

Taking the 'Maltese' out of Malta

Andrew Gilmore, Senglea



An artist's impression of the revamped St George's Square.

Poor old Valletta! Here we go again, with a new plan for Palace Square as illustrated in an artist's impression, which is as relative to Valletta and a World Heritage Baroque City as a kick in the teeth so far as the "furnishings" are concerned.

With Maltese craftsmen being possibly the best remaining in the world so far as wood, metal and stone working is concerned, surely a more fitting design for lamp standards can be found for a position in front of the Grand Master's Palace? Do the people who are responsible (who exactly are they, by the way - let's have some names to these designs) never travel to other countries and cities to see how to deal with restoration of city centres in historical sites? Why can we not have something thrilling, incorporating symbols of Malta, in soaring bronze, instead of something which looks suitable for illuminating a railway marshalling yard? Or are they designed to complement the equally unsuitable side entrance to Cordina's and the M&S façade, both stuck on to the Grade One listed Casino Maltese?

From the comments describing the illustration, it seems the whole area has been viewed as an open-air office space - the sight of "workers happily prodding their laptops" outside the Palace will make a really attractive photo for holidaymakers - I don't think!

Perhaps it is a prelude to what to expect for the City Gate. It's not enough for one "Piano" to play a few "solos" in our capital city, what Valletta needs is a full orchestra of people with thrilling and inspired ideas to restore the once thrilling and inspired ambiance which it once enjoyed with a joyous explosion of design and inspiration, but with the inspiration coming from inside Malta.

Otherwise we are heading towards a sort of Mediterranean Milton Keynes. Valletta deserves better than this, so try stuffing the Wi-Fi and keep the horses.

For a start, while we await the Piano Plan can someone please scrape the tatty remains of the pop posters off City Gate and prosecute the clubs and venues for illegal bill-posting? The phone numbers are all there to see. Or is it that no one really cares?

Comments

v.pulis (1 week, 3 days ago)

I have a funny feeling that the architect/s who designed the square is/are the same one/s who is/are responsible for the design of the baracca lift.

Anthony Magri (1 week, 3 days ago)

Those who criticise the designers ought to remember that it is Perit George Pullicino that has had the last word. He chose the design and boasted about it.

So if there is someone to blame it is the responsible chooser not the proposer.

Didn't we notice that Perit G. Pullicini is obsessed with squares and fountains. He is in litigations with his cabinet colleague Dr.A. Gatt for wasting water without paying a dime. If G.Pullicini embellish Valletta Dr. A. Gatt will gain, so why not think of something for Sliema that Perit G. Pullicini will benefit from it. And here comes Pijazza Sant Anna.

T Mifsud (1 week, 3 days ago)

The design is fitting! We dont want to be stuck in the old times, kollox tal-gebel tal-franka u hadid ta Hal-Qormi! It is a modern design that has both form and function. All foreign capitals have projects such as these albeit on a much larger scale. We need to mix tradition with futurism. It reminds us of our past while it gives direction ahead. Great design with purpose! Fantastic.

A Sciberras (1 week, 3 days ago)

And if the palace square is to lose its parade ground , why not reinstall the magnificent fountain that was there before the British removed it.

A Sciberras (1 week, 3 days ago)

Do you really beleive that Valletta is going to keep its world heritage status with all these modern interventions. Those lamp posts are fit for Sliema or Mia. I wonder what people would have siad had Mintoff authorised such projects.

Galea. L (1 week, 3 days ago)

Excellent letter.

Original plans as to how the knights built it and how it looked should be found and the square re-instated as it was then.

The design is a blasphemy to Valletta as an old city built by gentlemen for gentlemen. Any bets that it is a Piano design to test the reaction to his other blasphemy which he will present later for City Gate?

J Martinelli (1 week, 3 days ago)

OK Let's have a referendum on the suitability of the light standards!

Valletta was built 400 hundred years ago but that does not mean that it should not evolve and blend the old with the new.

The 'Piano' project will be judged on its own merits and no doubt there will be critics irrespective of whether Mr. Piano will deliver an austere medieval model, a modern one or something in between.

This is Malta, after all.

John Carmel Navarro (1 week, 3 days ago)

Taking the Maltese out of Malta or taking the Mickey as they say out of all of us! Who in their right frame of mind would choose lights that must have come straight out of IKEA or BHS electrical departments (no offence meant to both these stores) Why are we being treated like imbeciles surely as mentioned by Andrew a very passionate man who really cares about Valletta, we are still blessed by amazing craftsman who can produce and reproduce artefacts of the highest quality so would it not be fitting to come up with something that fits the ambience rather than the most distasteful set of lighting I have ever seen outside a Historic building anywhere in the World.

godwin scerri (1 week, 3 days ago)

'(who exactly are they, by the way - let's have some names to these designs).' That is the really relevant sentence in this otherwise excellent item

g. attard (1 week, 3 days ago)

"Valletta deserves better than this, so try stuffing the Wi-Fi and keep the horses."

Yeah. We don't need something that will be of benefit for locals and tourists alike. Horses sweltering in the summer sun is what we really need.

In fact, I'm sick of technology too. Let's just go the whole hog and roll ourselves back to the Dark Ages and be done with it. Keep Palace Square for burning unbelievers.

Luke Buttigieg (1 week, 3 days ago)

I don't agree with you at all Mr. Gilmore. The square would look really good in it's planned state, and the city is in dire need of open spaces where workers can perhaps take their work outdoors. I believe the square would actually make any photos of the palace much more pleasant to look at, versus the cars currently present in this same area. The horses can be moved to a more suitable place. I believe this project would compliment the work which has already been done in a similar style, such as Merchant's street and Republic Street paving, and Upper Barracca Garden's overhaul.
