

"Our aim is to pass on to our children a better country than we inherited. It is for this very reason that we compare our environment to a treasure, something we place our energies in, to protect, care for and improve. This environment encompasses all – nature, cultural and architectural heritage, towns and villages, the countryside, the seas and air. We believe that together we should carefully plan so that our heritage, this gem which we treasure, will not fade away." This is MEPA's mission statement, certainly a laudable and inspirational one. And it is with this statement in mind that any reform of the Authority should be undertaken, having as its main aim the betterment of the quality of our built and unbuilt environment.

This is no easy task, and requires a clear vision. The Kamra tal-Periti has pledged its support of Government's intention to bring about real and important changes within the planning process and in the coming days a delegation of the Council will be meeting with the Prime Minister in order to put forward its contribution with respect to the reform of the MEPA that the PM seems intent on following through. Much has been said in

the local press on what are perceived to be the ailments of the MEPA. Initial changes are already taking place, first with the halting of the processing of planning applications, and now with the announcement that DCC Board hearings will be held in the mornings, rather than the afternoon. The validity, and indeed the need, of these changes can be debated at length. Through its position paper, the Kamra hopes to be the voice of reason in this free for all opinion market that seems to have developed about the workings of MEPA.

The Kamra tal-Periti itself is also currently undergoing a period of "reform", through a process launched last December. The Council had presented to its members a number of proposals for the amendment and betterment of the legislative framework within which it and the profession operate, inviting its members to participate in a consultation process on these proposals. These included proposals for amendments to the Periti Act, to Tariff K and to the Regulations of the Kamra and the Code of Professional Conduct, a position paper on the introduction of mandatory Professional Indemnity Insurance and the introduction of Standard Forms of Agreement between Periti and their clients. These documents and proposals will be voted on during an Extraordinary General Meeting that will be held on the eve of the publication of this journal. It is hoped that the outcome of such EGM will allow the Chamber to embark on the process of introducing a Quality Charter for the profession, one that would have as its ultimate aim the improvement of the built environment through improved quality in the service offered by the members of the profession.

Achieving a better quality of our built and unbuilt environment is high on the Kamra's agenda, and is an ideal it is striving towards, despite its limited resources. This issue of "the Architect" focuses on one aspect that contributes towards the betterment of the environment within which we carry out our daily lives, namely the restoration and conservation of our built heritage. The emphasis here is also on the fact that our built heritage does not consist solely in buildings that are older than a certain age, but also more modern and recently constructed buildings and urban spaces that are also perceived to be worthy of conservation.

Simone Vella Lenicker
Editor


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KAMRA TAL-PERITI

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

The Council of the Kamra Tal-Periti for the year 2007 consists of David Felice (President), Vincent Cassar (Vice President), Simone Vella Lenicker (Honorary Secretary) and Council members Keith Cole, Philip Grech, Frank Giordmaina Medici, Anthony Fenech Vella, Etienne Micallef Grimaud, Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Danica Mifsud, and Damian Vella Lenicker.

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COVER: **MAURICE TANTI BURLO**
See page 22



President David Felice presents a painting by Laurent Muller to David Pace in appreciation of his years of work within the Kamra

KTP ANNUAL DRINKS

The Annual Drinks 2008 of the Kamra tal-Periti was held on the 11 January at the Chamber of Commerce in Valletta. A crowd of over 100 guests attended, including Minister Censu Galea, Dr Harry Vassallo (AD), Mr Anglu Xuereb (AN) and MEP Dr Simon Busuttill. During the event, President David Felice thanked all those who have assisted the Kamra during the last years and those who have already pledged their support for 2008. On behalf of the Council and of the Kamra's members, he also thanked Perit David Pace for over three decades of work for the Kamra tal-Periti. Perit Felice presented Perit Pace with a token of appreciation for his sterling work within the Kamra's ranks.

NEW COUNCIL 2008

Following the ratification of posts at the Annual General Meeting of the 07 April 2008, and the co-option of two members, the Council for 2008 is composed as follows: David Felice: President, Chair Board of Professional Conduct; Vincent Cassar: Vice President, Co-ordinator Architecture Centre Work Group; Simone Vella Lenicker, Honorary Secretary; Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Philip Grech: Co-Chairs Built Environment Standing Committee; Anthony Fenech Vella: Chair International Standing Committee; Damian Vella Lenicker: Chair Professional Practice Standing Committee; Danica Mifsud, Etienne Micallef Grimaud: Co-Chairs Communications and Events Standing Committees; Keith Cole: Chair Education Standing Committee and Frank Giordmaina Medici: Chair Finance Standing Committee

KTP CONSULTATION PROCESS

Towards the end of 2007, the Kamra tal-Periti forwarded to its members a number of documents that are being proposed for adoption by the Kamra. This followed a motion tabled and approved at the Annual General Meeting held on the 07 April 2008. The documents included a position paper on the Periti Act (Chapter 390 of the Laws of Malta), proposed amendments to Subsidiary Legislation 390.01 which included the Regulations and Statute of the Chamber as well as the proposed Code of Professional Conduct, proposed Standard forms of Conduct and information on the Chamber's negotiations with Elmo Insurance Ltd who have been appointed as the Kamra's preferred partner. The Council of the Kamra tal-Periti invited its members to send in their

comments in writing. Comments received were assessed by Council, following which the proposed documents were amended accordingly.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

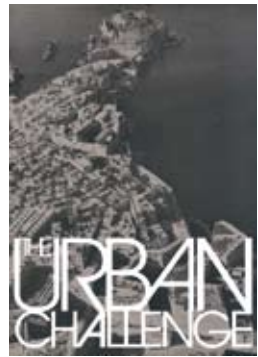
At its last Annual General Meeting, the Kamra approved a motion which required the Council to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting for finalisation of its consultation process. This EGM will be held on Tuesday 1 April 2008, at Palazzo Capua in Sliema. Participants are reminded that only fully paid up members of the Kamra are eligible to vote and make representations during the General Meeting. Periti are therefore reminded to ensure that membership status is up to date by contacting the KTP office for the necessary details. This EGM is imperative in assuring that the Kamra's vision in this respect is taken forward to the implementation stage.

DAVID FELICE INTERVIEWED ON "REPORTER"

In a second motion, also approved at the AGM, the members of the Kamra expressed their support of its Position Paper entitled, The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment. In relation to this, KTP President, David Felice was interviewed by Saviour Balzan, on a short programme, The Reporter. This interview may be viewed on YouTube or through the KTP website www.ktpmalta.com.

FACING THE URBAN CHALLENGE

Just before the General Elections, the Kamra tal-Periti issued a press release wherein it called on all stakeholders to collectively re-commit themselves to better quality in architecture and urban design and to higher standards in the construction of buildings and urban spaces for the benefit of the community. This statement followed the launch in November 2007 of The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment. Following the announcement of the electoral results, the



Council issued a second press release, congratulating Dr Lawrence Gonzi and the Nationalist Party on their electoral success; above all the Kamra expressed its support for the commitment shown towards the environment, sustainable development and the reform of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority and their inclusion within the Prime Minister's portfolio. The KTP Council has also written to the Prime Minister, asking for a meeting during which it may present its vision for a range of issues which it is tackling and which, in a holistic manner, address the different aspects of the conclusions of The Urban Challenge. These include the proposed reform at MEPA. The Kamra will be submitting its position on the measures required for such a reform in the coming days.

A copy of The Urban Challenge may be downloaded from www.ktpmalta.com. A printed copy of the document is also available through the KTP office.

UMAR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN MALTA

The Union of Mediterranean Architects' (UMAR) Annual General Meeting will be held in Malta between the 4th and 6th of April. It is being organised by the Kamra tal-Periti at very short notice following the cancellation of Beirut as a venue last January due to the country's unfortunate situation. The theme for this 14th AGM will be Sustainable development in the MED. Participants will include UMAR delegates, invited NGOs, ambassadors/consuls to UMAR member countries and a number of other guests by invitation. The meeting will be addressed by David Felice, President of host association, David Pace, UMAR Secretary General, Patrice Genet, President of the UMAR Executive Board and possibly Dr. Lino Briguglio as Chairman for the NCSD, the French ambassador on the French Med policy and the newly elected Prime Minister, Dr. Lawrence Gonzi.

KTP MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The membership fee for the current year became due on the 1st January 2008. The scale of fees is as follows: Student - €11.65; Graduate (up to 5 years after warrant) - €34.94; Full Member - €58.23; Honorary Member - €11.65; Retired Member - €11.65. Cheques are to be made payable to the Kamra tal-Periti.

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



NEW WARRANTS

On the 15 February 2008, Minister Ninu Zammit presented 36 warrants to practice as Periti to Angelique Abela, Clyde Abela, Roberta Azzopardi, Alexander Bigeni, Kylie Ann Borg Marks, Christian Buhagiar, Matthew Cachia Caruana, Gaston Camilleri, Mariella Camilleri, Greta Caruana Smith, John Cassola, Sandro Cini, Benny Cortis, Stanley Cortis, Ian Critien, Christian Cuschieri, Rebecca Dalli Gonzi, Manuel Darmanin, Matthew Degiorgio, George Farrugia, Karl Paul Farrugia, Janice Fenech, Oriana Micallef, Shawn Spencer Micallef, Anne-Marie Mifsud, Marianna Muscat, Daniel Portelli, Dirk Psaila, Justin Spiteri, Daniela Valentino, Andrea Vassallo Cesareo, Bernard Vella, Kurt Vella, Malcolm Xuereb, Analisa Zammit and Ronald Zammit. During the presentation ceremony the Minister reminded the new warrant holders of the challenges and responsibilities that the warrant brings with it, and the perit's obligations towards society in general.

WORLD'S LARGEST AND TALLEST SPANNING ARCH BRIDGE

FXFOWLE International's proposal for the architectural design of a the world's longest (1.7km) and tallest (205m) bridge in Dubai was selected by the country's Roads & Transport Authority in a major international design competition. The firm's winning bridge design further advances the infrastructure and transportation initiatives in Dubai. Sudhir Jambhekar, Senior Partner,



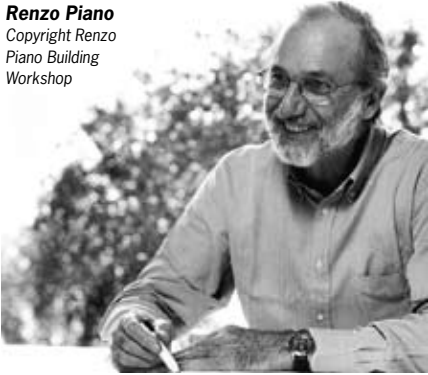
FXFOWLE INTERNATIONAL stated, "The bridge's design was inspired by multiple sources, each evoking similar imagery – the rhythmic grace of Dubai Creek's current, the elegant splendor of the sand dunes adjacent to the City, the lighting patterns of the lunar cycle and the design of the future Opera House. We believe that our bridge design is not merely to link the City's cultural and commercial developments or ease congestion, but an opportunity to connect people both physically and emotionally by creating an iconic landmark, destination, and gateway between the old, the new and the future Dubai."

ELECTION FEVER

Malta's general elections held on the 8 March were contested by no fewer than 17 periti. These were Periti Charles Buhagiar, Carmel Cacopardo, Martin Debono, Joseph Falzon, Censu Galea, Edric Micallef, Duncan Mifsud, Philip Mifsud, Jesmond Mugliett, Robert Musumeci, George Pullicino, John Rizzo Naudi, Simon Saliba, Giorgio Schembri, David Vassallo, Karmenu Vella, and Ninu Zammit. Prior to the election, the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti wrote to the leaders of the four political parties and to the periti candidates, stating that politicians have an important role to play as leaders of the community, as representatives of the party which they serve and also as members of the various professions to which they belong. It urged the parties to remind those periti contesting on their behalf of their obligations in terms of the Code of Professional Conduct. The number of Periti who made it to a parliamentary seat was much less than in previous years, with only Charles Buhagiar, Jesmond Mugliett, George Pullicino, Karmenu Vella and Ninu Zammit being elected. Furthermore, during the previous legislature, four out of the twelve Ministers were in fact periti. This time round, however, only George Pullicino has retained his ministerial role and has been appointed as Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs. On behalf of the Council and members of the Kamra tal-Periti, the Editorial Board thanks these members of the profession for their contribution in the political arena and wishes them all the best for their roles in this respect.

GOLD MEDAL TO RENZO PIANO

The American Institute of Architects pre-



sented its Gold Medal to Renzo Piano last February. In receiving the AIA's highest honour for an individual, Piano joins such influential masters as Walter Gropius (Gold Medal 1959), Alvar Aalto (1963), Norman Foster (1994), and Tadao Ando (2002), among many others. Renzo Piano first captured the attention of the architecture world as co-designer of the Centre Pompidou in Paris with Richard Rogers, an epochal building that dramatically established the still-reigning high-tech modern style of architecture. Piano's subsequent projects have steadily reinforced his reputation as a profound designer, sensitive practitioner, and master craftsman of building. His body of significant great works places him solidly among the handful of true form-givers of his generation. In their nomination of Piano, Thomas Howarth, FAIA, and Kira Gould, AIA, described his work as "sculptural, beautiful, technically accomplished, sustainable... He integrates the diverse disciplines that combine in contemporary building into cohesive, humane environments."

