

Mepa should safeguard Valletta's skyline - minister

Claudia Calleja

Valletta's skyline should be left intact, Infrastructure Minister Austin Gatt said yesterday, and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority should do its utmost to safeguard it.

The World Heritage City was under the spotlight yesterday during a seminar entitled 'Valletta 450' organised by the Valletta Alive Foundation. Valletta will mark its 450th anniversary in 2016.

Two architects argued that old and new may coexist and the possibility of contemporary architecture in Valletta should be explored.

Paul Camilleri said: "Old and new can be carefully knitted together so as to hold onto the city's historical identity even in the presence of contemporary buildings."

Photo: Ray Attard



David Felice spoke about the option of keeping Valletta's core untouched but discussed the possibility of expanding its peripheries into a "greater Valletta".

Dr Gatt also stressed the need to tackle the traffic congestion problem and enforce laws to stop cars from parking on pavements and shops putting up signs in the middle of passageways.

He also touched on the importance of respecting Valletta's residents since ultimately, they injected life to the city.

One resident, Antoine Cachia, spoke about living in the city which hosts about 6,300 residents. He suggested that special electricity tariffs be introduced for Valletta residents to "help the resurgence of the city".

Elizabeth Aquilina, from the foundation, spoke about the need to convert old houses into boutique hotels, to encourage more bars and restaurants to open for business in the evenings and for churches to open their doors to the 1.5 million tourists who roam the streets every year.

Martin Laing, who specialises in estate management in the environmental context, proposed the setting up of an urban regeneration company that oversees the rehabilitation of property in Valletta and also suggested introducing tax incentives for home owners to improve their property.

Comments

J. Spiteri (22 hours, 59 minutes ago)

What about the blue and yellow painted structures at the Valletta water polo pitch area? They offer a horrible sight from Ta' Xbiex and Sliema. They could, at least, have been painted in a more environment-friendly colour. The possibility of having them demolished would further benefit the Valletta bastions vista.

Wilfred L Camilleri (1 day, 2 hours ago)

Are these the same architects who think that the Valletta Gate is some sort of architectural monument? Come on! Valletta does not need modern buildings. What Valletta needs is the restoration of its historic buildings including the Opera House, the City Gate, and the many palaces now being used for government offices thus denying access to them by the public and tourists. Imagine Versailles being converted into government offices....only in Malta!

I Galea (1 day, 4 hours ago)

Modern architects must not be allowed to touch Valletta.

We have already had too many rapes of Malta by your modern architecture.

Karen Zammit Manduca (1 day, 6 hours ago)

Only last week I took some Italian friends to St Michael's Bastion to admire the vista of Valletta and the Grand Harbour and that is exactly what they noticed and commented upon...the eyesore to the side of St Angelo!

I.cachia (1 day, 10 hours ago)

"Two architects argued that old and new may coexist and the possibility of contemporary architecture in Valletta should be explored."

Right, like in the case of the monstrosity built next to fort St. Angelo. The knight's architecture and the glass and concrete block blend to perfection so that one cannot distinguish the one from the other. I bet even de Valette himself would find it difficult to tell the difference! Just as he would not recognise the city he had built and named after him!