

Water installation at the heart of Palace Square embellishment



Valletta's Palace Square is to feature an installation of multi-coloured water jets as part of an embellishment project which gets under way on June 8.

"We will be giving the square back to the people, it has been taken over by cars for far too long," Resources Minister George Pullicino told a press conference today.

MEPA gave the go-ahead for the €1 million project last Thursday.

Mr Pullicino said that two historical aspects of the square were the way how the Knights had built a fountain there to celebrate the piping of water into Valletta, and how military parades were held there to mark milestones and anniversaries in Malta's history.

The new project would link those two historical characteristics by featuring a water installation which would, however, be flat, allowing the organisation of parades and other activities.

He said the square would be fully pedestrianised and paved, including the street between the square and the Palace.

Although the plans so far provided for the Sette Giugnio monument to be retained, Mr Pullicino said that since this monument was intrinsically linked to the history of Parliament, should the plans by Renzo Piano provide for the re-siting of Parliament, the monument would be moved to near the new seat of Parliament.

He said the water installation would feature 14 jets of water of different heights which would be lit during the night, for spectacular effect.

The project would also include new lighting fixtures which would double-up as wi-fi and new, easily removable, street furniture, such as benches

Referring to restaurants, Mr Pullicino said the government was considering the drawing up of standards which befitted the capital city, so that one could see the end of plastic chairs and advert-emblazoned sun shades which many restaurants currently displayed.

Talks are being held with the Malta Transport Authority on moving the shelter for the horse drawn cabs (*karozzini*) to another site.

Mr Pullicino said it was hoped that the new project would be completed by the end of November, in time for Christmas.

Comments

Godwin Pullicino (1 hour, 20 minutes ago)

It always amazes me how the Maltese will moan and complain on everything and anything! This is a good idea. Valletta desperately needs revitalisation and reviving the Palace Square and handing it back to the people should be applauded. If this project were designed and implemented in London, Brussels, Paris, Rome or Geneva, the Maltese would remark how 'amazing', 'stunning' etc it all is. Time for the Maltese to get out of their little, parochial, island mentality, embrace change and ideas worth of an island nation in the 21st century. How about building a bridge from Valletta to Sliema? That would be a worthwhile and green project saving millions of pounds each year on fuel to get between these two main centres on the island. How about building an underground system like most capitals in Europe? How about a decent air-conditioned public transport system running regularly, on time and connecting main centres to the early hours? How about turning the beach at Mellieha Bay into well organised, colourful beaches like the ones you find in the Adriatic or Viareggio, for instance? Malta still has an awful lot of work to improve what it offers.

Anne Marie Kissaun (5 hours, 43 minutes ago)

Well, well, if only one would go back to the old pictures of St. George's Square and respect that layout, rather than coming up with so many modern ideas which do not do justice to the Square, or into Valletta. It is such an eyesore. When are we going to start making sense. Have we not had enough sensible comments affecting other situations, why do we keep falling into the same trap. I love fountains, but fountains that would do justice to the ambience, fountains that function, kept clean, and not messy like the Triton. That is another shameful point. Therefore, I sincerely hope that all these comments from various people do not fall on deaf ears.

M. Farrugia (6 hours, 8 minutes ago)

It's incredible what a bunch of moaners our island has become. Just been to Valletta yesterday. It's a gem on Sundays, packed with tourists admiring the many buildings, streets and piazzas, Pjazza Regina, Merchants street, St John square, barrakka, all looking clean and beautifully restored. So yes why not, now it's Palace Square's turn to look beautiful.

Joseph Agius (6 hours, 59 minutes ago)

plus hekk mhux ahjar tiehdu naqra hsieb il Funtana ta' Tritoni, lanqas gawrha bhal dik ma ahna kapaci niehdu hsieb ghax mimluja hmieg u aktar wieqfa milli tahdem ahseb u ara funtana tal kuluri. Pfffff

Joseph Agius (7 hours, 5 minutes ago)

Noooooo, why you are destroying our Valetta? A lot of tourists that visited our island say that Malta is beautiful for being able to keep its natural architecture, something that no place was able to keep. Who wants to see a Renzo Piano designed buildings or a multi coloured fountain they do have in their country,

K Spiteri (8 hours, 18 minutes ago)

I would prefer that the water installation would include the original Wignacout Fountain that is currently at Argotti Gardens.

