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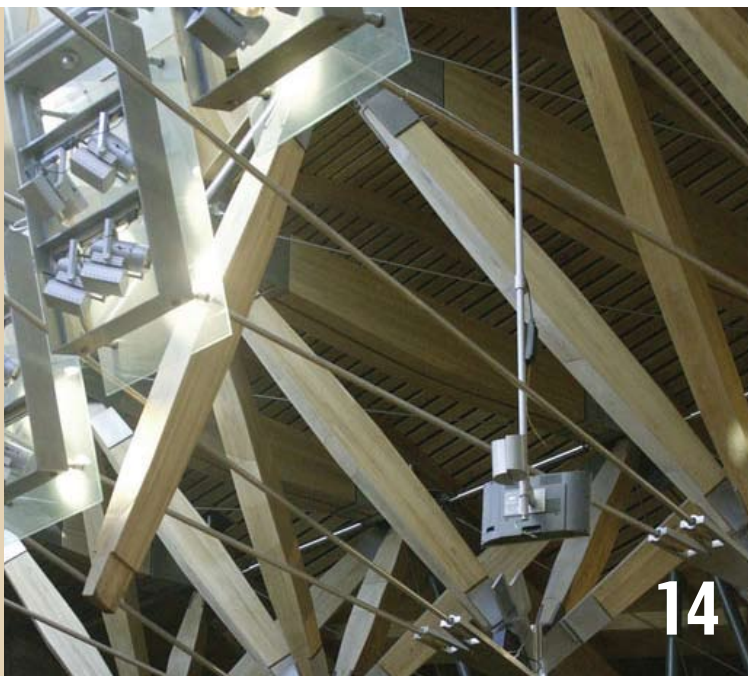
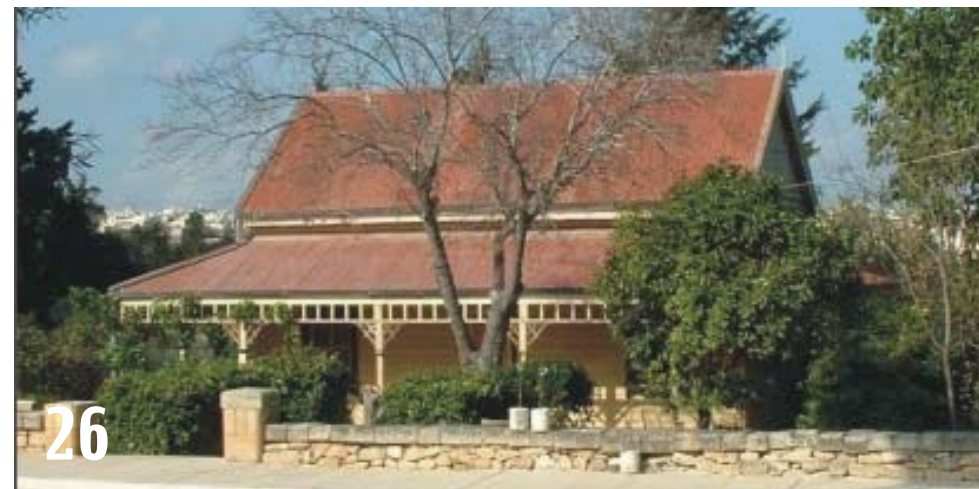
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***"We still have far too many deaths in the construction industry... We have come a long way on health and safety, but there is still more than one death per week."***

**Gordon Masterton**

# Is it just me or is everything shit?

No, don't worry, we haven't lost it here at tA this month – that is the title of one of the best selling pieces of literature this year in the UK, according to The Times of London; written by Steve Lowe and Alan McArthur, it is a comic rant at our consumer society, a wildly successful guide to everything in modern culture, that is frankly, rubbish.

There is of course, something distinctly comforting about hearing that others who share this global (or should I say glocal now?) village with us, also share similar problems. Take health and safety as one example...