OPPORTUNITIES IN SAUDI ARABIA

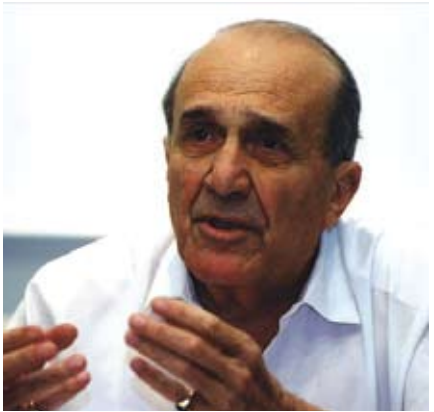
The Kamra tal-Periti has been contacted by the Embassy of Malta in Saudi Arabia regarding Business Opportunities for Periti in Saudi Arabia. The Embassy has been contacted by a Saudi entrepreneur who is interested in identifying Maltese architectural and civil engineering firms interested in working on projects in Saudi Arabia. Such firms will not necessarily be required to work in Saudi Arabia but can work from Malta. The entrepreneur is involved in the implementation of contracts awarded by the Saudi Royal family, and has expressed interest in establishing links with Maltese architectural and civil engineering firms who may wish to work on such projects. For further information, kindly contact the Kamra.

LIVING STEEL COMPETITION

Living Steel has launched its 3rd International Architecture Competition for Sustainable Housing, details on which can be found on www.livingsteel.org/extremehousing. Judged by some of the leading architects around the world, the total of prizes and honoraria is €100,000, with the winning design being awarded €50,000. The Competition presents architects with the task of creating energy efficient, single-family, detached housing that minimises climate change emissions and can withstand temperature extremes, yet is affordable to build and to buy. The winning architects will have the opportunity to utilize the exceptional qualities of steel to construct their design in Cherepovets, Russian Federation, known for its extreme temperature ranges. Expressions of interest may be submitted until the 28 April 2008.

PERIT CARM LINO SPITERI

Last February, Perit Carm Lino Spiteri, also known as Cumpa, passed away at the age of 75. Perit Spiteri was mostly renowned for his involvement in the political scene, which began in 1970 after both Nationalist and Labour leaders, George Borg Olivier and Dom Mintoff, approached him to contest the election on behalf of their respective parties.



He was first elected to Parliament in 1971 after a by-election and in subsequent years served as parliamentary whip and minister. He finally withdrew from politics after the 1996 election in which he was not elected,



but remained interested in political debate. Mr Spiteri was involved in numerous construction projects, including the new airport terminal at Gudja. In an interview with a local newspaper, when asked about the origins of his nickname, Perit Spiteri had explained that "A physics teacher had asked me a question and my answer was miles away from the expected reply. The teacher came up to me and shouted down my ear cumpaqpum, to make me realise that I had simply shot out an irrelevant answer. Ever since, my nickname has been Cumpa and I am proud of it" On behalf of the Council and members of the Kamra tal-Periti, we extend our condolences to Perit Spiteri's family and friends.

NEW DEAN AT THE FACULTY

Prof Alex Torpiano has been appointed as the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering at the University of Malta. He succeeds Perit Joseph Falzon in this important role. In view of the recent approval of the University Course as per the Qualifications Directive, the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti intends to take up discussions with Prof Torpiano on the current course structure. Such discussion were already underway in recent months but were held up for various reasons. On behalf of the Council and the members of the Kamra, the Editorial Board congratulates Prof Torpiano on his appointment and augurs for a healthy

collaboration between the Kamra and the Faculty.

WORLD HABITAT AWARDS

The World Habitat Awards were established in 1985 by the Building and Social Housing Foundation as part of its contribution to the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Two awards are given annually to projects from the global North as well as the South that provide practical and innovative solutions to current housing needs and problems. An award of £10,000 is presented to each of the two winners at the annual United Nations global celebration of World Habitat Day.

Over the years a wide range of excellent housing projects have been identified, which address a wide range of housing needs and come in all shapes and sizes. From the very beginning the emphasis has been not just on identifying the good examples of housing practice, but also on sharing this knowledge and experience with others who can use it in their own situations. The first international study visit to a World Habitat Award winning programme took place in 1987 and these annual visits have continued ever since. Further information on the Awards and details on participation can be viewed on www.worldhabitatawards.org. The deadline for participation is the 1 June 2008.

Getting it right

by Perit David Felice

The topic of MEPA and its reform have been discussed in the local media with some intensity over the past months. Perit David Felice, President of the Kamra tal-Periti, presented an article for publication in The Times, in response to a number of articles that appeared in the same paper. Unfortunately, only a shortened version of the original article was published. This is however being reproduced here in its entirety.

It is also pertinent to note here that the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti has, in an official letter to the Prime Minister, pledged its support in assisting the PM in his stated intention to embark on a reform of MEPA, and will be presenting a paper in this regard in the coming days.

The exchange of opinions in The Times of 5th, 8th and 21st February 2008 between Martin Scicluna and George Pullicino are of great interest to the Kamra tal-Periti and its members, also because they inevitably expose the wide vacuum that exists between public perception and the realities of our planning process. Even the headlines to these articles, "Conflicts of Interest in MEPA", "A Question of Integrity", and again, "Systemic Conflicts of Interest in MEPA", contribute to this. In his last contribution, Martin Scicluna contended that, "...we must find ways of reducing systemic conflicts of interest by ensuring that technical expertise informs the decisions reached by MEPA without undermining the objectivity, transparency and ethical base on which decisions of such importance are made. A process of independent scrutiny and selection of individuals to serve on MEPA's boards and commissions must therefore be introduced which ensures that those making decisions are beyond reproach, reflect more fully the different components of civil society and do not run the risk of being influenced, directly or indirectly, by their vested interests." I would support any measure that improves the quality of decisions taken by these boards. But are we sure that 'systemic' conflicts of interest exist? And is this the real source of the problem? Martin Scicluna then proceeds to suggest a selection process similar to that in Ireland, or at least the same kind of approach, where an independent committee is appointed,

chaired by the President of the High Court, to select the chairman and other board members, chosen from civil society and one civil servant. Earlier, Martin Scicluna had also referred to the incestuous composition of the Boards – again he is presumably referring loosely to both the Development Control Commissions (DCC) and the main MEPA Board. I would disagree that these be considered in the same manner. These Boards decide on different types of projects and their composition is totally different. Moreover, though he refers to all members of the different boards, his main thrust is towards the periti members on the DCC. Is he not aware that only four of the fifteen MEPA Board members are periti, one of whom is nominated by a political party, being also an MP? And that each DCC Board is composed of seven members only three of whom are periti? Are the rest of the board members so spineless that they are led to take decisions that favour the private and vested interests of these periti? This is what I understand with the allegation that conflict of interest at MEPA, due specifically to the involvement of periti on these boards, is 'systemic'. Indeed, if the only proposal arising from Scicluna's contribution is that we need the equivalent of the High Court of Ireland, presumably the office of our Chief Justice, rather than our Minister for the Environment, to nominate Board members, then, what can we say, this promises to be another missed opportunity to deal with those real issues

that are of primary importance. If the focus is to be on increasing credibility in the system and the removal of all suspicions, do we really think that the removal of periti from these Boards is the solution? Indeed is this the major step that needs to be taken to restore the image of the planning process in the eyes of the public? Do Board members have to be non-periti to ensure that they are beyond reproach? Should other sectors of society also be excluded from appointment to the boards for us to have a visibly fair process? Lawyers, whose clients also include developers; politicians, whose constituents have great pull on their decisions; retailers, and traders, building contractors and hardware merchants, all of whom have an interest in the industry, the real estate sector, anyone involved in the energy and utility sectors? George Pullicino provides some interesting statistics in this regard; 3% of all applications submitted to MEPA are submitted by periti (on behalf of their clients) who are DCC board members. It would be interesting to ask how many periti actually lobby to be Board members or, better still, how many periti who he has approached to become Board members have actually turned down the appointment. Because in this small country of ours, it is so easy to spread the perception that it pays an applicant to engage a perit who is a member of the Board to submit an application, because he or she has insider information and access. Is this true? We think not. ►

◀ In his first article, Martin Scicluna also referred to how a distinguished senior member of Malta's judiciary - commenting in a personal capacity - has spoken of a web of intrigue, involving a confraternity of inter-connected periti, each looking after their mutual interests. With the same reasoning applied earlier, does not this claim itself represent a conflict of interest? After all, this member of the judiciary is referring to a private case to which he is one of the parties. It would be pertinent to note what the Kamra tal-Periti had publicly stated with regards to this case:

"...the Kamra has always maintained that the presence of periti on these boards is essential to ensure technical competence, just as much as the presence of other persons, skilled and experienced in other areas, is required. More balance in the composition of the Development Control Commission was achieved when the number of periti on the various boards was reduced to the current levels, but it is inevitable that the Minister's choice often falls on periti in private practice.

The Kamra strongly feels that such appointees are persons of integrity and are professionals whose diligence the Council of the Kamra has had no reason to doubt... sweeping statements such as those reported to have been made are harmful to the profession unless they are justified and substantiated.

... The Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and the Kamra tal-Periti have agreed to collaborate on the setting up of a Code of Conduct for Development Control Commission Board members. This will also assist in the introduction of clear procedures to address cases of conflict of interest of the type raised for discussion..."

Readers should also be aware that all periti including those who are not members of the Kamra, are already subject to its code of professional conduct that could lead to the suspension or withdrawal of their warrant to practice. This Code forms part of subsidiary legislation and refers specifically to cases similar to the ones referred to by Martin Scicluna. The current Code states that, "No member shall use his position on any board granting building licences in order to obtain for himself a permit to carry out works". The Kamra is currently undertaking an exercise in revising its legal framework also to have better mechanisms to react more efficiently and to apply the proper penalties. The current draft before the Kamra's members for approval includes a new paragraph which states that a perit shall;"... refrain from using his position, when holding an appointment

with a public entity or a political appointment or office, in order to unfairly favour the interests of his practice or that of a particular colleague or otherwise seek to derive any form of unfair advantage by virtue of his public appointment."

Does the system work? Well, George Pullicino referred to the case of a perit who was a Board member and who advertised his services by means of a mailshot, and whose term of office was terminated. This case was originally investigated by the Kamra's Board of Professional Conduct. Other cases, even those indicated by Martin Scicluna, are also currently under the same Board's consideration.

Reference was also made to the previous Deputy Chairman of the MEPA Board, Perit Catherine Galea and how she was 'forced to resign in disgrace'. Martin Scicluna could have also referred to her as having resigned gracefully, in a country where the art of assuming one's responsibilities and resigning from public office when one's position becomes untenable, is a rarity. Catherine Galea is a past president of the Kamra tal-Periti, an office she held with professionalism, enthusiasm and fairness. Of course she is subject to the same regulations and Code of Conduct. But to state, in this particular case which led to her resignation, that the current decision making process has been undermined, is not at all correct and is a misrepresentation of the reasons given for her resignation. This does little to encourage the right people to come forward or to accept to perform the task of Board members. Readers should also be made aware that several of the alleged misdemeanours attributed to Perit Galea have yet to be backed up by hard facts.

The point is, of course, that the Kamra tal-Periti will support any improvement in the selection process. We would also have a lot to say on the way Board sessions are conducted, but we would also point out that these sessions where decisions are taken are open to the public - not a common occurrence in other sectors. But is that it? And is this really the problem? Would we not rather that this discussion turned to other issues like the need for MEPA to work on improving the way it interacts with the public and society in general? Don't we believe that there is the real need for more clarity in policies and a more qualitative, rather than quantitative, approach, with a degree of flexibility being granted to these Boards to enable better decision taking? Should we not demand better recommendations by the teams at the Planning Directorate to

avoid the situation where Boards are faced with the consideration of poor or biased reporting, particularly with Development Permit Application Reports - one other good reason to have technically competent persons on the boards, to explain the often complex information to the other Board members who may not be as competent in technical matters? Should we not implement improved procedures in Board sittings, like yes, the ludicrous situation of having Board members shift from one side of the room to another when their cases are being decided upon; and better use of the tools already provided for in planning legislation like the proper functioning of the Users Committee and the Planning Consultative Committee; oh, and by the way, what about an update to our Structure Plan, published in 1992 with a life span of ten years which expired six years ago?

What the Kamra would like and is indeed asking for is less talk of the type that tends to happen in election month, every sixty months, which tricks the public into thinking that the problem with our planning system is either the composition of Boards or the selection of its members, or solved by the implementation of four hundred and twenty six (and counting!) projects in our Grand Harbour, an exercise being conducted in total defiance of the planning regime, only to then probably fall back to the same, now old, system which seems to have managed to dissatisfy all in the process.

The perit is at the heart of the building process but also at the centre of issues like sustainability, energy efficiency, landscape and urban design. The role is much wider than obtaining permission to build for his clients ... all of you out there. But he too is to blame for the sense of dissatisfaction of the current situation. Consider this excerpt from "Architecture and Quality of Life", a document published by the Architects' Council of Europe, "The construction activities of society are one of the reliable indicators of change. The built environment records the mood of society more than any other form of cultural expression. Society's economic and social efficiency is made legible through the way it treats its public spaces and through the nature and extent of its construction activities. A fully functional, quality and well-managed built environment has a motivating effect on society; it sustains its identity and propels it to excellence in all undertakings." This is why the real confraternity of periti in Malta has been asking all political parties, because this is a political issue, to endorse

their Position Paper, The Urban Challenge. This document, launched in November of last year, was well received by all the different players in the industry, NGOs, government, developers, civil society and politicians. It makes a good read (you can download it from www.ktpmalta.com). It is successful in analysing the current state of our urban environment and it makes clear and strong recommendations for the way forward.

