

Valletta projects: The people have their say

Hundreds of people visited the exhibition of the proposed projects for the entrance to Valletta, being held at the Archaeology Museum. Close to 400 visited in the morning.

The plans, by world renowned architect Renzo Piano, were launched in Republic Street yesterday evening.

This morning they were visited by 125 architects and architecture students in the presence of Mr Piano. Their reaction was that the projects would take Malta to the 21st century.

Mr Piano is proposing the replacement of City Gate with a breach in the bastions, an environmentally friendly Parliament House on Freedom Square, and a roofless theatre incorporating the ruins of the former Opera House.

While the general reaction of people interviewed by Claudia Calleja in the vox pop above has been positive, concern was expressed over the fact that the proposed theatre is roofless and that Freedom Square would no longer be an open space.

Comments

Carmel Borg (17 hours, 29 minutes ago)

@ A.Borg

Sir, you have missed my point which was that we do not need another open air theatre. Valletta's (and our other cities'/towns') squares can serve for the purpose. It is the formal theatre we need.

Otherwise, I have no objection about the restructuring / regeneration of the city entrance. As it is, it is more akin to a shanty town and an abandoned oil drilling bore-hole than the majestic city is leads us into. Its lending to cultural activities is however questionable, as most activities on the islands are if limited size and can easily be accomodated in the piazzas in our cities and villages. Lest we forget that a few metres away are the Floriana granaries. In my view, the current terminus should be restored to be included in the adjacent gardens and left as a leisure area for the Valletta residents to enjoy (they hardly have any !).

Kathy Elliot (17 hours, 33 minutes ago)

Oh, so Mr A. Borg, you are saying that you justify two more breaches in a Baroque city wall, simply because other - rather shady sounding ones - have already been done? And these two new holes won't be a garage entrance-size, either, and condoned by Maltese Government. Seriously, what's wrong with you people. This is our country heritage, and it does not belong to us. It's simply borrowed; we're keeping for our kids. We all 'loved' how the old gate was removed, and talk whistfully about it now. Well, I'm not going to talk whistfully about the city walls. I'm going to do something about it.

clive borg (1 day, 3 hours ago)

@ Joe Vella

when i was talking about a piazza i havent mentioned that i want to stay it like it is but to regenerate it and do something that instead of hiding our fortifications and the church behind the theater make them much more visible than pianos newly constructed project....

@ A.Borg

i'm sure laparelli would applaud him for a newly modern structure to be put as the centre of attention rather than the other structures that we have... and if we havent got land power why we have to use all the piazzas i dont know where you live but do you prefer high and massive concrete structures rather than piazzas! (personally i like modern buildings but now even in valletta! we'll start with this one and i'm sure someone else will come with something new and original in another part of valletta!)

P Attard (1 day, 6 hours ago)

whilst the designs are beautiful there must have been significant constraints and are not necessarily practical.

the following considerations could be taken into account :

will the area beneath the parliament be closed for security reasons every time there is a session?

who will organise events in the new theatre when he would have to reimburse the tickets in case of bad weather?

why not spend the money on a less ambitious project and focus only on the opera house +roof and build the rest at a later stage? everything could be given a general clean up and we could still have parking and a road above the gate

J.Attard (1 day, 6 hours ago)

personally i like d proposals overall. the only thing that worries me is the reduced parking, sure i totally agree that freedom square should not be a parking area, but the ditch!!!!!! come on....Valletta needs more parking spaces!!!!

Etienne Vella (1 day, 7 hours ago)

Given the money given spent, I strongly suggest that a facelift is also done to the arcade and flats that will now be opposite parliament. A good paint job and a large number of plants might do the trick.

edward camilleri (1 day, 7 hours ago)

This is the last site in Valletta where an underground car park can be built, we already lost the main guard car park plus the other parking spaces that are now pedestrian or have been turned into resident parking only. Valletta is becoming another Mdina, a silent city, what is going to happen to the restaurants and coffee shops in the evening, and the hundreds of retail shops?

g farrugia (1 day, 8 hours ago)

Apart from the design and all, what worries a bit is the demolishing of the road roofing the current gate and the change of use from parking to garden of the ditch. The proposed designs will definitely improve the quality of the areas mentioned above however it should be noted that at present the carpark and road are host to at least 500 car parking spaces. Has a traffic plan been drawn up for Valletta or is going to be a non vehicular access zone all together?? I think this question is of great importance especially to the companies which have their offices in Valletta.