That ill-fated building of the century, the new Scottish Parliament building, drops one of its beams to hang precariously while debate is in session. In Russia, the roof over a huge indoor swimming pool complex caves in while Muscovites indulge in one of their favourite pastimes, swimming, and many die due to the sub zero temperatures. In Japan, an architect was arrested for certifying high-rise buildings to be according to earthquake resistance standards...when they were not, and nervousness crept in as Tokyo's citizens realised that they are living in a much less safe city than they thought they were. In Dubai, building construction workers for the next tallest tower in the world, riot due to terrible working conditions – of course most of them are expatriates. That same evening, a top developer organises a fancy dress party in the same city, with everyone dressed as...you've guessed it...a construction worker, making him a certain candidate for taking top prize for excelling in bad taste this year.

Is this any sort of justification for the low level of adherence to health and safety regulations in Malta today? Is it a result of the relentless pressure that is exerted on the building construction industry to maintain performance and results for an otherwise slow economy that suffers from an inert lack of creativity and innovation? Is it also a factor of the need to keep building costs down so as to balance with the spiralling cost of land and buildings, often catalysed by the introduction of new planning legislation that seems to be more concerned with the

bringing about of new possibilities for development? The answer is probably yes on all three counts.

This editorial cannot but raise the issues brought about by the rationalisation of development boundaries and the publication, at long last, of the final approved Local Plans. Much has been said and written and government has proceeded to implement its decisions, paying little attention to any advice to the contrary, at least in terms of the former; it probably has the support of one and all for the finalisation of the latter. Indeed, it is probably the order of things that was questionable; could not the local plans have been issued first, and included within them the much criticised rationalisation process?

It was interesting to note the various pieces written by columnists that grace our newspapers and their renewed interest in matters concerned with building and architecture. The general consensus derived seems to be polarised, as is often the case: on the one hand, one school of thought claims that it is not so much about the volume of development, but about the quality of design and architecture that results; the second claims that there is a time to scream enough, and that there is only so much that our natural, and hence built, environment, can handle, and that this has long since gone past us. Well, at least there is debate...

The role of the media is essential, as is education, in contributing to the quality of the discussion and the decisions that are taken in the interest of our environment. It is with this in mind that the Kamra tal-Periti will embark on the organisation of Architecture Nights over the next few weeks, with the participation of architects from leading firms, leading to the second edition of Time for Architecture later in the year, immediately at summer's end. The theme of the latter event will be directly linked to the role of the media and communication in architecture.

In the meantime, we can but hope that this long hot summer will end, one day, with the fresh air brought to us by the autumn winds...



THE PROFESSIONAL CENTRE  
SLIEMA ROAD  
GZIRA GZR 06 - MALTA  
TEL./FAX. (+356) 2131 4265  
EMAIL: kamrataperiti@nextgen.net.mt  
WEBSITE: www.ktpmalta.com

KAMRA TAL-PERITI

*To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community*

The Council of the Kamra Tal-Periti for the year 2006 consists of David Pace (President), David Felice (Vice-President), Keith Cole (Secretary), Alfred Briffa (Treasurer) and Council members Anthony Fenech Vella, William Lewis, Edgar Rossignaud, Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Danica Mifsud and Antoine Zammit

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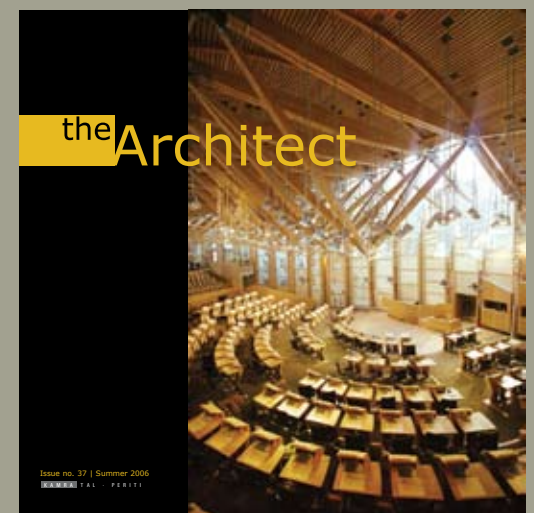
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Consulting Editors: **Simone Vella Lenicker**  
**Danica Mifsud**  
Design: **Kevin Grech**  
Sales executive: **Joseph Zammit**

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Vjal ir-Rihan  
San Gwann SGN 02  
Malta  
Tel: +356 21 382 741  
Fax: +356 21 385 075  
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Cover: **Interior of Scottish Parliament. Image courtesy of New Civil Engineer**

See page 14 for details.

