

## Fort St Elmo is perfect for Parliament House

John Caruana, Naxxar



I don't think there is a better place for Parliament than Fort St Elmo complex; the site is simply ideal, perfect. Why?

In the first place because, at the very tip of the Valletta peninsula, Fort St Elmo commands entrance to the island's two major harbours, which are both representative of so much glorious history, the backbone of any mature nation.

Situated at the very end of Valletta, it can be so conveniently reached and is easily accessible both from Marsamxett end as well as along the waterfront on the Grand Harbour side. The sheer advantage of this is that it won't in any way disrupt everyday business inside Valletta.

The fort is so near the Mediterranean Conference Centre, which is slowly becoming the hub of so much diplomatic activity. Having our Parliament next to the MCC will keep enhancing the area.

Knowing the historical facts surrounding this Fort, I daresay the crucial part it played in the Great Siege of 1565 led our forefathers to the eventual victory on September 8. Indeed, its astonishing three-and-a-half-week resistance to the Turkish onslaught before it was so brutally subdued must have seriously demoralised the besiegers and necessitated different conflicting manoeuvres which must have cost the enemy the siege.

A Turkish victory would have surely meant forfeiting our Christian roots and a Western culture.

Moving our Parliament onto this site would not only be an opportunity to give deserving praise to so many unsung heroes but is in itself a sure guarantee that such bravery is never forgotten. Once the necessary refurbishments have been completed, a commemorative plaque, ideally, if it is possible, with the names of the fallen, will be so befitting.

Fort St Elmo is much older than the Opera House, even older than the Grandmaster's Palace itself. If my memory serves me right, it was built in 1551, when the threatening rumours of an Ottoman invasion were so rife. I also believe the Fort was the first planned construction on the Sceberras peninsula. Siting Parliament here is unquestionably a great honour to the representatives of our nation.

Moving Parliament to St Elmo is possibly the biggest chance we have to restore the capital's silent sentinel.

Having said all this, let us give our architects an opportunity. They will surely rise to the occasion and breathe into Fort St Elmo enough vigour to make of it a lasting architectural masterpiece.

---

## Comments

D Vella (1 hour, 41 minutes ago)

Of course it is ideal. I have commented on this site before. It will also serve not to have to face politician's each and every time we go to Valletta, unless we want to that is.

Anthony Magri (1 hour, 43 minutes ago)

Parliaments in any World state its place is in the centre of the capital not on the outskirts north, south, east or west. The Main Guard is the place if it is to be moved from the President's palace.

Paul Borg (2 hours, 37 minutes ago)

The ideal and most dignified place and the one with best facilities already existing or the space for whatever else needs to be put in place, including parking and security: Manoel Island. Fort Manoel itself as the Parliament House and the refurbished Old Lazzaretto Buildings providing the necessary purpose built accommodation for the supporting staff and infrastructure. It would also have the added benefit of reducing people and traffic pressures from Valletta yet still be only a few minutes distance from it by boat or ferry. Refurbish and restore Fort St. Elmo by all means, as the Memorial to the Grand Siege its History deserves.

Anna Farrugia (3 hours, 1 minute ago)

Mr Caruana, what a marvellous idea! Prosit!

---