T Abela (1 day, 8 hours ago)

Opera House - 3/10 - The idea to preserve the remaining original parts is justified and i agree with it however being open air will limit the performance time to 11pm! - or are we going to change the law??? we have enough noise pollution in this country - lets not increase it. the opera house should be totally closed and sound proof with maybe a retractable roof - that would be a sight! but obviously there are no funds for this.

Parliament - 7/10 - I agree with the site but the glass should be kept at a minimum. My idea would be to old feature lines integrated into something modern.

Gate - 8/10 - Preferably the two sides should be connected by a lightweight bridge

Bridge - 9/10 - Agreed with narrowing the bridge but structure should look lighter.

A.Borg (1 day, 9 hours ago)

@ C.Borg

I understand your interest in piazzias but you are mixing cities that have a land power larger then whole Malta and can expand and create any 'open' space as possible. Valletta was not designed on that terms, watch it from the sky it is a grid and all squares are strategically placed. Valletta as it is the largest area that can acomodate a piazza is so small that does not make sense ... and Piano was wise enough to embelish Laperelli's strategy!

The only area that a piazzia may be comftable and make sense IMO remain that 'gorbocc' and eye soar of a shabby bus turminus we have ... looks like a city under siegel!

Anthony Said (1 day, 11 hours ago)

@ ALL

My comments were posted on the other blog 'CITY BY A GENTLEMAN'. And anybody who really loves our capital city must share by idea. And as I said, I bet that Renzo gave a thought about it !!!!

Carmel Borg (1 day, 12 hours ago)

I have not (yet) seen the models except on TV but:

* I think Mr Piano has overlooked our numerous squares which are themselves open air theatres, some even with excellent acoustics (e.g. St George's Square, Valletta, Cathedral Square, Mdina, etc.), spectacular backdrop and adaptability for seating. No further open air theatres please. I'm all for the (roofed) opera house.

* Excellent one on the carnival all year round. Why not do the parliament underground with a glass roof for us to stamp and drive our floats on, but keep Freedom Square free ? How will the project go around the current parking charade ?

* With such a massive project, I would love to see better use of the wealth of (railway) tunnels leading right up from Pieta to City Gate dating back from the late 1800s.

* I still opine that the place of parliament is at St Elmo which is crying for restoration and rehabilitation while the area is always a battle cry during election time. Time to put money where the mouth is, if there is any.

Mark Galea (1 day, 12 hours ago)

Typical moaners and complainers ... hope it is not politics.

Marisa Bugeja (1 day, 15 hours ago)

Mr Renzo Piano has shown great sensitivity in such a delicate project. He did not dare touch the ruins of the Opera House but was obliged to squeeze a Parliament somewhere. Considering the difficult task he had at hand, he must be congratulated for stepping carefully. However, 80m is a lot of money; maybe the best option for Parliament would still be the Sacra Infermeria with Freedom Square retained and embellished as a piazza providing an open space in an otherwise crammed area. Money would be left over for restoration of St Elmo and with it regeneration of the lower part of Valletta.

A.Borg (1 day, 16 hours ago)

Too many experts in here, I wonder all that are crying for our heritage how many times they visit regularly our sites? Tough hundreds are visiting the plans daily, only tourists make it a point to continue visiting the other displays in the museum ... that is our love and cry for our heritage!

@ Kathy Elliot

Seems you need a good tour of Valletta bastions, the whole curtain has been breached from many other parts and it was 'our' interventions including the majestic garage opening we have nowadays.

Personally I think that Piano's ideas continue on the evolution of our city. The city is not a medieval fortress but a mix of architecture reflecting our heritage from all the Hospitaller's Order period [including a diversity of style], the colonial British period and postwar to the early days of our Republic ... so there you go for diversity of architecture in Valletta!

Mike Magri (1 day, 16 hours ago)

My comments:-

Opera House Site.... With all due respect, to me, Mr. Piano's idea of an open theatre, looks more of a Tennis Court than a respectable and dignified Opera House as it is

planned, it surely does not go with the old City history.. I think that before we take a final decision on this site, we ought to know what certain theatrical experts, like world renowned Opera Tenor Mr. Joseph Calleja etc..have to say, and then take their professional advice, and decide..