James De Giorgio (8 hours, 27 minutes ago)

And on the seventh day he saw that all was well and rested...
if all that's been said was to be carried out, well I'd say it would be heavenly.

Joseph Brincat (1 day, 3 hours ago)

At long last we will have an exceptional square in the heart of Valletta embellished!!!
How I wish to see the multi-coloured water jets functioning before I die.
I sincerely hope that they won't end up like the Trident fountain or the one at the Paola playground near the Paola Primary School, or the one stolen from the sea at Bugibba, There is a long list of fountains that are not functioning at present.
To save tax-payers money, I would suggest that the fountain that was stolen from Paola Square, and which at present embellishes a yard in the Auberge de Castille, be moved to the Mainguard or else to its rightful place. I'm sure this suggestion won't be met.
Where is Din l-art helwa? Are the water jets and lighting fixtures appropriate in front of the magnificent Palace?
You don't have to hurry up to speak out, could be this is only a gimmick before the EP elections.

Albert Gauci Cunningham (1 day, 4 hours ago)

The EP election is well on the way.....even the Maghtab "qed iwarrad" after a year....and "x'kumbinazzjoni!!!!!! qed iwarrad fuq in-naha tat-triq".....sorry I will only believe all this when I see it being sustained after the June 6 elections and mind you if the govt. does continue with all these plans then (and only then) would it deserve praise!! In the meantime I'm still waiting for the Fra Ben project in Bugibba which was announced with the same amount of pomposity but which never got off in two whole years and after 2 successive budgets!!!!!!!!!!!!

bzar fl-ghajnejn to give gonzi the carte blanche he so desperately needs methinks!!!!

Marton Saliba (1 day, 5 hours ago)

Talking about waste of Public funds...

This government is all about looking good, rather than running good...

Water installation...it's compatible with the square, deal with it.

Katinka Zahra Lehtonen (1 day, 9 hours ago)

oh dear... and yet another eye-sore of a project someone is all too willingly throwing a million at... and oh yes, multicolored jets really do look great with the surrounding buildings... (please do note the sarcasm) seriously, who are we kidding?? where are all the "designers" getting these ideas from!?

Raphael Dingli (1 day, 12 hours ago)

I totally agree with Pamela Hansen's comments about naff kitsch. However, I was not aware that a Govt is able to legislate on taste. If this is so it will be a first. Good liuck with the rebrufishments - they look good on paper.

GiovDeMartino (1 day, 13 hours ago)

IWA m'hemmx cans igib wahda sewwa dal-gvern?

F.Williams (1 day, 13 hours ago)

The idea is good but why works will start in a months time and goes through the the peak of the Tourism period!!???? This happens every year in Valletta!!!

David Magro (1 day, 14 hours ago)

What about going back to what the Order of Saint John had constructed. Let`s not create another Porta Riale "gennata". According to history (and we do have site plans in the National Library) there was a fountain and a coloum on which there was a fox with the coat of arms of Grandmaster Verdala. This was stuck down by lightning. The concept of removing the cars from the square is a brave decision,

JB Caruana (1 day, 15 hours ago)

Everything new is nice...but what about upkeep? Malta has a track record of no maintenance, no upkeep. We have already seen places embellished, but then left to rot....and did we ever have a fountain that kept on working for long????? Which bring back to mind...what really happened to the bugibba 'in the midle of the bay' fountain...where is it now???

Dean Adam Mifsud (1 day, 19 hours ago)

Keep up the good work Minister Pullicino.I`m looking forward to the project when it is finished

because St. George`s Square is an eyesore to look at.

Roderick Peresso (1 day, 22 hours ago)

Prosit. I like the contemporary designs of this embellishment. They will positively contribute to the interesting mix of architectural styles of the square, built in different

periods -- the austere facade of the palace (Girolamo Cassar's manarsim), the baroque porticos and balconies of the same palace added later on by the knights and the neo-classical facade built during the British rule. Moreover the designs have taken into account the needs of the city and the country. Good job to all involved so far.

Graham Crocker (1 day, 22 hours ago)

Non Entiendo? The Maltese seemed to love the one at Placa d'Espanya,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ich7Yg0hBko>

C.Psaila, you mean heritage.

i laferla (1 day, 22 hours ago)

did the knights pay for the water and electricity bill? who cares, we have money for embellishing valletta!

alfred agius (2 days ago)

By all means embellish the place but give it a period environment with the choice of street furniture, lighting and overall design.