# editorial

# Time for Architecture & Architecture Nights



The Kamra tal-Periti has always strived to promote good architecture amongst the Maltese public, and continues to do so through a series of activities that take place during each year. Following on the success of last year's Time for Architecture events, it is the Kamra's intention to organise a similar series of events this year, together with another series of events titled Architecture Nights. Both these events are organised in conjunction with SACES, the Society of Architecture and Civil Engineering Students.

Each of these events is aimed at the public in general as well as members of the profession and students of the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering. The events will run between the 26th August and the 4th November and will provide a variety of activities that are sure to appeal to all sections of society.

## ARCHITECTURE NIGHTS

Architecture Nights is a series of evening talks that will be held at the Valletta Waterfront, hosting a number of inspiring and creative architects working in Malta and abroad. Based on a similar set-up created by The Architecture Foundation in the UK, the Architecture Nights series will explore architectural creativity in depth through the format of one theme, one interviewer and a big audience. The theme chosen for this year's event will be 'Identity of Place'.

Architecture Nights will comprise a programme of four talks by renowned local and international architects. The series will commence on Saturday 26th August with two senior architects and urban designers from Building Design

Partnership, a leading and major award-winning London-based architectural firm (boasting over 300 architectural awards to date, [www.bdp.co.uk](http://www.bdp.co.uk)). Other confirmed speakers for the Architecture Nights series include: Llewelyn Davies Yeang, London, UK ([www.ldavies.com](http://www.ldavies.com)); Professor Richard England, Malta ([www.richardengland.com](http://www.richardengland.com)); Bennetts Associates Architects, London, UK ([www.bennettsassociates.com](http://www.bennettsassociates.com)).

## t4 : A2

Time for Architecture is an initiative that was born in 2005, and consists of a series of events to mark World Architecture Day. World Architecture Day is celebrated on the first Monday of October each year. This celebration was initiated by the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA), of which Malta is a member country.

On the same day, the United Nations celebrates World Habitat Day to reflect on the state of human settlements and the basic right to adequate shelter for all. It is also intended to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.

The theme for this year's World Architecture Day and World Habitat Day, which fall on the 2nd October, is "Cities, magnets of hope". This theme, chosen by the United Nations, aims to remind us all that the world is witnessing the greatest migration of people into towns and cities in its history. In 1950, one-third of the world's people lived in cities. Just 50 years later, this rose to one-half and will continue to grow to two-thirds, or

6 billion people, by 2050. Cities are now home to half of humankind.

As the world becomes increasingly urban, it is essential that policy-makers understand the power of the city as a catalyst for national development. Cities have to be able to provide inclusive living conditions for all their residents. Rich or poor, everyone has a right to the city, to a decent living environment, to clean water, sanitation, transport, electricity and other services. How we manage this is arguably one of the greatest challenges facing humanity.

The main aims of Time for Architecture are to promote "good architecture", to increase the awareness of the work of Maltese architects and architectural firms among the general public, and to serve as a meeting point for the current and future members of the Kamra and others.

The theme for this second edition of Time for Architecture will centre on the element of the city as a focal point of society, and will aim to delve into aspects of architectural quality in the development of a better quality of life for the inhabitants of the city. Furthermore the theme will focus on the role of the media in the public's perception of quality in architecture and our built environment. For these reasons, the theme chosen for this year's events is – CITIES, MAGNETS OF HOPE; ARCHITECTURE & THE MEDIA.

In the Maltese context, the transition from rural to city life took place largely in the post-war period resulting in a fourfold growth in the islands' urban area and the urban scenario we share today. These resulting urban and natural environments, and the buildings that shape them, are the repositories for our hopes and dreams, for our visions of our futures and the memories of our pasts, for our aspirations for life, work, play and prosperity.

Yet they are also much maligned;

derided for having far too much ugly new concrete while too much lovely old stonework deteriorates and disappears through neglect, lack of investment, acid rain and the march of the bulldozer. The shaping of these environments in the years and decades to come will have a crucial bearing on their sustainability and that of our aspirations. We have a choice – to work forward on an urban agenda with hope and commitment, to understand and believe that the shaping of our urban futures can be positively directed through concerted action by all of the stakeholders that shape the public realm; or to bow our heads at what has happened in the last five decades and give up on each other and on what we may achieve together.