Parlament in Freedom Square... This square should not be ridden off. It should remain an open space and embellished in a certain way, that it could esilly be converted into a place suitable for holding local traditional activities, etc.. On the other hand, i am sure that we can find an already existant place/s were to have our new parlament..

Michael Darmanin (1 day, 16 hours ago)

I am looking at the plans online so bear with me. there r 2 gaps in the wall not 1. The lift should be inside the tunnel in the ditch and not visible and deliver people inside the city and not outside the bastions. that leaves only 1 gap (How about 2 gardjoli on each side to give the impression of entering a fortified city?). the Parliament building is monstruous. I thought the whole point was to liberate the Cavalier. Open air theatre is Ok but a retractable roof is possible (see Salzburg Residenz during the Festival). Politics is to Malta what religion is to India: a source of polarisation and occasional violence. Having a huge symbol for it built on entering our capital city is further aggravation. Valletta needs more open spaces not further build up. 80 million to house 65 representatives and their lackeys! wow! and it doesn't even begin to tackle the real eyesore: the bus terminus!

Kathy Elliot (1 day, 17 hours ago)

Valletta is a walled city, and should remain thus. Every single stone in that wall is protected by Maltese and Unesco Law. Any breach in the fortifications is an unthinkable damage to our heritage.

Noel Farrugia (2 days, 5 hours ago)

Talking about the theatre, Renzo Piano said that it was too small to be converted into parliament, so I understand that; if it was the right size, parliament would have definitely took over the theatre. This was the idea of Mr. Gonzi and Mr.Gatt at first but now the theatre is going to remain there and parliament is going to be 3 times bigger with central heating and airconditioning but not the so called theatre, that is going to remain "al fresco" with people sitting on tacky plastic seats, holding umbrellas (just in case it rains) or to prevent pigeon shit from striking on your hairdo. On plan of the Parliament looks so big next to the theatre. I imagined the theatre is like a caravan next to a circus tent. Last but not least - Renzo Piano's project looks very squareish. Ok he is a world famous architect but we cannot stuff whatever he projects.

charles zammit (2 days, 5 hours ago)

has piano the licence to destroy our heritage and why should our bastion city be taken to the 21st century. if our children and tourists want to savour concrete and glass they can just watch american soap operas or in the case of the latter just stay at home. we want to cherish our majestic buildings that notwithstanding signor piano renowned world fame are a gem that no one should destroy.

iCocker (2 days, 6 hours ago)

Today I have seen the models and can say the project is more visualised and understanding than ever, if many think Mr Piano made something out of his mind and not to harmonise with our culture and city I think it is better to go and have a look and scrutinise his experiments and thoughts before going into a conclusion. Including the open theatre or amphitheatre that would be a multimedia experience with the walls being used as a multimedia gallery [as recently Norbert Attard gave us a taste at Freedom Square what can be achieved]. Being roofless is something not out of this world, remember that the Greeks started this and continued by the Romans, surely they had something of interest to have that kind of ambience ...

Joe Caruana (2 days, 12 hours ago)

@Luca Cordina

Astrid Vella fights to conserve what is heritage not the present city gate built by the government led by the same party as today.

Probably if we employ Piano to refurbish our city he would pull down the bastions, we don't need them and it would Valletta more modern, open and so more friendly. Walled city with no gate?

Just another thought; anyone knows of a small shop, for sale or rent, in the vicinity of the theater? I would like to open up with umbrellas and parasols

Clint E Taliana (2 days, 13 hours ago)

I think that overall the plans look good, and really Renzo Piano has reduced the massive confused entry to the City. 2 points I want to raise:

- 1) Should the project be completed... don't you think that the bus terminus would be a BIGGER eye sore than what it is today?
- 2) Are there any plans for the lost parking spaces?

J Bajada (2 days, 13 hours ago)

Regarding an open air theater, it wouldn't be the first one in the world. The Arena in Verona is practically in ruins, it has not been built in the same way as it originally was, yet there are several operas being held there, in the open air.

Regarding the parliament house, many are saying that building such a modern building surrounded by baroque style buildings might not make sense at all. this plan reminds me of the parliament house in Edinburgh. it was built recently in a very modern way, and guess what is right in front of the Scottish Parliament? The Palace of Holyroodhouse!! so also in this case, it wouldn't be the first one in the world.