The challenges raised by our built environment can be overcome through a commitment to the development of a vision to work for better quality places that bring dignity, pride and real delight to their users. The definition of a National Policy for Architecture, championed by Government, is a critical step in this regard, presenting a clear national commitment to quality in architecture and the built environment and raising the profile of the architectural debate so as to form more informed and discerning consumers. The role of the media in forming public opinion is critical to raise the overall awareness of good design and to the pursuit of a healthy urban debate. The Kamra tal-Periti is working to promote the establishment of a National Centre for the Built Environment which would support research, education, heritage promotion, advisory and design review services to assist in the delivery of places that respect society's needs for an architecture and an urban and rural environment that truly meet our aspirations.

Addressing these fundamental issues seriously would go a long way in getting our Board decisions right.



Architecture Nights 08

The Kamra tal-Periti is proud to announce world-renowned leading international architectural firm Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF) for the first in a series of five debates for Architecture Nights 08. These debates, now in their third edition, have gained strong momentum and popularity following the participation of award-winning world-renowned international architects and practices including Mario Botta, Manfredi Nicoletti, Richard England, Peter Lorenz, Building Design Partnership, Llewelyn Davies Yeang and Bennetts Associates, among others, in the past two years.

KPF is an international practice with studios in New York and London and a growing presence in Shanghai. The practice, led by eighteen principles and directors and employing over 400 staff members from 43 countries, provides full architectural design, programming, urban design, master planning, graphic and product design services for clients in both the public and private sectors.

The firm's extensive portfolio, developed over thirty years, includes designs ranging from a small jewel-like glass pavilion for Rodin sculptures to an entirely new city in Incheon, Korea. The breadth of experience allows the firm to bring an international perspective to a local project. The central concern of the practice is design excellence, in a commitment to provide designs that create uplifting spaces for people. Its architecture responds to community, context and environment, demonstrating the important contribution architecture can make to sustainable pat-



Summer house on Andros Island. Agnes Couvelas



Hilton Hotel, Schiphol. MecanooCentre, Sweden. Mecanoo



Learning Centre, Sweden. Mecanoo



Bishopsgate Tower, London. KPF



Gannett-USA today Headquarters, mclean, VA, USA. KPF

terns of living. **www.kpf.com**

This debate which will be held on the 29th of March will be followed by another debate in April addressed by Agnes Couvelas. Ms. Couvelas leads her own architecture firm in Athens, which was opened in 1969 and operates in the field of architectural projects in a wide area of applications such as museums, archaeological parks and private residences. She lectures in architecture in Greece. Her realised projects have been published in a number of books, including 1000x European Architecture



The House of the Winds on Santorini Island. Agnes Couvelas



BBC Headquarters, UK. Mecanoo

Culture and 10th International Exhibition of Architecture Venice Biennale.

In May, the KTP will host none other than the renowned Dutch firm, Mecanoo. Mecanoo rapidly became a distinguished office that started to make a furor during the 1980s after the 'sloping brown' architecture of the 1970s. With its stark design - angular forms, plastered facades in brilliant white and fresh pastels - and clear ground plans it was instrumental in bringing about a revolution in architecture. All Mecanoo buildings bear witness to the conviction that while architecture may not help to improve the world, it can make it a more pleasant one. **www.mecanoo.com** These debates will be held at the Aula Magna in Valletta and are sponsored by Steel Structures and HSBC.



Improving the Built Environment

Designing for the Future: Architecture and Quality of Life

The Architects' Council of Europe, of which the Kamra is an active member, is organising a conference titled "Designing for the Future: Architecture and Quality of Life" which will be held on the 10th April 2008 in Brussels at the Flagey Building. The Conference, which enjoys the patronage of Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, is addressed



primarily at European leaders and decision makers from all levels, who act in matters relating to the built environment. It will present a number of ideas and concrete recommendations in relation to quality and planning that could be adopted and put in place very quickly.

The objectives of the Conference aim to:

- Promote qualitative developments through the adoption of diverse approaches during the conception and maintenance of the built environment, putting the citizen at the heart of all policies.
- Promote and manage policies that fully take the needs of sustainable development, territorial planning and effective, integrated management of the built environment into account.
- Notably include the cultural dimension of the built and urban environment without restricting it solely to heritage elements.

The economic policies adopted by the European Union continue to cause distortion by their strictly limited point of view – and by not adequately taking account of environmental, social and cultural dimensions, which are the very essence of a truly shared European project. Many architects, citizens and an increasing number of political leaders are more and more convinced that the advantages of sustainable development in general and on a quality built environment in particular, are

key elements for the future of the European economy and society. However, this glaring fact is still not brought to the fore in the specification of construction and planning projects to the extent where assessments and budgetary decisions are too limited to a short-term view thus penalising the possibility to have truly sustainable works. Perit David Felice is a member of the Organising Committee for this conference. Participation at this Conference is free, though registration is necessary. A delegation from the Kamra tal-Periti will be attending this event. We therefore invite all those interested in attending to contact the KTP Secretariat on: secretary@ktpmalta.com for further information.

FEED 2007: Further Education of Energy and Design for Disability

The Kamra tal-Periti has been successful in acquiring funding through the European Union's Social Fund in order to carry out a project that will involve the organisation of two further education seminars, one on Energy and one on Design for Disability. These seminars will be held on the 30 April 2008.

The overriding theme for these two seminars is quality in the built environment. There are a number of ways through which such quality can be achieved, and two of these aspects will be dealt with during these two seminars.

The morning seminar will tackle the Energy Directive, its implementation and its impact on the local building scene. It will also look at some case studies and will try to address the way forward for the profession and the industry in this regard. A number of questions come to mind when discussing this issue, in particular those regarding the perit's responsibilities with respect to this matter. This seminar will attempt to address these issues and more.

The afternoon seminar will look into the aspect of Design for Disability. The KNPD's design guidelines in this regard have become

a standard reference in any perit's library. However many still perceive the requirements of these guidelines as constraints, rather than measures that can improve the quality of life of users of the buildings we design. This seminar will aim at providing participants with a better understanding of how persons with disability are hindered by the very design of our buildings, and why it is imperative to keep such considerations in mind at the early stages of the design process.

Participation at these events is free of charge. Further information will be available in the coming days on: www.ktpmalta.com

Study on Liability and Insurance Regimes

The European Commission is currently preparing a Call for Tenders for the carrying out of a European study of liability and insurance regimes in the construction sector. The Architects' Council of Europe was invited to a stakeholder consultation on the matter at which it expressed its views on the subject and on its hopes for the outcome of the study. The ACE highlighted, among other things, the need to ensure that insurance policies truly protect the consumer interest, that all actors in the project team carry insurance appropriate to their input and that the law of the country in which the asset is constructed is the one that applies in case of dispute.

The Commission reported that the Study will survey the existing regimes in the Member States and that it will give an accurate overview of the situation in the EU. It also recalled that the Study is being undertaken in the context of earlier work in the 1990's on the Competitiveness of the Construction Sector and in the context of the requirements of the Directive on Services in the Internal Market.

BEAR

The Built Environment Action Register (BEAR) is a database of professionals willing to

volunteer their time, skills, and expertise for humanitarian architecture projects for communities in need all over the world. The idea for BEAR was initiated in November 2006 at the ACE General Assembly in Brussels in response to an urgent need voiced by humanitarian shelter providers including Architects for Aid, Architecture de L'Urgence (France), Architects Sans Frontieres UK, Architects for Humanity UK, and the Shelter Centre to match qualified and interested volunteer professionals to aid agencies.

The BEAR database will be a resource to international aid agencies as well as country-specific charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to contact volunteer architects, engineers, and other relevant professionals for post-disaster recovery and rebuilding as well as ongoing development and restoration efforts. Interested volunteers may be called on for specific assignments such as needs assessments, site and building analyses, architectural design, engineering best practices, cost analyses, project management, construction supervision, and collaboration with local communities. To register, go to <http://www.a-4-a.org/call-for-volunteers.htm>.

Energy use for space heating and cooling EN ISO 13790, "Thermal performance of buildings - Calculation of energy use for space heating and cooling", is one of the key standards supporting the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). It is the only standard explicitly mentioned in the EPBD: "The European Commission intends further to develop standards such as EN ISO 13790, also including consideration of air-conditioning systems and lighting...". This key standard already developed as a truly global standard, for use not only within Europe (CEN), but on a global scale (ISO), has just passed the parallel formal voting within CEN and ISO with flying colours: 27 CEN Member Bodies (national standardisation committees) and 18 ISO Member Bodies approved the standard unanimously. Further information may be found on: www.buildingsplatform.org.

The Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering

is the first stage in most local Periti's career, making this institution's role in the formation of our built environment crucial. In the light of this, SACES has gathered students' comments and suggestions regarding the course structure in the hope that we will encourage discussion and debate on the direction that the Faculty is headed. This article presents the main points that have emerged from the suggestions received.

It is no surprise that the teaching and assessment of design, which plays such a central role in the course, was a dominant theme in the feedback received. That art (at least at intermediate level) should be an entry requirement to the course was suggested by a number of respondents. Others also suggested that introductory art classes be introduced in the summer prior to the start of first year; a move that would both give prospective students a smoother transition into the course, as well as emphasising the importance of the subject to anybody interested in embarking on this course of studies.

It has also been suggested that design be more fully integrated into the course. Currently, at least until third year, the only subjects directly linked to design are architectural science, urban design and to a lesser extent, history. Lectures on design as such are very prominently absent, and although students are often told that their tutors were specifically selected to give students differing opinions on design, these opinions are never formally stated. Many students wish for a more structured approach to the teaching of design, incorporating lectures and increasing tutoring hours.

We believe that despite limited studio space, better use can be made of the studio if tutorials were to adopt a less presentation-like format and a more hands on approach, much like the way that sketching is taught



in first year. Tutors should circulate around students whilst the latter continue to work on their designs, during times assigned to them by roster, so that the vast amount of time spent waiting to speak to a tutor will now be a lot more productive. In this way, tutors would get a much better idea of students' work in progress, as well as allowing students to learn more from each other, something which is notably encouraged by the current second year tutors. Furthermore, a possible reduction in the workload of the first year students might go a long way in instilling better basics in them rather than creating a race-against-time mentality to design, which so many of them said they found discouraging.

Another suggestion regarding design which was sent in by a number of students was the official teaching of computer-aided design tools such as AutoCAD, Photoshop and Studio Max. AutoCAD and Photoshop are taught in the summer months as if they were secondary subjects, when the use of such programs plays a very important role in the presentation work required in one's university and working life. Dedicating a few credits per semester to presentation would truly help students show their work off to its maximum potential, and

a certificate at the end of each course will help when applying for jobs later on. The presence of a number of credits in the syllabus which can be considered secondary, at best, to one's architectural education implies that finding space in the credit system for presentation subjects should not be too difficult. The two semesters spent on the topics of sampling and probability are an example of potentially replaceable credits.

One suggestion which could positively influence a number of subjects is providing time for experiences on site. A number of students expressed their wish to visit construction works throughout the semester, in order to have the concepts taught during lectures explained in physical terms. A fourth year student who spent a semester in America explained how part of their design course entailed helping out in the construction of a new dwelling, whilst other students who went on the Erasmus programme got to build the furniture they designed. The current use of the concrete laboratory and surveying equipment in first and second year is a testament to the fact that when students see and work on something physical, they tend to learn a great deal



more.

A final sentiment that seemed to be present across the board is a wish for a general improvement in the attitude to the course. Very often it seems that the course is more a series of obstacles to becoming a perit, rather than a total effort on the university's behalf to bring out the fullest in its students. Lecturers who truly give their all to our education do their best in a system which very often hinders them from doing so, primarily because of a lack of co-ordination between credits.

SACES would like to thank all the people who took the time to respond to our call for suggestions and would like to assure the Faculty that it will lend its help and support to all initiatives taken. All members are very grateful for their inclusion in the decisions taken so far and for the Faculty's encouragement of a workshop organised with the aim of improving the faculty building itself. This three day workshop was held between the 25 and the 27 March and addressed issues such as poor detailing, generating activity with the building, making the building work, catering for future expansion, the introduction of much needed design studios, etc. This event had the aim of serving as an interesting design experience for the students themselves, who lived on site during the workshop. The workshop days included a number of events including the viewing of films, brainstorming sessions, discussions, and of course some entertainment.

The ultimate objective of this workshop was to present solutions which persuade the University that they are worth financing and undertaking, besides the learning experience in itself. It also served to indicate how the students are willing to take an active role in the improvement of their Faculty and are capable of producing such solutions themselves. The Council of the Kamra tal-Periti also attended this workshop and delivered a presentation on The Urban Challenge. Since the event took place prior to this journal going to print, further details will be given in the next issue of "the Architect".

The restoration aspect of the Manoel Island and Tigne' Point Project

PROF A. TORPIANO, PERIT K. BUHAGIAR, PERIT S. SAMMUT, PERIT D. ZAHRA, PERIT E. SAID - AOM PARTNERSHIP



Restoration works on one of the barrack blocks at Fort Manoel

The objectives in the Development Brief are clear, and since the inception of the Manoel Island and Tigne' Point Project, it was understood that the restoration of the numerous historic sites in the Tigne' Point peninsula and on the 'Isolotto' in Marsamxett Harbour, including "the original underground tunnels and water storage cisterns", were to become the focal point of this project.

The range of buildings and fortifications to be restored vary from 18th century fortifications, including Fort Manoel and Fort Tigne', to the remaining structures of the former Quarantine Establishment occupying the whole South-Western corner of Manoel Island, to British Military structures and coastal military positions that characterise this side of Marsamxett Harbour.