Allow the Palace to remain the focal point of the whole project and let no multicoloured jets steal the attention from the majestic characteristics of the Palace . Yes, the Palace is and should remain the no. 1 attraction in Palace Square.

Multi coloured illumination should only be used to enhanced the features of the Palace, perhaps accompanied by multi language commentaries on the history of the Palace and the historical events that Palace Square has witnessed through the ages.

And one last point. Why not consider taking public proposals before finalising plans to spend a million euros.

David Saliba (2 days, 1 hour ago)

My question is, will this project be like the many projects undergone in the past where water fountains were inaugurated.... only to go green and stop working after just a few weeks or if one is lucky some months....

Case in point. the fountain found at Ta'Qali... its hardly ever working, and the water is always filthy and green, or perhaps like the one in Sliema, gnien Indipendenza.... here one finds two fountains, none of which are clean or functioning.

I shall not go into the merits of this project, in my humble opinion I think it could prove an attraction and am all in favour of it..... I just hope its' expiry date does not follow too close !

Galea. L (2 days, 1 hour ago)

Anyone wants to bet a bottle of beer that this is one of Renzo Piano's projects for Valletta?

a attard (2 days, 1 hour ago)

Hopefully they will not end up used as litter bins or infested with algae like the ones in Paceville and Msida. It would only look good if the water shimmers and the fountain kept clean in other words properly maintained.

charles cauchi (2 days, 1 hour ago)

mhemmx xi tghid il progett sabih. issa kif ser jolqot lin nies tal belt ? fejn ser jiparkjaw tal monti il vanijiet? fejn ser immorru tal karrozzini? u dawk il kwantita ta karozzi li kienu jiparkjaw hemm fejn ser jiparkjaw/ u l onorevoli kollha tal parlament ? mhux ovja li ser jiehdu il parking fejn jiparkjaw il beltin. ghaliex ma isierx parking taht il pjazza? insomma fuq il karta kollox sabih nistenew u naraw .

Luke Gatt (2 days, 1 hour ago)

I can not understand this mentality of the Maltese the gov has to continue doing projects even if they are launched before an election such as the coming European parliament elections.

If the government was to suspend its work due to elections than he can might as well don nothing as every year in Malta we have an election.

Joey Borg (2 days, 1 hour ago)

nice.. hope this will get built in my life time, that they use rain water and it does not malfunction after a couple of weeks..... is this too much to ask?

Anthony Magro (2 days, 2 hours ago)

A spectacle of coloured water jets at night when the City is deserted. Original idea Perit G.Pullicino. Why not install benches around and charge a fee so that people could sit down and admire the spectacle. Nothing is free except the best things in life.

Joseph Galea (2 days, 4 hours ago)

Unbelievable how there will always be naysayers! It seems that if was up to Galea. L. we should go back to candles and oil lamps since that's what they had in Valletta during the time of the knights.

And S. Galea complains of less parking in Valletta. If we want to save Valletta we should make less parking available not more, so people will be forced to use alternative means of transport and not pollute the City. If one provides activities and embellishments such as the new St. Geroge Square the people will come.

wistin Schembri (2 days, 4 hours ago)

@ Victor Laiviera

I believe that you have returned back to Malta from a year-long holiday!

O Galea (2 days, 4 hours ago)

Prosit Gorg. Keep them rolling.

R Grech (2 days, 5 hours ago)

It is unbelievable how this country is managed. Few months ago we have assisted for the 2009 budget speech but ironically there was no mentioning to these new projects that are being announced week after week. Let me mention some of them:

The Teatru Rjali (Expected to cost around 80 million euro);

New pavement in front of Palace (1 million);

Lift at Barracca (1 to 2 million);

Grand Harbour Pond (1 million)

Embellishment of Palce incling relocation of Parliament (Expected cost is unkown)

How come that all these projects were not mentioned in the budget and thus not budgeted for. This shows the lack of professionalism that the budgetary system for our nation is in. One wonders how than as a country we exceeded the required criteria. One wonders how we are running 233 million euro and is on the increase during the first three months of this year when compared to the first three months last year being an election year.

This are matters which are totally unacceptable.

A.Calleja (2 days, 5 hours ago)

How about building the new parliament on top of the 'Main Guard' or is it too far from Kastilja.