Regarding the City gate, i'm not satisfied with the plan, i expected something a lot better. perhaps the gate might be flanked by two small towers, just like the city of Tallinn in Estonia. this way, the bastions' identity is preserved, or perhaps enhanced! you would really have a sense of entering a fortified city.

R.Gauci (2 days, 16 hours ago)

I didn't see the model physically so I can't comment a lot about the project but its always better than leaving things how they are, however I have a question to ask and may be some expert may reply to me about what is going to happen with the first eyesore view one is having when approaching Valletta, that is the Bus Terminus Area with all the air pollution from Buses emitting fumes and the smell of burnt oil coming out from the Kiosks surrounding the area cause nothing is listed in the model ?!

In my opinion this area should be refurbished to a bus sheltered terminal area where each bus number has its own bus waiting area to protect passengers from the weather elements and where the kiosk can be transferred to a better hygenic premises.

Buses not in use should be parked in another area may be an underground terminus and not left in front of our Capital's Gate leaking oil!

Neil Payne (2 days, 16 hours ago)

"This all looks lovey!" he says sarcastically, then with even more sarcasm he adds, "All i have to do is wish that i still have a job when it's all done to be able to afford to get there and see it, that's of course if my car makes it there without being lost down a pothole between my home town and Valletta!" Seems to me that government spending priorities are somewhat awry. Get the basics right and do what you can to help the economy, then do the polishing. On a smaller scale, it's like planting flowers on a roundabout when the tarmac is more cratered than the moon. same thing, different scale, but it's the same. The money could be much better spent elsewhere and with more benefits.

dusty williams (2 days, 16 hours ago)

Do you call that a main entrance to a historical place like Valletta?

Did we need renzo piano to design it? even an amateur designer would have come up with something better! for me FJAKKA

and the theatre? a joke. House of parliament? do we really need that? I dont think so.

Valletta need more space not more buildings. Why not rebuild the old opera house? thats what the maltese people wanted after all. But it would'nt be ready in time for the next general election i guess??? ... and Gonzipn would have nothing to show.

Mario Sciberras (2 days, 17 hours ago)

Just two questions. Will the new bridge and entrance be able to take the human traffic at peak times? How does one get from say Castille square to say Old Bakery Street?

R. Aquilina (2 days, 17 hours ago)

I know this may sound way out but could the possibility of an artificial roof be considered for the Opera house which could be removed in summer as long as it is aesthetically pleasing using glass, something in line with the Louvre pyramid. It would be something innovative even for tourists although probably very expensive, but it could be used all year round.

As regards the plan itself on the whole I like it. What I would include would be a majestic monument commemorating La Vallette himself the Knights and the Maltese people of that era somewhere near the Parliament, after all the city was founded by him and we could do with a touch of pegeantry and the idea of having entered a city with a sublime history that is also balanced with new buildings. I would include more entertainment

areas and trees especially in the Fossa and even near the Parliament (or at least beautiful pots with flowers and shrubs, I also think that the flats will be an eyesore. The idea should be that on entering Valletta a tourist is caught up in something which is special awe inspiring and not normally encountered.

S. Camilleri (2 days, 17 hours ago)

The way I see it ...

a. 10/10 for the bridge

b. 9/10 for the Gate

c. 8/10 for the theater. Good one about incorporating the ruins but why No roof!!

d. 1/10 for the Parliament. Maybe we could have Parliament in an open air arena elsewhere..

e. 0/10 for doing nothing about the block of flats. A big space between the two cavaliers with a modern opera house would have worked wonders.. but then poor Gonzi would not have gotten his Parliament ... I can imagine him in Piano's office repeating ad nauseum .." I want my Parliament and I want it now"

Joseph Bartolo (2 days, 20 hours ago)

I want to say that the project for Valletta city gate and the adjoining areas, is not in conformity with our beloved city.

We must make sure that all the building being developed are of the same style of the city, however the interior can be created into a semi modern style.

If this is REALLY for the citizens of our beloved country, I would seriously suggest the very best for us all.

Please take heed and spend and use our money well !

Ronnie Gauci (2 days, 23 hours ago)

I never liked Piano's appointment for this project, he is good when it comes to modern cities and glass buildings but then as I can see he's an amateur when it comes to old ones like our Valletta. Tell me what innovations or new ideas did he come with which any cheaply paid Maltese architect couldn't have designed himself? He just eliminated the city gate and the opera house, designed a modern building side to side with St. James Cavalier, transformed the ditch into a garden and resurrected the idea of the lift we already had 30-40 years back.