These icons of Maltese history had fallen into misuse and disrepair. Nonetheless, their restoration is important as this "presence of the past", within the new context of the Manoel Island and Tigne' Point project, will give society a sense of

belonging, defining its identity and providing depth and character for the working and living environment.(1)

The primary objective of any restoration intervention is to make the historic buildings structurally stable. This invariably



Traditional building methods used in the reconstruction of this arcade at Fort Manoel



One of the casemated flanks at Fort Tigne' before restoration...

involves the repair, and a degree of replacement, of severely deteriorated stone elements which might compromise the structural stability of the monument. Nonetheless, stone replacement is being kept to a minimum to avoid the unnecessary loss of original fabric. Secondly, the intention is to make the buildings watertight to avoid further problems related to water infiltration, normally implying faster rates of deterioration.

The process of restoration starts with a detailed historical research to understand the historical developments affecting the site. This research highlighted the historical significance of other sites, not originally included within the Development Brief, including the Brennan Torpedo Station (& Boom Defence) and the Garden Battery, which are now included in the Restoration Project.

This phase is followed by an accurate study of the current state of deterioration. Each site presents a different scenario, including a wide range of problems:

- weathering of stone elements
- water infiltration
- cement repairs
- structural problems particularly due to war damage
- missing portions - demolished during WWII
- vandalism and theft

The aim of the restoration intervention is to revive the original concept, or legibility, of the subject(2) in order to achieve a proper understanding of the whole and the historical development of the site. This implies the reconstruction of missing portions and the uncovering of relevant historic features (covered by debris, soil, vegetation, modern finishes, etc) resulting in a scheme that enhances the quality of the monument, whilst reducing the rate of decay.



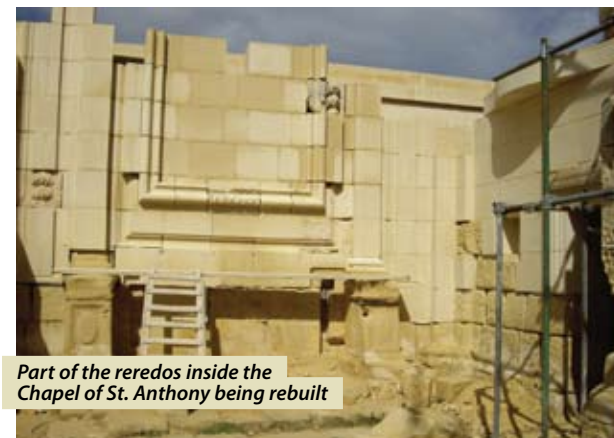
...and after restoration

Since all these structures were constantly modified, to respond to the military and/or quarantine demands of the time, one of the difficult aspects of the project is an informed judgement of whether to revert back to the original configuration, on which developments and additions to retain and to remove, and on which missing areas to reconstruct.

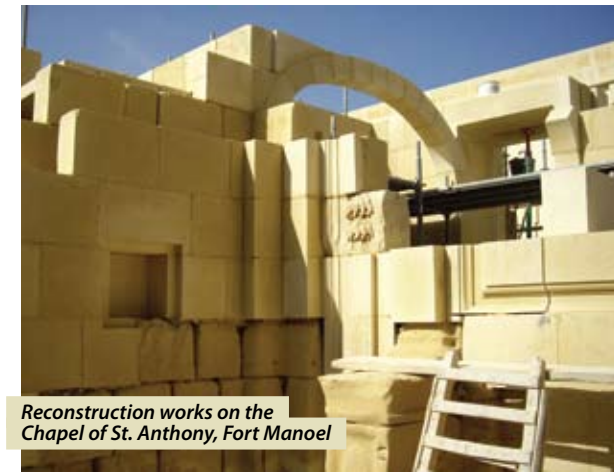
Unfortunately, such questions do not have a simple answer. International Charters, which stress "authenticity" (every new intervention has to be distinguishable), through recording and retention of all superimposed layers of history, provide the necessary guidelines. Furthermore, we feel it is imperative to stop restoration when conjecture begins.

Restoring such buildings is not enough. Restoration is both expensive, as well as short-lived, unless it is supplemented by on-going maintenance. A 'compatible' and sustainable use, which respects and (possibly) enhances the historical significance of a place(3), is desirable, since it facilitates the conservation and maintenance of the monument.

Currently restoration works on Fort Tigne' are almost com-



Part of the reredos inside the Chapel of St. Anthony being rebuilt



Reconstruction works on the Chapel of St. Anthony, Fort Manoel



Plastic repair being carried out on a severely deteriorated cornice at Fort Manoel

plete. The outworks of the fort which include the glacis and foreshore will be restored as part of a landscaping project for the former 'Dragut Point'. Apertures and the support infrastructure are currently being fitted and will be completed in the near future.

Restoration works on the internal structures of Fort Manoel are well underway, with the Polverista and casemated bastion complete as well as the Victorian gun emplacement and one of the four barrack blocks that surround the place d'armes. As can be discerned across from Valletta, conservation interventions on the bastions flanking the Main Gate are also well advanced. This year will hopefully see the completion of the other three barrack blocks, the parapet walls and sally ports. Civil works on service trenches will also commence shortly followed by a paving scheme for the entire fort. The reconstruction of the ruined chapel of St. Anthony of Padua is underway with works presently focusing on the lower Sacristy and main altar reredos.



Detail from the Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua, Fort Manoel

"... the proposed project would ensure the highest standards of restoration"

References:

- (1) English Heritage (1995-96). *Sustaining the historic environment: new perspectives on the future*. London: English Heritage. Pp. 1-11
- (2) Feilden, B., (2003). *Conservation of Historic Buildings*. England: Architectural Press
- (3) ICOMOS (1999). *Burra Charter*. Retrieved on the 11th June 2004 from www.icomos.org. Article 1

VILLA FRANCIA

A Conservation and Restoration Project

Villa Francia is a property of national interest and importance. It lies on the outskirts of Lija and is owned by Government. Works on the restoration and rehabilitation of the Villa started in June 2006 and are currently nearing completion.

The aim of the conservation and restoration project was to give a complementary function to the Villa while at the same time respecting its artistic and historic value, as well as its structural identity. The completed project is intended to serve as a multi-use conferencing facility, for use by high government officials, including, for example, Cabinet meetings. The Villa shall also house a small auditorium and will further cater for the accommodation for one VIP. Furthermore, the Villa will include a fully furnished kitchen to cater for all its guests.

HISTORY

Villa Preziosi, which later became known as Villa Francia, is situated in the northern part of Lija. Leonard Mahoney has dated the villa to the mid-eighteenth century (prior to 1757), when the Baroque style permeated down from the rulers to the pretentious and wealthy Maltese families. Mahoney explains that some of these wealthy houses cost so much that their ambitious owners, including those of Villa Preziosi, ended up with going bankrupt.

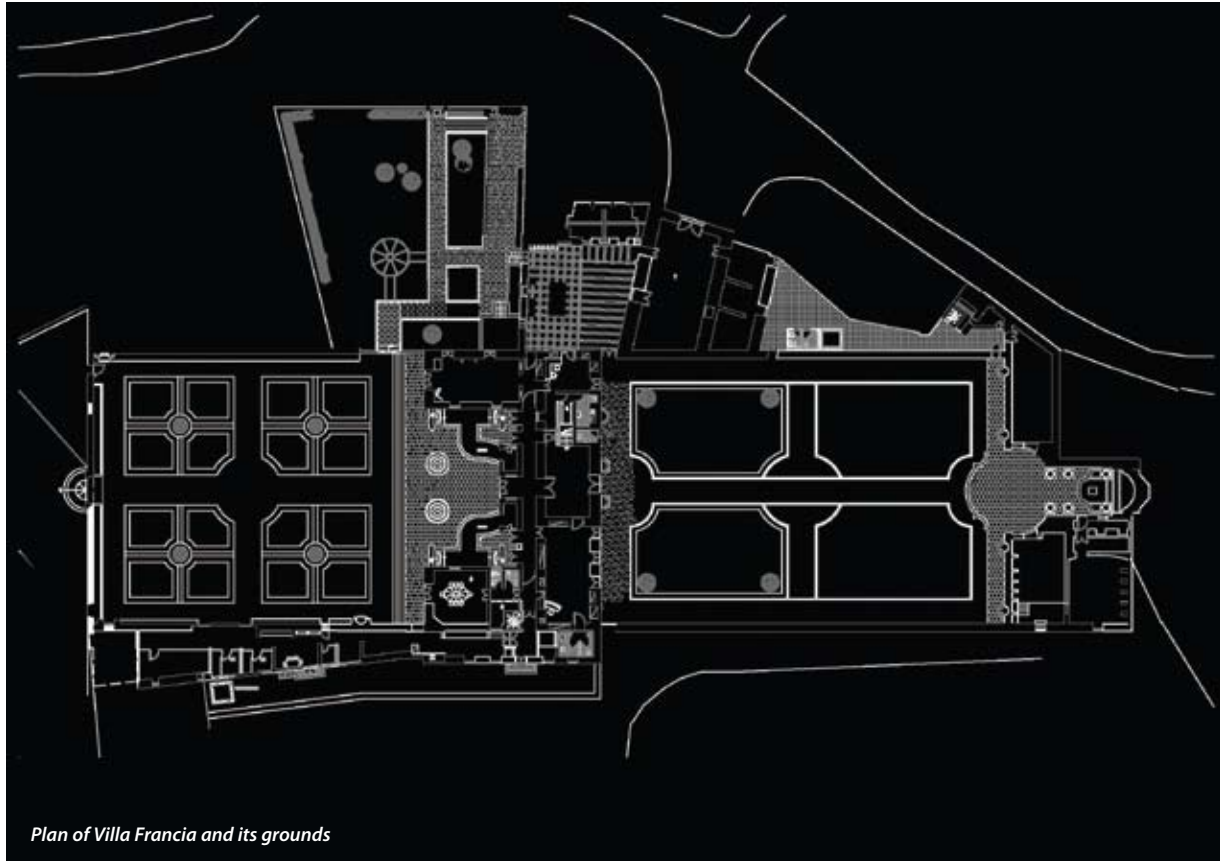
There is sufficient intrinsic evidence to demonstrate that the Villa was not built in its present complete state at one go, but it developed over a period of time, probably originally being used as a hunting lodge. However, further accretions to the building continued to be constructed up to the second half of the twentieth century.

The Villa comprises a main two-storey building with a front and back garden. At the end of the back garden is a large nymphaeum building which houses a water mill (sienja) and a large reservoir. On the southern side is a small garden and a building consisting of some rooms attached to the main building.

RESTORATION, CONSERVATION AND REHABILITATION WORKS

The project included the conservation/restoration of all the facades, the conservation/restoration and rehabilitation of the ground and first floor levels and the landscaping of all the gardens. The work also comprised the restoration and conservation of all the joinery works, metal works, globigerina limestone floors, in-situ mosaic floors, multi-patterned pebbled floors in the gardens, numerous decorative fountains and niches. The water mill, the coach room and stables and the old kitchen shall also be restored as museographic spaces of our local heritage, regaling the Villa's guests with a multi-layered experience of Maltese culture.

The first phase of this unique project involved an initial



Plan of Villa Francia and its grounds



Reliefs discovered on the walls

study to understand the extent of deterioration of the building. This was necessary so as to determine the restoration processes required to be employed. The study involved the taking of a large number of photographs, the preparation of various drawings, an inventory, a survey of the Villa as existing and also research on old plans of the property.



One of the fountains before and after restoration

The concept of restoring and rehabilitating the Villa involved amongst others the insertion of a lift and accompanying ramps in order to render the Villa accessible to all. It also included the demolition of a wall, which was covering the main elevation. While this served to create four parking spaces, this intervention resulted in a proposal that not only serves a useful functional aspect



Elevation of nymphaeum prior to initialisation of the restoration and conservation project

but also brought back to life the partly hidden façade and the re-establishment of the original street-scape.

Various workers and craftsmen pertaining to various trades were involved in this project, predominantly hailing from the Works Division, together with workers from the Restoration Unit, the Districts Section, and the Marsa Garage Metal and Carpentry Sections. A number of students from MCAST also actively participated in the project through a sponsorship, which allowed them the opportunity of training practice on site.

The project is currently in a very advanced state. Some of the interventions included the demolition of a number of recent accretions which did not attribute an intrinsic value to the Villa. These included reinforced concrete roofs, brick walls and concrete ceilings in the service wing, which were

removed and replaced with new globigerina walls, using traditional construction of double skin walls, customised laminated wooden beams, stone slabs with torba and modern deffun as a screed.

The civil works for the insertion of a lift and dumb waiter are also complete. The tender for the lift has been adjudicated and the lift will start being installed towards the end of October.

Bonanno Garden (the side garden) has been redesigned, resulting in a garden which is now accessible for all. The design also includes a trellis and outdoor seating area, a gazebo and a new landscaping design.

The facades of the Villa have also been restored. The restoration philosophy adopted involved the removal of the



The Bonanno Garden Fountain before restoration



Open joints in the fountain structure



Lichens removed from the fountain surfaces



Cleaning process under way



Details



A FOCUS ON THE FOUNTAIN IN BONANNO GARDEN

From various pieces of documentation available, it was determined that the arch was constructed at the turn of the 19th Century. A door

damaging factors. For this reason, cleaning was intended to remove only the damaging elements and the existing patina has been completely respected. During the process of cleaning the walls in the main corridor at ground floor level, two authentic sculptural reliefs were discovered. These were in a relatively bad state as parts of the sculptures were missing. A process of reintegration has been completed and the sculptures can now be fully appreciated.

