

## City Gate demolition to start in July or August

Demolition works at City Gate are expected to start around July or August, Chris Paris, CEO of the Grand Harbour Regeneration Project, said yesterday.

He was leading media persons on a tour around the site together with Architect Conrad Buhagiar as the first works have started on the Valletta City Gate project.

Mr Buhagiar said three studies on the geological make-up of Freedom Square have been launched as part of the project.

Walls at the back of the vacated shops in Freedom Square are being removed to reveal the rock behind them so that engineers could assess its suitability for new foundations.

At the same time, deep boreholes are being drilled in the square as part of geo-thermal investigations into whether they could be used for the cooling and heating system of the new parliament – since rock is cooler than air in summer, and warmer in winter. Initial results had confirmed assumptions made in the design stage, he said. Workers are also uncovering an old trench round the former Opera House, where water used to be collected. This too could be used for the new project.

Mr Buhagiar confirmed that the old railway station and tunnel beneath Freedom Square will be preserved.

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