What a waste of money!

Brian Scicluna (3 days, 1 hour ago)

First of all, I personally haven't seen the plans in detail but from what I see I think its just fine. I particularly liked the idea of the garden in the ditch. Not sure about a massive building instead of an open space but that is most probably because it is a change and everyone is somewhat unsure of change.

Regarding parking, although I don't think it is right to use Freedom Square and the ditch as car parks, at the moment they are being used so. So what is going to happen?

Where are people going to park? I would have also included the revamp of the ugly terminus in the project too, and maybe an underground car park over there.

Another thing that I haven't heard anything about.... The road on top of city gate will no longer be there. Any idea of the new traffic arrangements?

Patrick Pace (3 days, 2 hours ago)

500 years with a gate and now it is gone? no way, no way Valletta without a gate. Now it will be called city hole instead of city gate. Disgrace

Denis A. Darmanin (3 days, 2 hours ago)

@ P. Attard

Maybe you can allow us to use yours!

How many garages do you think are available in Valletta? Or shouldn't Valletta residents own cars?

But maybe you live in a new suburb, in a nice semi-detached with a driveway and garage.

I happen to be one of the 'msieken' who live in our Capital City, and proud of it. Its the place where people like yourself come to work, belch out car exhaust, shop, eat, use toilets and then go back to your sweet families in nice cozy homes. If there's anyone to comment, it should first be us residents. But no-one had even mentioned us in yesterday's magical speeches which shows you how much they care for us. Except on the eve of any election.

J Degiorgio (3 days, 3 hours ago)

iCocker is suggesting to walk a bit.. I wouldn't mind doing that if I am out for leisure..Can you please tell me how can we reach our homes and get our shopping..

Hope VALLETTA LOCAL COUNCIL will give due consideration to the RESIDENTS who have to find their way through the new maze . Will they remember residents when election will be close????

Only residents'cars (truly living in Valletta) should enter Valletta,,as it is in Mdina..I very often get the bus to go work for fear of not finding parking space when I return, let alone now when parking spaces will be reduced further..However I still do not agree with the ugly parking spaces in open squares, they are an eye sore.

May be it is high time Valletta residents get together in an association to fight for their common good.

Luca Cordina (3 days, 4 hours ago)

How come Astrid Vella and friends haven't had their say yet? I really wonder. . . .

As for the project, I simply relish Piano's idea. Delightful.

Edwin Mifsud (3 days, 4 hours ago)

Valletta's latest spectral....

COMING SOON!!!!!!

"The Phantom Gate near the Opera".

P Attard (3 days, 4 hours ago)

Ms Bugeja - in the garage! The entrance to a city obviously should not be a car park, dont' you think?!

paul mizzi (3 days, 4 hours ago)

erm... in reaction to the heading for this article...

what do you mean with "The people have their say"... in the voxpop? is that what Renzo

Piano will refer to for consultation with the public?

Where and how can anyone share ideas that Mr Piano will listen to?

iCocker (3 days, 4 hours ago)

Everyone who is against is saying he is in love with the historical Valletta but from what I read from most I think they are in love with themselves they only care that they can park their car in Valletta and not to walk a bit and have that horrible carpark or a monti just as you enter ... apart why are we juggling this thing politically, was it designed by Piano or a masterplan by Gonzi ... people lets get alive, yes we need to discuss the plan, might things also improve, infect that what Piano wants and lets get the ball rolling ... may I remind many when the Parisiens saw the Eifel Tower they got scarred that their beautiful city is ruined ... now they have a national icon!

Marisa Bugeja (3 days, 5 hours ago)

Where are we going to put the cars?!

Hector Mamo (3 days, 5 hours ago)

lil daw kolla li bhala gustifikazzjoni biex il-progett ma jsirx issa qed jippruvaw b'xi mod iqanalu lil tal-karnival biex jopponu nissugerilhom isaqsu lil tal-karnival stess x kien isir qabel meta pjazza helsien kienet mibnija.

il-karnival kien isir pjazza San Gorg. jitlaq minn hdejn kastilja, jinzal strada rjali ghal quddiem il-palazz fejn kien isir id-defile jitla minn triq l-arcisqof , ghal strada merkanti ghal hdejn kastilja.