The back garden has also been restored. Part of the project includes the restoration of the multi coloured pebbles and more than half of this intervention has already been completed. In the meantime the landscaping project has been finalised and it is only a matter of time for the landscaping to mature. The Villa also boasts numerous decorative fountains and niches, all of which have been restored. These fountains shall be fully functional once the project is completed. Some examples of the fountains include the one at Bonanno Gardens, and another one located in the front garden.

The water mill, the coach room and stables are also in an advanced state of completion. Walls have been cleaned, pointed and lime washed as necessary. One of the more complex restoration and conservation interventions was that carried out on the nymphaeum. The original colours were uncovered using surgical blades and fine scalpels. The overlying white lime wash that was covering the original blood

oxen lime wash, was painstakingly removed, and the missing areas were reintegrated.



Removal of lime wash with surgical blades



The nymphaeum today

◀ that connected the Bonanno Garden with the back garden (now leading to third parties) was blocked using this decorative fountain as a feature. After the initial process of documentation, in particular using photography, work began with the gentle process of cleaning. Through this process, the documentation and understanding of this cultural asset continued to develop and be understood. So much so, that the final inter-



Colour emerging during the cleaning process



Plastic repair applied to the pilasters



More of the original colour emerging during the cleaning process



Slaking the lime



Colour samples

PROTECTION AND FINISHES

The protection process is intended to render less possible, or at least to slow down, the natural deterioration processes. In this case, the lime wash was used not only for the reintegration of the coloured fountain but also to act as a sacrificial layer. Lime was slaked in dated barrels for a minimum of three months. Coloured powder was then added to the lime wash and samples were applied. Once the set, it was possible to identify the final colour of the wash. Once the correct colour has been established, the lime wash is sieved in order to eliminate granular particles, and a fine slurry is prepared. The wash was applied creating a semi-transparent lime wash. The overlapping of these washes at different angled brush strokes, created the required effect.

The aesthetic finishing represents a series of interventions aimed at giving back to the restored monument a unified formal dignity, restoring the legibility of the monument and the aesthetic harmony of all its single components.

Architect in Charge: Perit Claude Borg
Project Manager: Perit Mario Bonello
Works Manager: Louis Attard
Office of the Prime Minister Coordinator: Ugo Callus

vention was never foreseen, and the result we see today only came about through an open approach to the restoration process.

The primary aim of the intervention was to transmit the restored fountain to future generations in the way it was intended to be presented. With this in mind, the intention was to halt the deterioration factors and to best appreciate the potential unity of the fountain.

The fountain was in a relatively bad state, having suffered from infiltration of water through various open mortar joints and the coping, with previous cement rendering causing rising damp, salt formation and delamination of renders. In view of this, the decision to remove the cement rendering was deemed necessary.

CLEANING

The aim of the cleaning process is to eliminate incoherent substances from the surfaces of historic buildings. It is an irreversible process and must be carried out with great care. This phase in the restoration of the fountain was very delicate and presented various technical problems due to the vast range of deterioration processes which were present. The choice and sequence of the methods adopted derived

from a careful evaluation of the deterioration processes present on the surface and the possible existence of lime washes that were slightly evident. The cleaning process started with the most gentle cleaning, first using toothbrushes and bristle brushes and later using surgical blades. It also included the removal of cement renders, algae and lichens, dirt and loose lime layers.

During this process, various original colours began to emerge. Taking note of these colours, the proposed intervention considered the reintegration of the lime washes which, at the same time, would act as a protective layer to the stone. Thus the cleaning process became an important part of the documentation aspect of the project.

CONSOLIDATION

The pilasters surrounding the fountains were coated with a hard cement render. This had to be removed carefully so as not to induce more damage to the underlying sculptural elements. In this case, chipping hammers were necessary to remove this damaging cement render. They were then re-rendered with plastic repair, a lime based mix which has very reduced shrinkage properties. The application of the mortar was carried out in three different layers, starting from a coarse mix, gradually adding a finer mix, with a thin fine mix as the last coat.

The principal methodology adopted involved the plastering and/or pointing with lime mortars of all cracks, missing elements, and deteriorated stone work or open joints between the stone blocks. The re-adhesion of large detached fragments of stone was carried out through the use of plastic repair.



The final result

FAREWELL JOINWELL?

In July 1969, the prestigious journal *The Architectural Review* (AR) issued a special edition entitled 'MALTA – Past Present and Future' with Quentin Hughes as guest editor(1). It combined a series of diverse articles on Malta's rich architectural history, a selection of glossy monochrome photographs of historic buildings and the Maltese landscape, line drawings of local streetscapes by Richard Demarco and a celebrated article by the late Peter Richardson entitled, "Rape of a Village." One specific section of the issue dealt with a selection of contemporary buildings highlighted on the basis of their architectural merit.

Almost forty years later, browsing through this section I could not resist observing that very few of these buildings have survived. Richard England's innovative and ground-breaking hotels designed for a then fledgling tourism industry have all but perished or have been irretrievably transformed beyond recognition - the Ramla Bay hotel, the Dolmen hotel, the Salina Bay hotel and the Cavalieri hotel. The Army Married Quarters, in Bahar ic-Caghaq (today better known as the White Rocks complex) designed by architects Austin-Smith, Salmon, Lord Partnership feature prominently. It is hard to conceive how these buildings photographed in their pristine glory today lie in total abandonment and are dilapidated carcasses awaiting the final blow of the sledgehammer. The Royal University of Malta campus designed by the UK architectural firm, Norman & Dawbarn is also featured - inevitably today it is only a small component of a far more extensive university campus enlarged as it was in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The Joinwell showroom in Sliema completed in 1967 is singled out in the special AR edition as "one of the few new commercial buildings in Malta of any distinction." The showroom, with its external walls faced in travertine and two upper floors covered by a distinctive brise-soleil of steel louvers, is an iconic building in Sliema. It is a pioneering work of architectural modernism in Malta – one of a very few examples. Yet it

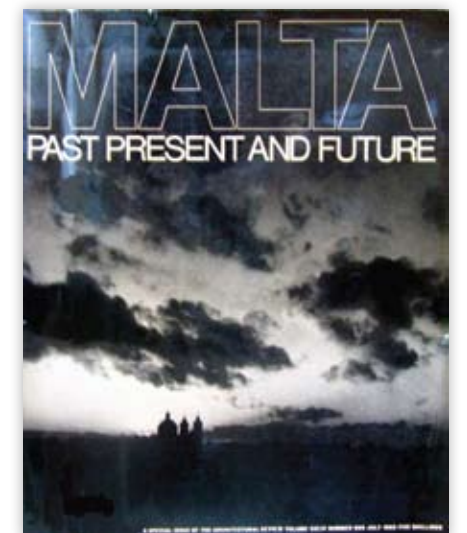


soon seems destined to bite the dust and be consigned to the ash-heap of Maltese architectural history. Recently a planning application (PA 6914/07) was filed by its new owners who are seeking planning approval to completely change its exterior appearance. Current planning conservation and scheduling policies as they exist today do not afford any protection to post-war buildings.

The Heritage Advisory Committee has recommended against the approval of this application on the grounds that "it is an iconic building of the twentieth century." The loss of the Joinwell showroom would signal a further mile-stone in the obliteration of prime examples of local modern architecture. It would join the ranks of the part-demolition and insensitive modifications to Huntingford's Qala

primary school and the recent whole-scale demolition of the Mira Building in Gzira, one of the island's first reinforced concrete-frame buildings. It seems that popular appreciation of good modern architecture is virtually nil - anything built after the Second World War is deemed not worthy of conservation. Modern architecture has earned a bad name locally - our conservation efforts do not go beyond the few surviving Art Nouveau-Liberty buildings of the 1930s (although that was not the case in the 1980s when Sliema's architectural heritage went to the dogs). I beg to differ. There are a few modern architectural gems that are certainly worthy of conservation - Victor Pasmore's house on the outskirts of Gudja, Ermin Cremona's Villa Flora and Mediterranean in Attard, Marquis Scicluna's quirky Villa Mystique, and the Manikata church immediately spring to my mind. As a nation we would be culturally impoverished if the best architectural products of an entire generation are permitted to vanish into thin air.

Architect Conrad Thake is the author, together with the late Quentin Hughes, of the book Malta – War & Peace, an Architectural Chronicle 1800-2000.



(1) Reference: 'MALTA – Past Present and Future', a special issue of *The Architectural Review*, Volume CXLVI, Number 869, July 1969

Reinventing ‘The Norman House’

by Michael Lowell

The restoration of Palazzo Falson was a long and painstaking process that lasted more than five years, but the benefits of this project are now being reaped. The Palazzo has been open to the general public for almost a year, and it is the visitors’ enjoyment and amazement at this splendid house and the magnificent collections it contains which make all the efforts worthwhile. Another reason is that in opening this museum, Olof Gollcher’s wish was finally fulfilled. Captain Olof Frederick Gollcher OBE (1889-1962), was the last owner and resident of Palazzo Falson. He bought the Palazzo in 1927, and renamed it ‘The Norman House’. He was a painter, scholar and philanthropist, as well as an ardent collector of objets d’art and historical items. Gollcher wanted the Norman House to be preserved with its contents as a museum, and in his will he left instructions for the setting up of a foundation bearing the name The Captain O. F. Gollcher O.B.E. Art and Archaeological Foundation to execute this wish. In 2001, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti entered into a management agreement with the Gollcher Foundation, whereby it would restore the Palazzo and its contents, and open it to the general public as a historic house-museum. Palazzo Falson is one of the oldest buildings still standing in Mdina. This imposing palazzo was originally a one-storey high courtyard house that was built around

the first half of the 13th century. This first house was substantially larger than today’s Palazzo, the main façade of which was on what today is Bastions Square. This incorporated a covered passageway, or *sikifah*, which was the principal means of access. There was also another covered entrance on Our Saviour Street, which served both the house as a back entrance, and a church dedicated to Our Saviour, which the house abutted. The ground floor façade on Villegaignon Street, with its double-serrated stringcourse of inverted triangles with pendant balls, and centrally placed doorway with Sicilian-inspired hood-mould, belongs to the turn of the 15th century, when the Palazzo was more compactly redesigned on a new orientation. The first floor was largely added and rebuilt, in the course of the 15th and early 16th centuries. Other distinctive features on the façade include the three mullioned windows on the first floor, which in all probability were included around 1524, at the time when Jacobo Dimieg, the leading master mason of his generation, was responsible for some interventions. At this time, the property was inherited by the Vice-Admiral Michele



Main door before...



... and after restoration

Falson from his cousin Ambrosio de Falsone, who was the Head of the Town Council. The first floor of the house was mostly rebuilt around this time. Other changes to the first floor seem to have taken place in 1530, when Grand Master Philippe Villiers de L’Isle Adam was hosted at Palazzo Falson. L’Isle Adam came to Mdina during that year after Malta was donated to the Knights of the Order of St. John by Emperor Charles V. It is probable that at this time the entrance hallway and the front rooms on the first floor were adapted to make them more suitable for the Grand Master’s presence. L’Isle Adam’s coat-of arms is carved on the fireplace in one of the Sale Nobili as well as in the courtyard. These are however 20th century additions to commemorate that event. Prior to Patrimonju taking over Palazzo Falson, the building had been closed for over 40 years. During that time weather conditions led to substantial water infiltration into the walls, as well as to severe deterioration of the wooden apertures. Part of the roof had to be replaced due to the rust and deterioration of the ungalvanised metal beams which supported it. The lack of roofing membrane and cracks in the pipes of the old drainage system led to substantial water seepage that damaged the wood panelling and the friezes of the Sale Nobili. Great care and due diligence have been exercised in preserving the original features of the Palazzo. Parts of the building that had deteriorated over the centuries had to be restructured and secured. When the plastering of the interior walls was removed, it was discovered that three stone

arches at ground floor level were cracked, and that the first floor was at risk. On a positive note however, the removal of the plaster also yielded a number of interesting features and openings that can now be viewed, including graffiti of 15th century galleons. All the stonework throughout the entire Palazzo had to be cleaned and conserved, and replaced only where absolutely necessary. Any repointing that was needed throughout the building was done using a natural hydraulic lime-based mortar solution. The interior walls were also rendered with a lime solution, but unfortunately, the first coating of this solution did not prove to be pure enough thus affecting the breathable properties of the walls beneath. Within 8-10 weeks of this application, salt crystals started pushing off the plasterwork. The walls had to be washed, and a purer and thicker porous lime solution that was specially imported was applied. The use of pure lime mortars allows the moisture to be released from the background as water vapour, therefore controlling the level of dampness and the concentration of salts from the walls. The façade possessed a number of layers of old plasterwork, most of which were showing signs of detachment. Consolidation works were carried out either by injecting a hydraulic grout, or by using a silicate based consolidant, depending on each particular instance. A number of superfluous iron fixtures that had caused considerable damage to the stonework of the façade had to be removed. Large parts of the pointing in the façade, especially at the upper level, were absent, loose or friable. After consultation and considerable research into lime-based mortars, it was concluded that hydrated lime-sand mortars would be considered suitable in compatibility with local globigerina limestone in terms of porosity and strength. The walls were cleaned from any biological growth with an anti-algae agent dissolved in distilled water. After this treatment, the surfaces were washed down with distilled water, and the organic material was removed with a soft brush. Stones that showed signs of mechani-



