

## Shop owners welcome City Gate, Opera House decision

The Republic Street Business Community Association (RSBCA) said today that it was very pleased that the government had announced its plans for the relocation of Parliament to the site of the old Opera House and also about the redevelopment of City Gate. It also agreed with the plans for the Grand Master's Palace.

"The city will benefit as these projects will enhance and attract more tourism in Valletta," the association said.

It added that it was proud that Renzo Piano had been selected to be the architect to design and commission this project.

"Since he is an architect of world fame we feel that his credentials and qualifications for such projects will be to the benefit of Valletta, which will be included among his long list of world renowned important projects."

The association, however, urged the government to build a multi-storey car park below Freedom Square in order to improve access to Valletta.

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### Comments

edward bartolo (4 days, 16 hours ago)

The original designs look like a lost jewel from the past. Why should our government replace them by a modern concrete and glass monster?! My humble opinion is: let us restore what WWII took from us. It is a pity that we cannot agree on this!

victor vella (4 days, 18 hours ago)

Can we see the plans please?

adrian galea (4 days, 18 hours ago)

Interestingly, when the opera house was first designed, it was much derided. It seems nothing has changed 150 years later, with modern critics already criticising a design they have not seen..

I am as much as part of this generation as Mr Grech, but I come to different conclusions and I do not support a reconstruction of the opera house (much as i like the design itself).

This is too important a site not to think as to what message it needs to send now and in the future. I do not favour sending a message of mere reconstruction. I favour a statement of what Malta is today, and where it wants to be tomorrow. It is probably the most important post-independence architectural decision which needs to be taken.

Again, wait and see...let the designs come through and one can talk. At the moment a lot of criticism is based on speculation and assumptions. It is far too premature.

Albert Bezzina (4 days, 20 hours ago)

Private investors could not be found for a reconstruction of the Opera House and environs which would give a viable return on investment.

The solution: Use public money (our taxes) to build an extravagant building to house Parliament!

WE should also discuss not only if we want Renzo Piano to design the building but also if we want to use our taxes to create another parliamentary building when the current one is doing its job.

The question arises: If the rebuilding of the Opera House to its former state and function could not find private investors and a decision has been taken to use public money to build another parliamentary building, WHAT is the problem with using public money to rebuild the old Opera House to its former design with possible internal multi-use capability. This will not give a return on the money spent just as much as another Parliamentary building will not give a monetary return. Extravagant hallways and offices for the MP's maybe? A mini country with a Mega-Parliamentary Building a la Malta House in Brussels maybe! Keep the MP's at the lower end of Republic Street. Recreate the Opera House to greet visitors entering Valletta.

apgrech (4 days, 20 hours ago)

There's only one design that fits the Opera House and that's the ORIGINAL design. Anything different will not be acceptable by us and our future generations.

If the government plans to have a modern design, most of us would appreciate it if they leave the area as it is.

The NP goofed when they built the existing City Gate and apparently they are planning to goof on these new designs of the Gate and the Theatre.

I wish there will be many who'd push the Opera House to be constructed on its original design.

Marvin Mizzi (4 days, 21 hours ago)

At long last something is going to be done and it is recommendable. But first of all nothing against Renzo Piano but anyone just deals with one person without the chance for other renowned architects to give their plans as well and then decide on the best option. How can there be public consultation when the public is kept in the dark on the original plans. Finally when we already have a Parliament and recession affecting all the world why put 60 to 80M in something that is not going to generate business. Is it really a present for Valletta and its people to Malta and all Maltese or self gratification to our Prime Minister. We need a building that can give grandeur to the City of Valletta and at the same time help to generate business in Valletta. Surely not a Parliament can do. What would create is of an opposite in itself. You welcome people to the City but the first thing they find is a restricted secure area Parliament, There is only one place for Parliament and that is Fort Saint Elmo. Old Opera House should either be a National Theatre or a 5str Hotel. + Traditional Building

adrian galea (4 days, 23 hours ago)

IGalea: i would also look at Norman Foster and of all places...Berlin, Germany

CButtigieg: We haven't seen a single design yet...so what is the criticism about? We have to wait and see.

A world renowned architect being involved is certainly a commendable option. It does not mean that whatever he is going to propose is right, but neither am I going to say it's wrong without giving due consideration. Saying that, I wish him well and hope he comes up with something we can all be proud of and which enhances the city and the country's reputation overall. Interestingly, the Chamber of Architects do not have a problem with this.

It is sad that many people seem to develop opinions when they simply do not have the information yet to reach that opinion in an informed, considered way.

John Scerri (5 days ago)

@lgalea

We've already got a Maltese architect who started that trend.

Just visit the Franciscan Parish church of Bugibba designed by Richard England....

Looks like a bunker among other and even modern Maltese buildings!!!

Igalea (5 days ago)

Caroline Buttigieg

Because some persons in our government suffer from an acute inferiority complex.

René Micallef (5 days ago)

Afraid of foreign architects? Of modern architecture?

Then how about going back to a nice picnic area on the pristine Sciberras hill? And please demolish those horrible baroque façades in Mdina, as well as all the Renaissance military architecture... Good old Siculo-Norman architecture should be modern enough!

Maybe not? Well, then consider R. Piano seriously... or N. Foster if you prefer. They sure aren't quite as bold as their baroque predecessors, who demolished 'old' stuff without the least concern, merrily chopping off jutting pieces of sculpture from cathedral façades to hang decorative papier-maché for some royal visit. Or else, if you prefer, let us build architecturally worthless apartments and fill our island with fake baroque, so that in 300 years' time our generation will be remembered for its artistic decadence and worthlessness.

If we can afford the Vaubans and Vignolas, or the Brunelleschis and the Berninis of our day maybe we should consider employing them... telling them exactly what we want, like the old patrons of the arts used to do, and leaving the rest to their creativity.

Caroline Buttigieg (5 days, 1 hour ago)

Just because the architect is of world fame, does not mean that what will eventually be part of our beautiful historic Valletta will fit in. His modern projects may just be an eye-sore to Valletta.....why are foreigners, in Maltese eyes, so much better than the Maltese?

Louis Gialanze (5 days, 1 hour ago)

Of course these people approve! What else can we expect. It's in their vested interest. I wonder whether the same can be said of other shopowners whose commercial interest lies elsewhere and who do not partake of the ripple effect of notte bianca or the cruise liner business. How about resurfacing the roads leading to the south instead.

Igalea (5 days, 4 hours ago)

Have a look and see what others think about outsiders designing their cities.

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