In recent years the Kamra tal-Periti has begun to work on an agenda for a better built environment and a National Policy for Architecture. The KTP recognises that the architectural profession has a responsibility towards the current state of the Maltese urban environment. Yet it also recognises that without engaging the other stakeholders and actors involved in the production of the built environment, it can achieve little on its own.

The media's role as an opinion former is central to these efforts. It has tremendous power to reach consumers of the built environment and to help them to form educated outlooks and attitudes that can drive the agenda for urban change in directions that will result in better places for life, work and play that will also help to sustain prosperity in a country where the environment is an integral aspect of an economically vital tourism product.

The choice of Architecture and the Media as part of the theme for this year's Time for Architecture is driven by the firm belief in the need for a media which is actively engaged in a positive informed search for a better urban and rural tomorrow.

architecture nights 2006

saturday 26th august \_ building design partnership, london, uk  
saturday 16th september \_ llewelyn davis yeang, london, uk  
thursday 12th october \_ prof. richard england, malta  
saturday 4th november \_ bennetts associates, london, uk

@ the valletta waterfront

'IDENTITY OF PLACE'

## SCHEDULING OUR HERITAGE

Malta has lost some of its finest architectural works simply because they are not old enough to be considered part of our cultural and artistic heritage. The KTP has been pushing for the recognition of the need to schedule some of Malta's post 1800 architectural works. MEPA has recently consented that the KTP presents a list of possible candidates for scheduling, which will be forwarded to all the heritage management bodies.

Simply drawing up a list evidently does not provide adequate safeguards, but it may represent a first step towards achieving the KTP's goals of having some of the country's most important recent works preserved as part of our architectural heritage. The KTP is therefore inviting its members to submit their suggestions for inclusion on the list. If you believe that there is a particular 19th or 20th century building worth preserving, kindly forward your proposals to the KTP for consideration. Any additional information about your choices would be appreciated.

Important to note is that buildings completed in the last thirty years are currently not being considered.

## DOCOMOMO

Over the past few years, Malta's architectural heritage belonging to the modern movement has been put increasingly at risk from destruction or disfigurement. The recent demolition of a large part of the Qala School in Gozo, which the KTP had strongly opposed, is a clear example. The local modern movement was primarily an architectural expression of the country's renewed hope in its future, following the Second World War, although a few notable built works dating back to the 1930s are also to be found.

In order to reverse this trend, the KTP has set in motion a process to set up DOCOMOMO\_Malta, the local branch of DOCOMOMO International (standing for Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement). DOCOMOMO includes 49 working parties throughout the world and more than 2000 members.

The DOCOMOMO\_Malta Draft Working Group Document will pave the way for the issue of a call for expressions of Interest from architects, local authorities, NGOs and other personalities concerned with the preservation of local works belonging to the Modern Movement. The process will eventually lead to DOCOMOMO\_Malta being officially recognised at the 9th DOCOMOMO International Conference to be held in Turkey this coming September.

Anyone interested in learning more about DOCOMOMO\_Malta or in participating in the Working Group, may contact the KTP for an abridged copy of the Draft Document.

do.comomo  
international

## PROPOSED NEW TARIFF

The KTP held an EGM on the 25th April in order to discuss the new schedule of professional tariffs. Over 60 periti took part in a heated debate which also included topics such as the VAT element applicable on construction costs, enforcement of the tariffs, and ways of strengthening the KTP's powers to ensure compliance with the code of conduct and regulations.

The tariff proposal was debated at great length. There were reservations expressed by members on the actual structure of the proposed schedule, the apportionment of fees in relation to progress on the project, and the capping of fees. It was suggested that the schedule could be more precise in describing the services covered by each fee band, as it would give a more unequivocal and uniform guideline in establishing the fee to be charged.