Turret before restoration and today (right)



cal damage were carefully repaired, or replaced only when the extent of the damage warranted such an intervention. Such examples include the decaying stones on the door jambs, and instances where deterioration had allowed water to infiltrate the architectural fabric. The wooden apertures, particularly those on the upper floor, were in a poor state of repair due to lack of maintenance and regular use. The old paint was totally stripped, the wood was treated against woodworm, any cracks were filled in, and the metalwork was cleaned and restored. Leaded lighting was also inserted in some of the windows. The missing metal studs on the main door were replaced, and the old original hinge system was restored with the use of metal, leather and brass. The extensive works on the internal terrace overlooking the courtyard have included cleaning the active fungus from the facing wall, removing the old cement floor and any rusting chimneys, and replacing roofing slabs. The weathered stones featuring decorative motifs along the terrace ledge have also been replaced. The old broken flagstones in the central courtyard, which had been randomly patched up with cement, were replaced with worn and weathered ones, and the decorative column of the fountain, which lay unused for many years has been repaired and strengthened. Gollcher’s vast collection of historical books, which number around 4500, proved to be too heavy for the library on the first floor. The excessive weight caused severe damage to the flooring beneath, and some of the roofing slabs (*xorok*) had to be changed. The books themselves had to be moved to a separate secure location, and each individual book had to be dusted from the DDT powder that had been liberally sprinkled over them for protection purposes prior to the time that the Palazzo

was under the care of Patrimonju. The wall-to-wall wooden shelving has also been restored, which included dismantling, stripping, treating against woodworm, refilling of cracks, the application of a preservative, and painting. The shelving was then refitted, and galvanised metal fittings have been installed to support it. The entire drainage system had to be replaced and modified, and the old electric wiring made of single-strand copper wrapped in cloth, was replaced with new low and high voltage electrical systems to support the correct museum lighting and the various alarms and CCTV systems. A museum gift shop and a panoramic roof café were also included, these being necessities in the modern day museum experience. Palazzo Falson is also committed to the preservation of the environment, and the first step in reducing the museum’s carbon footprint was to install the Evalon-V Solar membrane on the roof, which incorporates photovoltaic elements, is pollution-free, and converts solar energy into electricity to supplement the energy needs of the museum. This technology, which was new

Works carried out on the façade of Palazzo Falson

Replacement of deteriorated stones with new ones, as the deterioration had allowed water to infiltrate the architectural fabric.

Consolidation of old plaster works through hydraulic grout injections, or a silicate based consolidant, depending on each particular instant

Cleaning of walls from any biological growth with an anti-algae agent dissolved in distilled water, after which the surfaces were washed down with distilled water, and any organic material was removed with a soft brush

Aesthetic treatment of more recent blocks with resin patination

Repointing

to the islands, was done thanks to the sponsorship of the two principal banks on the island. The beauty of this system is that when the electricity generated exceeds the needs of the museum, particularly during hours when the museum is closed, the surplus electricity generated can be fed into the national grid. Another benefit of this new system is that the PV elements are integrated into the membrane and therefore are completely flat with the roof surface. Unlike conventional mono or multi crystalline solar panels usually used in Malta, they do not cause any projections from the roof which would have been aesthetically unacceptable amongst the lovely roofscape of Mdina. This system has already generated a lot of interest in Malta and has great potential for adoption by companies and private individuals. Although it is early days yet (the statistics need to be analysed over a long period), the simulation results show that the energy production annually should reach approximately 5,000kWhr, which would result in an average of 13kWhr daily production of PV renewable energy. During the summer season the system seems to produce an average daily of 20kWhr which would represent about 10% of the overall electricity needs of the Museum. By reducing the amount of electricity drawn from the national grid it is estimated that Palazzo Falson’s operation will be avoiding emissions of 4,900kg of harmful CO₂ emissions per year. The crowning glory of this Palazzo was reached when the artefacts that number over 3,600 were returned to their former home, having been removed to a secure warehouse to be restored and conserved by numerous experienced restorers. Refurnishing the Palazzo was in itself a slow and laborious task, espe-

cially when applying the finishing touches, which make all the difference. Although the restoration work may have now been completed, the mission of the Palazzo is an ongoing concern, as it aims to use the collections and the building itself as a means to educate and to transmit the enjoyment of culture to all who visit, as well as to provide an unparalleled visitor experience. Michael Lowell is the CEO of Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti and was responsible for the recent interior design and layout of Palazzo Falson

References:

Buhagiar, Mario, The Late Medieval Art and Architecture of the Maltese Islands, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, Malta 2005
Buhagiar, Mario, ‘The Palazzo Falsone at Mdina - An Art Historical Appreciation’, Treasures of Malta, Vol.XII No.2, Easter 2006, pp. 15-18.
Watercolour by Charles Frederick de Brocktorff (1775-1850), Palazzo Falson
Libr. 1147, National Library of Malta



Restoration works on the facade



The Facade before restoration



The Facade after restoration

QUALITY OF SERVICE

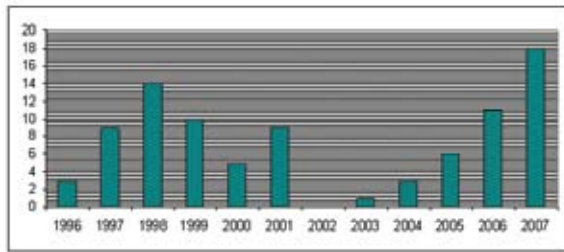
BY PERIT SIMONE VELLA LENICKER

“Periti owe a duty of care to their clients. Their work has a profound and long lasting effect on the community at large. As projects grow in scale and complexity, there is a growing awareness of the need for the profession to meet today’s challenges and demands and deliver its product at a level of quality commensurate with today’s expectations and standards of living. The Kamra tal-Periti is working to improve its structures and those of the profession to allow its members to better serve their clients and society through their work.” This is the opening statement of the section entitled “Quality of Service” of the Kamra’s position paper on the built environment, “The Urban Challenge Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment.”

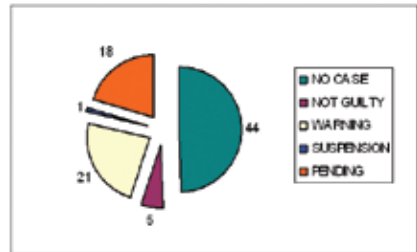
In the light of the above, last year the Professional Practice Standing Committee of the Kamra tal-Periti embarked on a process that began with the reviewing of the various bits of legislation relating to the profession, which, oftentimes, are regrettably antiquated and sometimes obsolete. These included: Chapter 390 of the Laws of Malta, known as the Periti Act; Subsidiary Legislation 390.01 of the Laws of Malta which includes the regulations governing the Kamra tal-Periti and the Code of Professional Conduct; and the relevant section of Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta, the Code of Organisation and Civil Procedure, namely the section that stipulates Tariff K. Stemming from these and from the need to instil improved quality in the profession, the Kamra also looked into the introduction of Standard Forms of Agreement between periti and their clients, as well as negotiated with an insurance provider who has been appointed as the Kamra’s preferred partner in this regard. All of the above points towards the implementation of a Quality Agenda aimed at improving the delivery of the services provided by periti to their clients, in the interest of the built environment, the community and the profession. All of the above mentioned aspects, therefore, have to be seen as part of the holistic approach that has been adopted. Furthermore, these changes have to be read also in conjunction with The Urban Challenge, which may be downloaded from www.ktpmalta.com.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

At a day conference held on the 07 December 2007, which was followed by the Kamra’s Annual General Meeting, the Council launched a consultation process with its members and non-members. Unfortunately, one of the complications the Kamra faces is the fact that not all members of the profession are members of the Kamra. However, the Kamra



Number of cases investigated by Board of Professional Conduct since 1996



Outcome of cases investigated by the Board of Professional Conduct

has jurisdiction over the conduct of all members of the profession, and is also empowered to take and implement decisions that affect all warrant holders, be they members of the Kamra or not. In view of this, therefore, all periti were informed of the process being embarked upon, in order to ensure that knowledge of this process reached all members of the profession. The proposed documents were, however, only sent out to members, since it is only members who have the right to attend and vote at the Kamra’s General Meetings, where decisions on the way forward will be taken. Non-members were, however, invited to contact the Kamra in order to receive the said documents. The consultation process closed on the 31 January 2008. By this date a number of comments, suggestions and reactions were received by the Kamra’s Secretariat, which comments were taken into consideration by the Council. Some of these were taken on board, while others were deemed to have either been covered by other aspects of the process under way, or were considered not to be in line with what the Council was trying to achieve. A document listing all the comments received and the Council’s reaction to each comment was subsequently sent to all members for information.

PERITI ACT

The Periti Act was introduced in 1996 and addressed the anomalies of the Architect’s Ordinance – in particular the requirement that for anyone to obtain a permanent warrant to provide the services of a Perit one had to be qualified from the University of Malta. The opportunity had been taken at the time to introduce other changes to address the needs of a developing profession and the introduction of a Warranting Board. Such new elements included the recognition of partnerships and the requirement for Professional Indemnity Insurance cover. Through its position paper on the Periti Act, issued in March to the Kamra’s members, the Council hopes to stimulate a debate within the profession, on the basis of extensive

discussion that has taken place over the past years within the Kamra and in particular in its Council. Opinions have already been taking shape, but it is not the intention of the Council to limit or fix parameters to the extent of the discussion. On the other hand, the Council

felt that it should be catalysing the evolution of a definite position to identify those parts of the legislation that require reconsideration in order to address the changing nature of the profession. Moreover, it considers this to be a major opportunity to present its thoughts in a coherent manner, read in conjunction with an integrated range of documents and proposals, in agreement with its members, and to engage in a process leading to the formulation of firm recommendations for change.

REGULATIONS OF THE KAMRA

In 1996, the General Meeting of the Kamra tal-Periti had approved changes to the Regulations of the Kamra. These should have replaced current Subsidiary Legislation 390.01, but for various reasons the required procedures for these proposed regulations to be endorsed by government were not followed through. The Council has therefore reviewed the regulations once again, with the proposed amendments being presented to members for approval. The Council will subsequently approach Government with a revised set of regulations for promulgation through the necessary legislative procedures. The main intention of these revised regulations is to establish a streamlined structure within which the Kamra can operate, to address some aspects of the current regulations that were either obsolete or in conflict with other legislation or regulations and to ensure that the Kamra has the required backing to carry out its work for the benefit of the profession and society at large.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND COMPETENCE

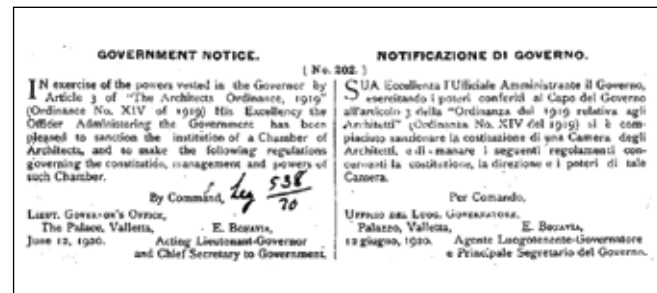
The architectural profession has always been characterised by its ethical and responsible approach to the provision of services to society. For this reason Codes of Conduct for the profession exist in all Member States of the EU. Locally, a Code of Professional Conduct is entrenched in the Regulations comprising Subsidiary Legislation 390.01 of the Laws of Malta. The object of the Code is to promote

the highest standards of professional conduct, or self-discipline, required of the Kamra’s members in the best interests of the community. The Code seeks to regulate the behaviour of members between themselves, towards their clients and towards the general public, putting into words what clients would expect of the professional advisors in whom they place their trust. The revisions to the Code of Professional Conduct being proposed by the Council are intended to renew the level of trust expected and desired between the perit and his clients, by obliging all the members of the profession to maintain the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. The proposed document is based on the Deontological Code of the Architects’ Council of Europe, a document drawn up with the intention of harmonising the Codes of Conduct between its member bodies in order to achieve a more homogenous approach throughout Europe.

The Kamra is vested with disciplinary powers in relation to the Conduct of members of the profession. The table reproduced here shows the number of cases investigated by the Board of Professional Conduct since 1996, while the pie-chart indicates the outcome of such investigations. While the increase in numbers of cases brought to the attention of the Board may not be due to an increase in misdemeanours by warrant holders but to greater awareness of the role and existence of the Kamra, the implementation of the proposed Code of Conduct will help in clarifying a number of aspects which may have been unclear to date, as well as giving the Board a better tool against which to judge alleged incidents of misconduct.

TARIFF & COST INFORMATION SYSTEM

To bring the practice of the profession in line with the free market economy championed by the European Union, and in particular with the requirements of the Competitions Directive and the Services in the Internal Market (SIM) Directive, the impetus is to move away from fixed fee scales towards more open competitive tendering, with the Perit charging rates he/she considers appropriate for the work to be done. There is a point though below which the Perit will not be able to give a satisfactory standard of service without the risk of being unprofessional. The challenge for the future is to reconsider statutory fees while ensuring an adequate level of service to the client, adjusting fees to reflect not only the volume and type of work expected, but also the nature and complexity of the commission and the facilities and standard of service the Perit or practice offers. In line with the recommendations of the Architects’ Council of Europe (ACE), the Kamra is working towards establishing



a database of fees – referred to as a Cost Information System (CIS) – which will provide not only the professional but also his client with guidance on what may be expected.

