

Is that the Opera House in the picture?

Jane Micallef, Mosta

As I am always fascinated with old photographs of Malta, you can imagine my delight when, leafing through a book my husband had acquired from his late father, I found an undated newspaper cutting with an aerial picture of Valletta which I had never seen before. In the picture (above) I immediately recognised Castille, St James Cavalier and the old City Gate but, for the life of me, I could not recognise the majestic building dominating what is known today as Freedom Square.



That must be the old Royal Opera House from an angle never seen before, I said to myself. But then, wait a minute, I said. If that was the Opera House, then the picture must be pre-war. Yet, the parking area in front of the Castille Hotel clearly indicates that the aerial photograph was taken after the war, probably in the early 1960s.

In fact the news story on the other side of the cutting (probably from *Il-Berqa*) mentions Dr A. Paris as being the Minister of Education and Mr J. P. Vassallo as Director of Education at the time.

So, I came to the conclusion that the imposing building inside the entrance to Valletta was nothing but a superimposed artist's impression of how the opera house was to be rebuilt. I wonder if the plans still exist somewhere and whether they would have been acceptable today.

Comments

John Inguanez (3 days, 20 hours ago)

No that is not the Opera House designed by Barry. That is the design by an Italian architect way back in thr 60s under the Nationalist Government.

frank vella (3 days, 22 hours ago)

am sure the picture will arouse great interest with the public. look forward to comments about it. think city gate still the old one.

Richard J. Caruana (3 days, 22 hours ago)

Ms Micallef, you might be lucky enough to acquire a copy of the book about the Opera House, with its history, complete with plans etc including the post-war plans and artist impressions. Authors are Joe Bonnici and Michael Cassar. If not for sale you'll surely find it at the Public Library.

g.c.Forte (3 days, 22 hours ago)

Very interesting picture, what about the two stairs which was at the back of the city gate. As it is in the picture, it is very difficult to go up for the buildings on city gate. There should be some kind of deviation in the picture, but what ? and how?