The members present at the EGM voted by 56 votes in favour, 2 abstentions and 1 vote against, to confirm the mandatory nature of the tariffs and to direct the drafting sub-committee to consider the proposals made during the EGM. All members were invited to submit their proposals to the KTP office by the 9th May. The sub-committee is currently preparing a report based on the submissions received, and another EGM on the matter will be announced shortly. KTP members can also continue to have their say on the private forum at [www.thebluebucket.org](http://www.thebluebucket.org)

## CPD: RESTORATION & CONSERVATION

Periti Hermann Bonnici, Claude Borg and Norbert Gatt delivered a highly informative CPD Course on Friday 21st April. This course, with the title "Restoration and Conservation – what you need to know in the local context", covered a vast range of topics.

Following an introduction to the concepts and ethics of restoration and conservation, the speakers went on to discuss basic recording and documentation techniques. This was followed by a discussion on cleaning techniques, pointing, repair, protection and maintenance. After a much-welcomed lunch, deterioration mechanisms were the topic of discussion. Participants were then regaled with a detailed description of the restoration works that were carried out at the church of Santa Caterina d'Italia in Valletta.

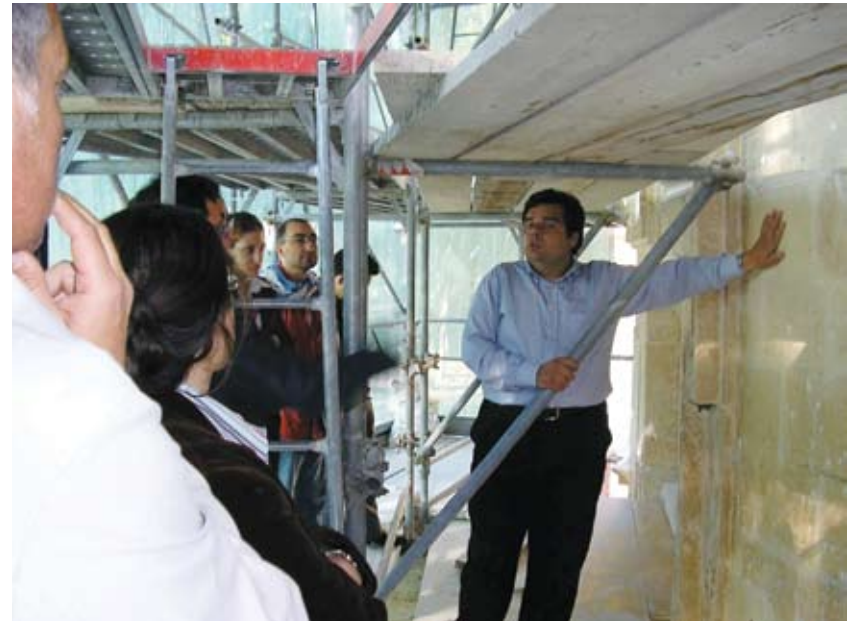
The participants, numbering around 60, were then taken on a site visit to observe the works being carried out on the Sarrja Church in Floriana. Here, those present could see the works close up, and better appreciate the

techniques outlined during the course. Workers were on site during the visit, and participants could see the works being carried out as they watched.

This CPD, which spanned over a whole day, was organised by the KTP, in collaboration with the Restoration Unit of the Works Division.

## CPD: LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr Simon Micallef Stafrace delivered a seminar entitled Legal Duties and Responsibilities of Architects on the 19 May. This discussion, as are all the other CPD events being organised by the Kamra, was well attended by members and non-members.



Perit Hermann Bonnici explaining the processes of restoration used at Sarrja Church, Floriana, during a site visit.

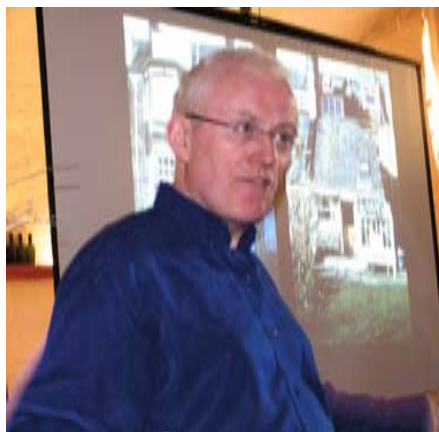
The speaker gave a brief overview of the legislation relevant to members of the profession, namely the Civil Code (Ch 16), the Code of Organisation and Procedure (Ch 12), the Periti Act (Ch 390), the Development Planning Act (Ch 356), LN 281 of 2004 dealing with Minimum Health and Safety Requirements for Work and Construction Sites, the Criminal Code (Ch 9) and the Professional Secrecy Act (Ch 377). Furthermore there are other instruments that are relevant to the profession of the perit, namely the Code of Ethics and the Directives and Guidelines issued from time to time by the KTP.