STANDARD FORMS OF AGREEMENT

Consumers may often ask whether periti are delivering what they promise and what they are charging for. Is the quality of service given by periti of an acceptable level? Does the perit visit the site as often as he should? Does the quality of design seek to achieve a standard of excellence that improves the built environment? Similarly the profession may ask: Does the client appreciate the type and level of service required for a particular project? One other proposal by the Council of the Kamra is the introduction of Standard Forms of Agreement for the provision of services by a perit. These would clearly define the services an employer / client may expect and a perit would be requested to deliver, the fee structure and the manner in which the services are delivered and remunerated. It is furthermore understandable that the employer is not always fully aware of the complexities of undertaking a construction project, the risks involved and the time frames, costs and procedures they face on the road to achieving their goals. Such forms of agreement would explain the various aspects of a project in order to assist the consumer in understanding such complexities.

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

In general, in all Member States of the European Union architects carry liability for the work they undertake. This liability arises from the duty of care that architects owe to society in general and the ability of architects to act independently of vested interests on behalf of society. The Kamra tal-Periti believes every practitioner should have an adequate level of insurance for the benefit of both the Perit and his clients. Once again, there are several obstacles that still need to be overcome in order to ensure that this initiative is successful, and viable, not least the excessive liability period the Perit is subjected to. At present, the Kamra is engaged in seeking ways to ensure that all Periti can obtain an adequate level of PII cover.

The Council’s proposal in this regard is to continue to develop the established relationship with the Kamra’s Preferred Partner for the provision of PII, to provide a custom built insurance scheme and to assist and advise the Kamra in discussions with government. It then proposes to prepare a report for submission to the Minister which would propose a reduction in period of liability against a firm commitment that Kamra will ensure that all members of the profession are adequately covered with Professional Indemnity Insurance and keep a register in this regard.

MOVING TOWARDS A RENEWED PROFESSION

During the Annual General Meeting held last December, the members present voted in favour of a motion titled “Renewing the Profession”, the text of which is reproduced here: “Whereas the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti has engaged, through the work of its Professional Practice Standing Committee, in the preparation of an integrated proposal to

improve the legislative framework within which it operates, and

Whereas the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti presented its proposals during a full-day conference which preceded this Annual General Meeting, including a position paper on the Periti Act, the revised Code of Professional Conduct, the revised Regulations of the Kamra, proposals on professional liability and Professional indemnity Insurance, proposed new standard forms of agreement between periti and their clients and a proposal on professional fees,

Whereas the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti is to provide detailed information on each of these proposals to its members by not later than 21st December 2007, so as to launch a consultation process that will lead to decision on this range of matters that are intended to provide the mechanisms to achieve excellence in the quality of service that periti provide in the interest of the profession, its members and the community,

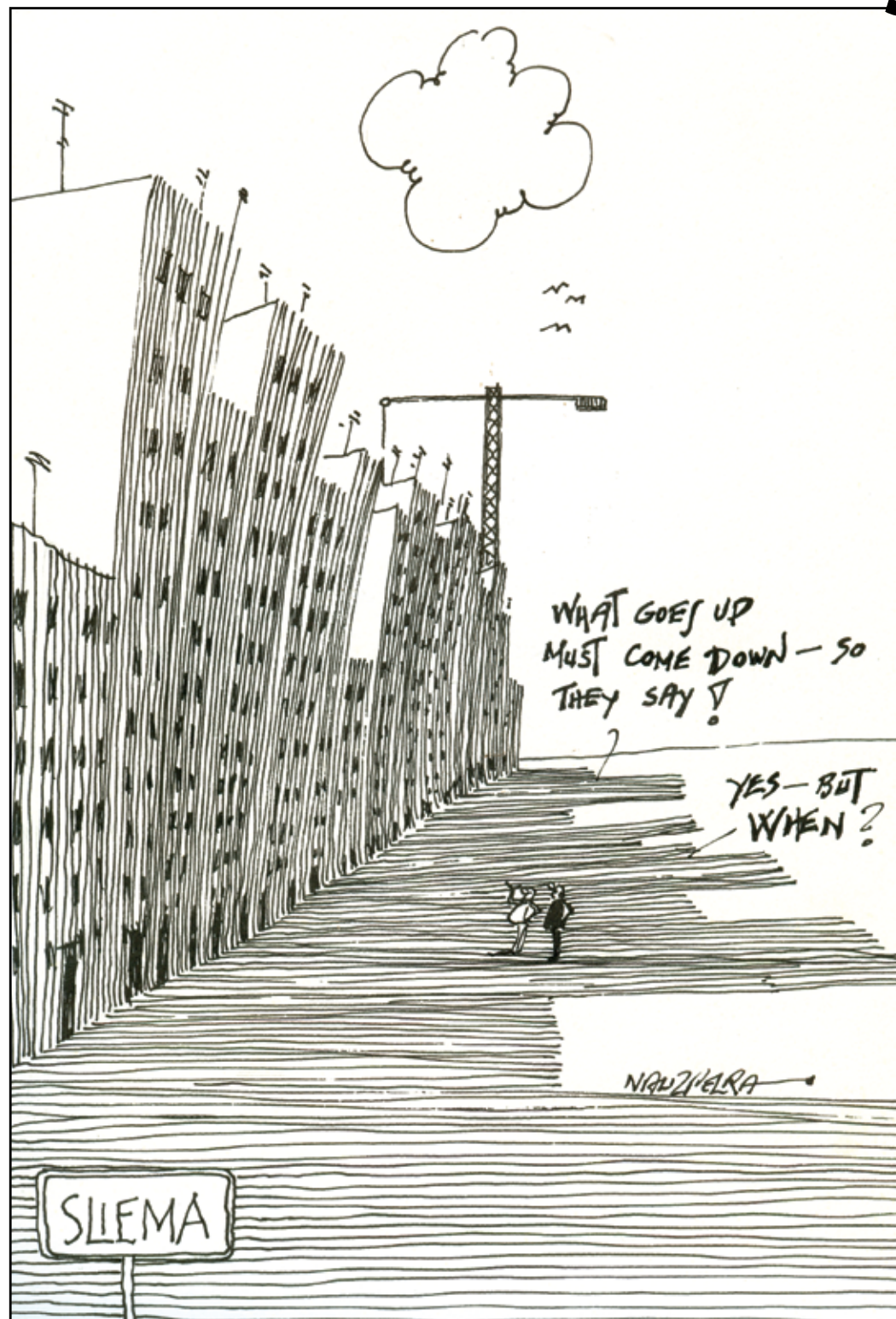
Whereas the process will also take into account the discussions that ensued during the last Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings, and the imminent implementation of the Services Directive and the Qualifications Directive and the launch of a position paper, prepared by the Built Environment Standing Committee, ‘The Urban Challenge – Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment’;

The Annual General Meeting delegates the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti to receive written comments from its members by not later than 31 January 2008, following which the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti will then proceed to assess these comments and to consider amending its proposals, which revised documents will then be circulated to all members of the Kamra by 21 February 2008 for eventual discussion and finalisation at an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held on Thursday 6 March 2008.”

Due to the National General Elections held on the 08 March 2008, the Council of the agreed to postpone this EGM to the 01 April 2008, and informed all members of the profession accordingly. Since this journal was at the printers on the day of the EGM, the proceedings will be reported on in the coming issue of tA. Quoting from the UIA Accord on recommended international standards of professionalism in architectural practice, “Members of the architectural profession are dedicated to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and competence, and to the highest possible quality of their output, and thereby bring to society special and unique knowledge, skills and aptitudes essential to the development of the built environment of their societies and cultures.” It is with this aim in mind that the Kamra has embarked on this process, and it is hoped that the proposals being made will continue to build on the efforts of the profession in achieving this goal.

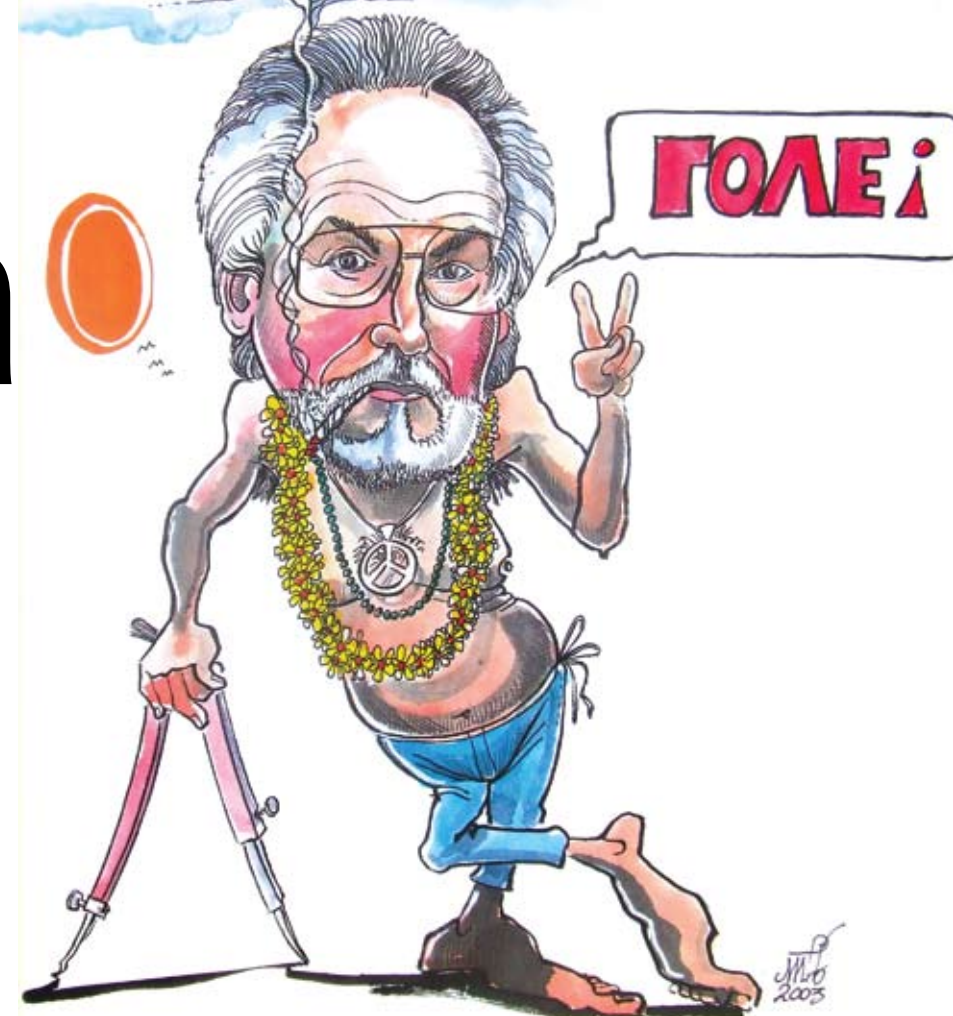
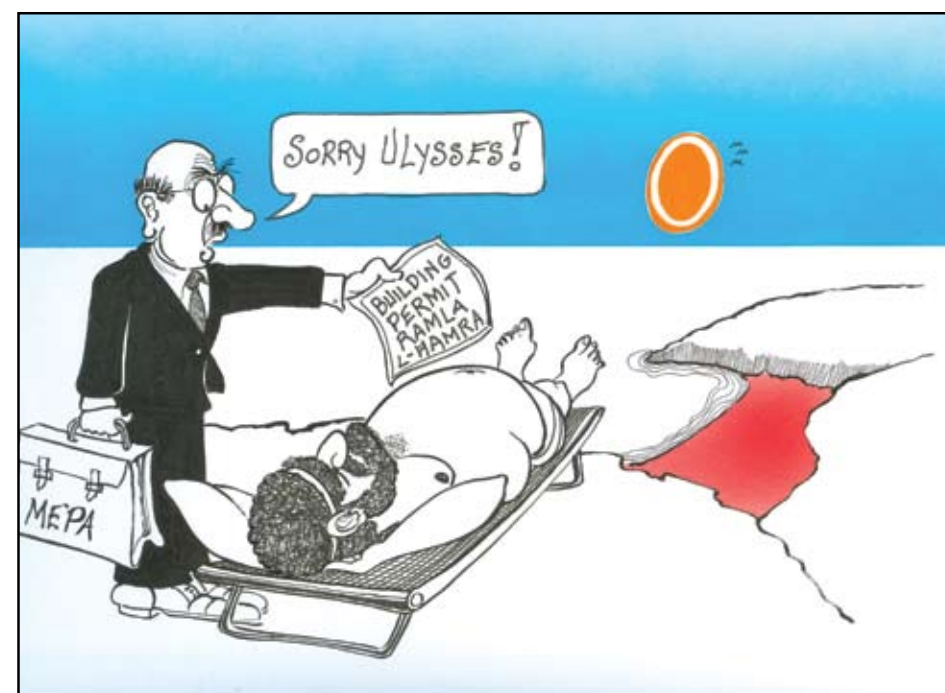


Malta through the eyes of Nalizpelra



For the past thirty years, Maurice Tanti Burlo, many a time operating under the guise of his pseudonym Nalizpelra, has through his cartoons published in the Allied Newspapers entertained us with his commentary on a wide spectrum of issues. His artwork is as incisive as the razor-edged blade of a rapier cutting through fine silk. It would be safe to state that nearly all public figures particularly politicians have at some time in their career been caricatured by his

potent and colourful pen. His cartoons, predominantly of a political nature, speak volumes and are the perfect substitute to reams of hollow, rhetorical commentary. Over the years, Nalizpelra has tackled subjects beyond the domain of party politics and focused on issues pertaining to the state of the local environment. The relentless drive focused on over-development and building speculation, together with a fair share of controversial high-profile projects have been favourite subjects for his cartoons.