Phil Pryce (2 days, 5 hours ago)

This is all very nice etc, etc, but what the tourists see first are the hotels and the buses. Do they really want to wait by the pastizzeria while the bus inspector gets the pastizzis for the driver (who's blocking all the traffic in Birkirkara main street), and do they want to witness the aggressive driving and the driver smoking on his bus? - (this was all on bus reg: DBY 450 by the way). Do they really want to book into a 4 star hotel like the Preluna, only to find the food is second rate and the rooms are shabby (this was from a German student who was a professional guy that expects 4 stars to mean 4 stars!). No, I think they expect more, and will probably go elsewhere. Embellish away Mr Pullicino.... you are embellishing in the wrong direction!

mario borg (2 days, 5 hours ago)

Is it possible here in Malta to keep things simple and in their context. Why do we have to create a bay street style out of everything. Can we just keep Valletta in its baroque splendor.

In my opinion this is horrible. Why does every project planned by the government have to ruin the beautiful architecture and environment. A good paving, restoration and creative lighting of the square and palace facade will be sufficient. We don't have to look futuristic to be progressive.

These projects should be entrusted to organizations like Din I-art Helwa etc because they are the true cultured and have knowledge of how to enhance the characteristics of such places.

Victor Laiviera (2 days, 5 hours ago)

The projects are coming thick and fast just now.

Is there an election in the offing, by any chance?

Robert Cuschieri (2 days, 5 hours ago)

"Mr Pullicino said that two historical aspects of the square were the way how the Knights had built a fountain there to celebrate the piping of water into Valletta"

Yeah, I'm sure the knights used jets of colored water, very classic.

C.Psaila (2 days, 5 hours ago)

Of course they should remove karozzini. ...they are our FOLKLORE but the issue of smelly Malta and ruining of our roads too!!!!

Alfred Baldacchino (2 days, 5 hours ago)

When talking of water-jets allowance should be made for windy days, which are quite numerous in Malta.

Paul Xuereb (2 days, 6 hours ago)

why does George have to 'hope'. can't he just get it done by the end of November like Austin does?

Galea. L (2 days, 6 hours ago)

Pamela Hansen

Agree totally with you re the restaurant.

How can the modern floodlights on those poles and ground lighting harmonize with the old buildings and environment of an old city built by gentlemen for gentlemen.

S Galea (2 days, 6 hours ago)

... like it or not, this means less parking space in Valletta

Joseph Camilleri (2 days, 6 hours ago)

love the idea.. have seen a couple of similar water jet installations in other european cities and they are a main attraction.

i'm looking forward to this!

jesmond zammit (2 days, 6 hours ago)

prosit immens lil gvern ta din l idea. jalla jigi sabih bhal ma gie bieb il belt u l progett ta renzo piano,u x inghidu ghat teatru vera titpaxxa tidhol il belt.wow u l port il kbir li issa lest jidher sabih immens mill lift tal barrakka

Charles Sammut (2 days, 6 hours ago)

I'm not so sure about the multi-coloured water jets. In fact I don't like it at all.

As Pamela Hansen has commented, I to hope that it will be something tasteful in harmony with the architecture of this noble city.

Franco Farrugia (2 days, 7 hours ago)

Minister, well done on these prospective projects for Valletta.

However, you, as Minister also in charge of animal-welfare, are duty-bound to act in favour of the horses of the karozzini. Up to now, nobody wants responsibility over karozzini to the detriment of the horses.

Minister, if you are going to allow karozzini to continue being 'parked' outside the Palace or anywhere else in Valletta for that matter, you simply have to ensure that a) said horses are covered and protected by the summer sun and other elements in other seasons; b) said karozzini are only utilised within certain times of the day so that their perusal will respect the wellbeing of the horses.

Please, do not look the other way, Minister. It is all very well to improve and embellish places, but animal-lives are worth fighting for. The animals request nothing less from us, supposedly more enlightened animals.

Pamela Hansen (2 days, 8 hours ago)

Please let it be tasteful, not some naff kitsch.

Plastic chairs are not the only non aesthetic items around in many public places.

I know this is unrelated, but how come the tacky kiosk with plastic chairs, grotty tables and low hanging umbrellas, which had been removed from the Gzira promenade with much media coverage, is back?

Charles J Buttigieg (2 days, 9 hours ago)

Which Christmas?