The different responsibilities of the perit were also looked at: that of periti towards their client and towards the contractor, and that towards society in general. In particular the responsibilities of periti working in partnership were discussed. Further, the issue of professional indemnity was brought up. The speaker also listed a number of instances that could result in the suspension or revocation of the warrant or the registration of a partnership. The ensuing discussion was intense, with a number of issues and cases being raised by those present.

**CPD: MASONRY**

Perit Denis Camilleri delivered a seminar for periti on "The use of local sustainable masonry as a structural material". This 5 hour CPD was well attended by members, with the ensuing discussion raising a number of issues. Amongst the various properties delved into, dimensional stability together with durability were seen to require further research, due to a concern that professional advice being handed down to clients was not achieving the desired fool proof solutions.

The load bearing capacity of masonry walls was looked into, combined with the effects of the imposed load eccentricities of loading from the overlying floors. Structural integrity of masonry buildings was considered, both as subjected to the design wind speed and the seismic effects from the assumed EC9 - 475 year ground acceleration return period. The restricted shear and tensile capacity of masonry was utilised to advantage in the design of secondary wall panel elements, from clerestory wall panels of a factory facade to a basic arch design. The design methods revolved around rules of thumb, stability moment method and the elastic method utilising tensile capacity.

**RICHARD MURPHY**

In the midst of much debate on the quality of architecture in Malta, the Kamra tal-Periti organised a public lecture by Richard Murphy of Richard Murphy Architects at the Castille Wine Vaults in Valletta on 5th April. Speaking to a packed audience in an informal setting, Murphy delighted those present with a passionate presentation of the work of his firm, in particular his early housing projects in and around his base, Edinburgh.

Richard Murphy's real introduction to the architectural community in Malta followed his proposal for a new school in Mosta through a design competition organised by the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools and that was declared the winning scheme. However, Murphy's connection with Malta goes back twenty years, when he took part in an architectural design workshop held on the island. He was one of a team of architects and students working on ideas for a theoretical project on Manoel Island.

**ESF**

Last February, the KTP placed an application for the European Social Fund 2004-2006, one of the four Structural Funds made available to the European Union. The KTP project ranked sixth among eleven projects submitted. The available funds were, however, taken up by projects that ranked higher.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES**

The membership fees for the current year became due on the 1st January 2006. Membership offers various advantages including discounted rates for participation in conferences, workshops and seminars organised by the KTP. If you are not sure of your membership status, you may contact the KTP office on 21 314265

**CONTACT KTP**

The KTP Official E-mail Addresses are as follows:

**president@ktpmalta.com**  
(President, Perit David Pace)  
**secretary@ktpmalta.com**  
(Secretary, Perit Keith Cole)  
**treasurer@ktpmalta.com**  
(Treasurer, Perit Alfred Briffa)  
**thearchitect@ktpmalta.com**  
(Editor, Perit David Felice)  
**admin@ktpmalta.com** (Web Site administrator; Perit Saviour Borg)  
**kamrataperiti@nextgen.net.mt** (KTP office secretary; Mr. Anthony Cassar)

The KTP office secretary, Mr. Anthony Cassar, is available at the KTP office every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 1000 - 1200hrs.

**Letters****Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Church, Fgura**

Dear Sir,

With reference to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Church, Fgura, featured in Issue 36 of tA, I would like to clarify a few points for the sake of correctness and record purposes.

The church at Fgura was designed by the structural engineer, Godfrey Azzopardi, as a hyperbolic paraboloid structure, a concrete "tent" resting on four extreme corners. The resulting impression was of a large unencumbered spatial volume floating on these four supports leaving four large triangular openings, one at each end. The structure was constructed and built but a decision as to how these four apertures were to be enclosed had not been taken despite various attempts to arrive at an acceptable design solution.