The editorial board of 'the Architect' has recently caught up with Maurice Tanti Burlo and with his kind permission we were permitted to browse through his vast archives. In this feature, we are presenting to our readers a sampling of his cartoons inspired by local environmental issues that have arisen over the years. The cartoons provide a colourful and at times, a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the state of our environment as seen through the eyes of Nalizpelra.

The emotionally-charged debate on Renzo Piano's design for the new entrance approach to Valletta was the inspiration of the cartoon depicting Piano's elegant steel bridge deflecting precariously as it is subjected to the not-so-elegant load of an elephant proceeding to the city and beckoned on by the words "Piano, Piano".

In a more recent cartoon, a corpulent and bearded Ulysses enjoying his siesta on a sun-drenched deckchair along the Ramla l-Hamra coast is rudely awakened by a

MEPA bureaucrat formally presenting him with the planning permit for the nearby tourist village development.

Government ministers are not spared as the worm-like figure takes a cue from the newly appointed Bishop Paul Cremona's statement - "I believe I can build bridges", seeing it as the ultimate divine intervention being urgently sought by Minister Jesmond Mugliett to complete the ill-fated Manwel Dimech bridge. Architects are not spared as Richard England creator of the infamous 'Love' sculpture in St Julians is depicted as a pot-smoking hippie character straight from the flower-power generation and leaning on a pair of compasses.

Nalizpelra indulges in a world where the strokes of his pen render the use of words superfluous.

Perit Conrad Thake

(All cartoons are being reproduced with kind permission of Maurice Tanti Burlo)

Extending UCAs in post-war urban areas

by Perit Edward Said

A curious letter to the editor which appeared in The Times dated March 18 defended the existence of apartment blocks on Tower Road, Sliema. The reader spurred the argument from Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi's comments aired on national television soon after the General Elections. Dr. Gonzi reiterated how the new Administration is bent on drastically improving the Maltese environment, urban and rural. He went on to mention the situation on Tower Road and how in such cases, very little can be done to reverse the situation.

Disagreeing with the Prime Minister, the writer argues that the long-gone villas and two or three storey houses did not exploit the maximum views of the sea whilst the more-recent apartment blocks did. However, what is most interesting for the article is its essence. Probably for the first time ever somebody is publicly expressing some form of appreciation for the development of Tower Road. This is the first manifestation of the element of time which has progressed significantly in a process that ultimately makes buildings historically significant and raises the argument as to whether they are worth preserving or not.

I was recently talking to a gentleman from Hamburg who recounted the construction of reinforced concrete prefabricated Brutalist condominia built in the wake of World War Two carpet bombings. As controversial as their design may have been he was still sad-



Still preserved uniformity at Santa Lucija



The 60s idiom at Santa Lucija

housing in Floriana with its giant orders and dwarfing loggias. As far as form is concerned there is definitely an expression here stating the rising from the ashes of a modern, orderly, very bold and militant style. In Bormla for instance we find clear examples of post-war restrained Art Deco. Function on the other hand decreed the sheer need for housing and increasing use of the automobile both of which resulted in multi-storey development, generous roads and parking arrangements.

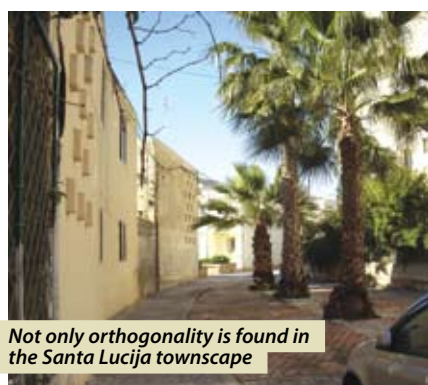
These urban legacies are now half a century old.

The settlement of Santa Lucija, built from scratch as a new town survives relatively untouched. So do up-market suburbs such as The Gardens in St. Julian's with its mix of detached and semi-detached villas with an architectural grammar that boasts some of the best examples of 60s and 70s design. All these urban areas and more in Malta are the few examples which reflect a wide spectrum of Malta's socio-economic status at a certain period in history. Yes history which believe it or not continued after World War Two!

Since its birth MEPA has had the challenging responsibility to decide which buildings or urban areas are worth saving for posterity. Despite countless tragic losses many examples of Maltese rustic, vernacular, baroque, colonial architecture



A residence undoubtedly worthy of conservation at The Village



Not only orthogonality is found in the Santa Lucija townscape

have been protected by law. Will these 'styles' stop at World War Two however? Is it incomprehensible that some examples of post-war housing schemes are identified and listed? Yes, one realises that space is limited on our islands especially with (thankfully) more and more restrictions on development on virgin land. MEPA, would it be so outlandish to extend UCAs to places like Santa Lucija, Tal-Virtu' or The Gardens in St. Julian's? Don't we want future generations to have some idea of authentic architecture dating to the post-war era and beyond?



Typical residence at The Village, St. Julian's



Garden Street at The Village, St. Julian's



Urban space hierarchies at Santa Lucija

1000 YEARS OF WORLD ARCHITECTURE - AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

They say that a good story will always be passed on from one generation to the next. Though the past may be inked on the paper trail through time, it often leaves us with a cacophony of occurrences the historian must make sense out of. Fortunately, a history of architecture has miraculously survived as tactile representations of what it once meant to respective builders and patrons.

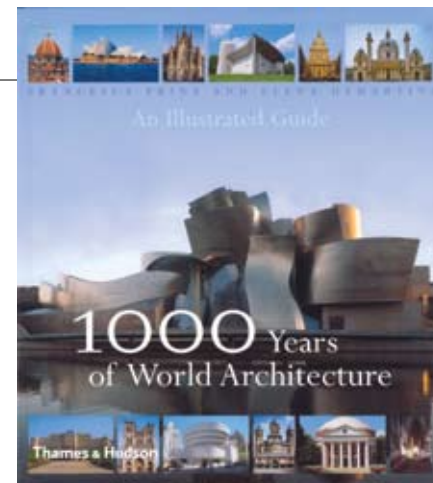
Of course every masterpiece has its own story. As the foreword to Francesca Prina and Elena Demartini's handy little almanac '1000 Years of World Architecture' explains, buildings don't just appear. What is often made by the historian to seem as

obvious progress is frequently born of a complex network of client architect relationships, influences, current exigencies and without a doubt, pure uncalculated chance. Such a statement is hardly news to the contemporary architecture practice and thus the book generously leaves the reader with much to relate to.

Despite the authors' decision to revert to a chronological presentation of case studies (in fact, this book might have more aptly been called X Examples of World Architecture) special attention sheds additional light on important movements and themes, from the Romanesque style to the more contemporary trends. These

are explained by concise two-page features and some 180 mini biographies of notable architects.

The vessels of progress rarely face clear paths to steer through. If they did '1000 Years of World Architecture' could not have been as half as interesting. Both the building aesthetic, as well as how it came to be, operate in tandem throughout glossy pages. This smart visual guide is sure to serve as a handy reference to the most significant examples of Western architecture of the last century or at the very least act as the perfect thing to retreat to during those rare moments of office downtime.



Francesca Prina & Elena Demartini
Thames and Hudson
ISBN-13 978-0500342299

<http://whc.unesco.org/>



what we live with today and what we will pass on to future generations.

The website provides links to UNESCO's publications, the latest one being a very interesting document about Climate Change effects on our World Heritage.

A desirable item for anybody's office is the World Heritage Map that features the 851 World Heritage sites and brief explanations of the World Heritage Convention and the World Heritage conservation programmes, as well as superb photos of World Heritage sites with explanatory captions.

The UNESCO World Heritage website is full to the brim with information about many important world sites and links to what is going on as regards to the activities of the organisation. The site aims to promote our legacy from the past, together with

The website is composed of subdomains linking to Natural Science, Education, Human Science and other topics. The best description of this site is that of an overwhelming pool of information and interesting reading material.

COMPETITION

This photomontage illustrates a project for a cliff-hanging hotel that was proposed in 1967 by the famous Spanish architect Julio Lafuente. Can you identify the proposed location for this unrealised project?



The winner of this competition wins a copy of the book reviewed above: **"1000 Years of World Architecture"**. This book is available from **Agenda Bookshop**, the sponsor of this competition and review page. Send your entries to:

The Editor, The Architect Competition, Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira, or by email on thearchitect@ktpmalta.com

The first correct entry drawn on the 15 May 2008 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 chapel featured in the previous competition was that dedicated to St Anthony of Padova (or Lisbon), located in Fort Manoel, Manoel Island. The architect responsible for the design was Francois de Mondion. Unfortunately no correct answers were received.



Agendabookshop

NOW TO 13 APRIL 2008 ; THE LIGHTHOUSE, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

SENSES OF PLACE: BUILDING EXCELLENCE

This exhibition will show the outcomes of a series of workshops, in response to the Scottish Government's 'Curriculum for Excellence', in which teachers, pupils and other school users from five local authorities across Scotland have worked with leading Scottish architects and designers to influence the design of learning spaces for the future. www.thelighthouse.co.uk

NOW TO 19 APRIL 2008; NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE, LONDON, UK

UNDERGROUND LONDON

This exhibition will explore the new underground infrastructure planned for London in its drive to become a sustainable modern city. www.newlondonarchitecture.org



NOW TO 20 APRIL 2008 ; GALLERY OF MODERN ART, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

COLLAGE CITY

This display highlights the crucial position of urban space as a playground of ideas for artists in the past 60 years. www.nationalgalleries.org

NOW TO 27 APRIL 2008; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

MAPPING THE IMAGINATION

This display includes maps made to inform or to entertain, maps enhanced by imaginative embellishments, maps that show imaginary places, and works in which artists have adapted map iconography to express their ideas and experiences of place. www.vam.ac.uk



NOW TO 11 MAY 2008; MAK EXHIBITION HALL, AUSTRIA

COOP HIMMELB(L)AU – BEYOND THE BLUE

An insight into the unconventional and pioneering approach of the team who keeps redefining the boundaries of form and material in architecture and urban planning with their architectural vocabulary. www.mak.at

NOW TO 19 MAY 2008; ARCHITEKTURZENTRUM WIEN, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

THE WHITE CITY OF TEL AVIV: TEL-AVIV'S MODERN MOVEMENT

The historic centre of Tel Aviv has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since July 2003. The Israeli city on the seafront includes a unique ensemble of over 4000 houses in new functionalist style — a little known fact in this country — that have only recently been restored. www.azw.at



NOW TO 22 JUNE 2008; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

THOMAS HOPE: REGENCY DESIGNER

This exhibition brings together rare surviving drawings by George Frederick Bodley and his office to mark the anniversary of his death. Bodley was the most influential Gothic-revival architect of the late 19th century, and this exhibition explores his career from his early days

as an avant-garde High Victorian, through his pioneering return of the Gothic revival, to the spare elegance of his late style, which so profoundly shaped the appearance of Anglican churches throughout the world. It draws on the rich resources of the RIBA and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and is supplemented by a number of key loans. www.vam.ac.uk

NOW TO 13 JULY 2008; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

CHINA DESIGN NOW

The V&A's spring exhibition, China Design Now, will explore the recent explosion of new design in China, from the 2008 Olympic stadium to the most interesting fashion and graphics. www.vam.ac.uk

NOW TO 31 DECEMBER 2008; ARCHITEKTURZENTRUM WIEN, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

A SHOW: AUSTRIAN ARCHITECTURE IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY

With the opening of the final 3rd stage of a_show, the Architekturzentrum Wien is bringing the comprehensive documentation of Austrian architecture of the 20th century up to the present day. www.azw.at

09 – 12 APRIL 2008 ; CASABLANCA, MOROCCO

MEDESTATE 2008

International forum and exhibition of Real Estate and Investment in the Mediterranean region www.medestate.ma

09 APRIL TO 14 SEPTEMBER 2008; MAK GALLERY, AUSTRIA

ANDREAS FOGARASI

www.mak.at

10 APRIL 2008; FLAGEY BUILDING, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE: ARCHITECTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The Conference, which enjoys the patronage of Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, is addressed primarily to European leaders and decision makers from all

levels, who act in matters relating to the built environment. It will present a number of ideas and concrete recommendations in relation to quality and planning that could be adopted and put in place very quickly. www.ace-cae.org

15 - 17 APRIL; INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE, SINGAPORE

CITYSCAPE ASIA 2008

An annual networking exhibition and conference focusing on all aspects of the property development cycle. It attracts regional and international investors, property developers, leading architects and designers to an annual forum that celebrates the very best in real estate, architecture, urban planning and design. www.cityscapeasia.com

16 TO 29 APRIL 2008; GALLERY 1, PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON, UK

VISUALISATIONS OF THE 21ST CENTURY CITY

An annual exhibition produced by Building Futures in collaboration with MA Design students. This year students from the Royal College of Art will be responding to the shifting scenarios that the city may face in the future. www.architecture.com

29 JUNE TO 03 JULY 2008; TORINO, ITALY

XXIII UIA WORLD CONGRESS TORINO 2008 – TRANSMITTING ARCHITECTURE

A tool to build a widespread urban democracy, nourished by communication and by the spreading of knowledge. www.uia2008torino.org



20 JULY TO 20 OCTOBER 2008; THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, USA

HOME DELIVERY: FABRICATING THE MODERN DWELLING

This exhibition will offer the most thorough examination of both the his-

torical and contemporary significance of factory-produced architectures to date www.moma.org

17 TO 19 SEPTEMBER 2008; VAN NELLE FACTORY, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE



Docomomo invites architects, historians, and other parties involved

in the processes of preservation, renovation and transformation of modern buildings to investigate the paradox of the modern monument, and to reflect on the manifold dilemmas of change and continuity. It is time to once again face the challenge of change.