Nistghu nesploraw li d-defile isir madwar il-funtana tat-tritoni. Hemm bzonn inhallu Pjazza Helsien bhala parking is-sena kollha biex nuzawha darba f'sena... u ejja !!! Dalghodu il-fuq minn 120 perit inghataw prezentazzjoni minn Renzo Piano innifsu dwar il-progett. Dawn zgur li jifmhu aktar minnha. Dawn ukoll baqghu impressjonati u rringrazzjaw lil Renzo Piano ta' l-opportunita li pajizna ser ikollu progetti ta' Paino.

Jimmy Magro (3 days, 5 hours ago)

For the time being I would like to comment on the open theatre concept. I have heard many of the top brass stating that the old opera house is not part of Valletta - for example for sure it was build by the British and not the Knights and no other building was based on columns.

To convert what remains from the bombed theatre into an open air theatre, I would have cleared the site and constructed something new for the benefit of the people and Valletta. The setting up and dismantling of the props that goes in setting up of a theatre would make all events unsustainable or otherwise, after footing the bill for the construction, the people would also have to foot the bill for each and every show; and then for what: to come out in sweat and sunburn if not with a sun stroke. With our weather, it is not worthed. Forget it.

Make a new start and build something beneficial for all that goes with the Valletta Knights architecture. Then I suggest that the Government should collect all the remains and use it in the Ta' Qali Park or a new park in the South.

Anthony Magri (3 days, 5 hours ago)

Reconstitute the Royal Opera House as the jewel that it was or as left after the bombing, and keep it like that for all visitors to see, just like the Rome Coliseum. A monument to modern warfare. In some hundred years it will be a monument to the past. An open air theatre is money down the drain passing through Piano's pocket that retains a handsome portion.

As for the House of Parliament, provided it is a closed box with some finishings it does not matter. Call it Freedom House and every one will be happy except Dr. A Gatt who did not once pronounced the word freedom in his speech.

How many Maltese architects that visited the exhibition would have done the same or better if given the opportunity. But they are Maltese not foreigners. A foreign name was required to enhance the present administration.

Edwin Cachia (3 days, 5 hours ago)

Kuntent hafna bis-sens ta consensus li nholoq b'dan il-progett.

Dalghodu kulhadd jitkellem b'mod positiv dwar il-proposti ta' Paino. Din l-art Helwa, il-periti, l-atmosfera ta dawk li zaru l-esebizzjoni.

Kulhadd jaqbel li l-Gvern kemm jista jkun malajr jibda. Jien ukoll ninghaqad ma dawk kollha li l-Gvern qed jghidulu, ddiskutejna hafna, il-Gvern semgha bizzejjed. Ejja ha nibdew !!

Manuel Micallef (3 days, 5 hours ago)

Some comments please:-

1. Why in Malta we work on 5 years basis only? This project is to coincide with the next general election!! and then you have Gonzi saying that this is a project "for all the people!!

2. I am not sure I like the plans. Freedom square is taken over and becomes an aquarium on a stand. The opera house is left as it is, with some temporary "walls" which are to make it an "open air theatre"!! It looks to me a cheap option!! The Valletta door is changed from a "garage" door to a "hole" in teh bastions... not sure which one is best!!

To me, if we are coming out with "cheapish" ideas for the best spot on the island, might as well leave it as it is!!

sahhiet

Chris Borg (3 days, 5 hours ago)

@ Kevin Spiteri

Good one hahahaha

Andrew McPherson (3 days, 6 hours ago)

Sorry I think its a waste of a lot of money. The City Gate will now become the City Hole in the Wall. The old theatre will remain without a roof. The square will be built up and look like a box on top of an aquarium. One of the few roads which allows you to pass from one side of Valletta to the other will be lost. All the parking spaces in the ditch will

go. The Bus terminus, which makes Valletta look like a bus station will remain. No! I don't like it at all.

Joseph E Briffa (3 days, 6 hours ago)

The concept of open-air theatres is not a new one...the Greek theatres in Sicily, the Colosseum, the Arena in Verona come to mind.

Kevin Spiteri (3 days, 6 hours ago)

Good job Mr. Piano. Building the parliament in Freedom square was the best thing of all. In the past, this square used to be used for a full weekend in February, for Carnival. Like this we would have Carnival all year round!

Philip Bonello (3 days, 6 hours ago)

For 65 years we have been waiting patiently on successive governments to rid us of the humiliating scar at the entrance of Valletta (The Germans paid for it immediately after the war). Along comes Piano, probably briefed to keep the project as cheap as possible, and he decides to keep it-Teatru Rjal, our scar, for posterity. Do you realise what this means for us Maltese especially for those of us from Valletta. We will have to see those ruins forever. 65 years of procrastination glorified by Piano. And what about Bieb-il-Belt. We had a garage door before and now we're getting an empty space; a very nice way of isolating all those families who live in the flats above the entrance to Valletta. Now they will have to go round and drive out through South Street to leave the city if not down to Marsamxett. I wonder whether Piano's gap will be baroque too! Keep it-Teatru Rjal as it is, do not rebuild city Gate but parliament will be state of the art. Long live the people!!

Edward Bartolo (3 days, 6 hours ago)

I am still convinced that a roofless theatre is not practical, especially in winter. It is unimaginable staying seated while it is raining, when it is cold.

@ Government

Please, consider again the expense. Make Malta proud of having a functional theatre all year round that doesn't depend on the weather conditions.

Anthony Paris (3 days, 7 hours ago)

It is a relief that Dr. Gonzi, having ignored the Maltese people's cry, at least listened to Mr. Piano's advice not to place a parliament building on the old opera house site. It also makes sense to enlist the help of someone like Mr. Piano for the design concept. The big question is what brief was Mr. Piano given. Dr. Gonzi told us he gave Mr. Piano two parameters, namely (a) 80 million euro (b) four years. The second parameter is easy to understand since Dr. Gonzi would want his name on the customary marble slab and at the same time buy a few votes for the next general election. It is the first parameter that needs more explanation. Dr. Gonzi (a) seems to be hell bent on getting a new parliament building (b) has demonstrated by his actions that culture is not a top priority. Therefore can we ask (a) what proportion of the 80 million euro will go towards the opera "house" and what proportion towards the parliament building (b) what options was Mr. Piano given (eg a roofless parliament building?)

Joe Vella (3 days, 7 hours ago)

Perhaps that the messengers of Gloom and Doom should know that open theatres even exists in the frigid, freezing Countries of North America, USA and Canada.

monica muscat (3 days, 7 hours ago)

Good for you Mr. Piano. I liked the project/s and not like many others, am not bothered by the fact the the theatre will be an open-air one. You get these in many Old European cities so popular with tourists,

What bothers me is that no one seems to be giving a thought to the need for parking, mainly for the residents who are already so stressed about the situation. First the removal of parking from Pjazza S. Gorg, now Freedom Square, following we will have the parking removed from the Ditch and the Bridge/Street over the present City Gate. We on Old Bakery Street, and I presume the other main thoroughfares are already feeling the ' pinch' for parking. The future is a nightmare! Please give us residents a thought!

Joe Vella (3 days, 7 hours ago)

What Square are you talking about? I thought a square was meant to be a place for people to meet, and not a place for pile of steel to park.

clive borg (3 days, 7 hours ago)

it would have been better if he divided the new parlament building into apartments and sell them to lessen our debts... there was a pjazza and now its going to be build, structurally the new parlament is nice but putting it in the entrance to our city!

ps mr piano said that we consider the opera house as a monument. and he too... does in italy put a huge structure infront of a monument or try to expose it to the maximum! (would you consider putting that structure infront of the coluseum)

thanks for trying to preserve the opera house at least, not so bad idea!

raymond calleja (3 days, 7 hours ago)

Mot so bad..... but the opera house is and would be if executed a shame.No roof no identificationas opera house maybe we will do carnival there....ha ha

Who nows how much it will cost us and who is behind thisssssssssssssssssss ??????

Keep a watch

Domnic Zerafa (3 days, 8 hours ago)

j'in kont hemm ukoll dalghodu u nahseb li mmur kuljum peres li noqoghod il-Belt...ikolli nghid li huwa progett li jaghti lura d-dinjita lil belt u j'Alla jtini l-ghomor li narah lest ghax il-belt ha terga tkun gojjel kif kienet

Elizabeth Camilleri (3 days, 8 hours ago)

I was one of those hundreds of poeple who went to the exhibition.

The general feedback was more than positive. I am very happy with what is being proposed.

At the exhibition there is also an example of the technology which will be used at the

Theatre. Impressive.

Well done a very professional exhibition that a project like this merits. Prosit to all involved, keep it up