At the time, during 1981, I was Head of the Architecture Department at Maltconsult International and since Perit Azzopardi was a partner in the company, I was asked to find a solution to the seemingly elusive design problem. The solution, in fact, was quite simple. Azzopardi had designed a floating structure and the enclosing

elements had to respect and underline this fact. This was achieved by designing free-standing concrete structures, independent of the roof, thus leaving a glazed space in between to draw natural light on all four sides! These bastion type enclosing elements were hollow on the internal side to form additional floor and volume spaces. The attached are copies of the original sketch perspectives which had been submitted to the Carmelite community for their approval.

Following my return from Saudi Arabia in 1987, where I had been working, I was appointed by the Carmelite Fathers to design the presbytery area; here I have to point out, again for record purposes, that Vincent Apap's Christ, which is now hanging outside above the main door was originally designed to hang inside over the main altar!

Yours sincerely,

**Edward Micallef**

*B.Arch., A.&C.E., M.C.S.D., A.S.L.A.*

*Letters from our readership to be considered for publication are most welcome. Letters for inclusion in Issue 38 are to reach tA by the 15th Sept 2006. Please write to: The Editor, "the Architect", Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira GZR 06, or send an email to thearchitect@ktpmalta.com. All contributions will be acknowledged.*



**ACE & UIA**

On April 29, 2006, at the Architects' Council of Europe's



General Assembly in Brussels, UIA President Gaetan Siew and ACE President Jean-François Susini signed an agreement of cooperation between the two organisations.



ARCHITECTS' COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DES ARCHITECTES D'EUROPE

This memorandum of understanding, intended to give new impetus to collaborative works by the UIA and ACE in favour of architects and the profession, encompasses four orientations:

- Rationalise the resources of both the UIA and the ACE in order to carry out pertinent and coherent activities at all levels
- Reinforce the capacity for action of both organisations in relation to external groups
- Explore opportunities for joint UIA-ACE positions or actions toward third parties
- Cooperate in lobbying efforts whenever appropriate, notably on the question of professional practice in relations with the WTO.

This strategy will be applied on the political, technical, and operational levels.

**PERIT GENOVESE**

Perit Joseph L. Genovese passed away on the 28th July, aged 80. Joe was a keen member of the Kamra tal-Periti, and represented the KTP on the General Services Board. The Council of the KTP and the editorial team of tA extend their deepest condolences to his family on behalf of the profession.

**AIA HOUSING AWARDS**

The American Institute of Architects recently announced the recipients of the 2006 Housing Committee Awards. This program recognises good housing as a necessity of life, a sanctuary for the human spirit, and a valuable national resource. The 13 projects, both multi- and single-family, bring quality housing back into city centres and take energy and resource conservation seriously



"K Lofts" by Jonathan Segal, FAIA is one of the 13 projects cited in the AIA 2006 Housing Committee Awards Program. Photo: Jonathan Segal, FAIA

**CELEBRATION OF CITIES 2**

The forty projects that made up the final selection in this international consultation launched by the UIA will be displayed from 9 September to 10 November 2006, within the framework of the Venice International Biennial of Architecture, at the Palazzo Zorzi, UNESCO's European headquarters in Venice. The opening of this exhibition will take place on 8 September with the participation of numerous personalities such as French architect Odile Decq, and UIA officials Gaetan Siew and Giancarlo Lus. The exhibition's scenography was designed by Roberto and Ludovica Palomba.

Two grand prizes ex-aequo were awarded in the professional category to Caterina Anastasia, Venice, Italy, and Sung Goo Yang, Seongnam-Si, Republic of Korea. The winning project in the student category was authored by Valentina Araya, Santiago, Chile.

A third edition of the Celebration of



The Grand Prize was awarded to Maurizio Marzi, Giorgio Morini, Marcello Ganassini, Francesca Scianna, Yewande A. Omotoso (Italy) for the project titled "Reuniting Milan"

Cities will be launched on the occasion of the 2008 UIA World Congress in Turin. For more information visit [www.celebcities2.org](http://www.celebcities2.org)

**CHICHESTER DISTRICT MUSEUM**

The RIBA Competitions Office has issued a request for expressions of interest from architect-led teams for the opportunity to design a new District Museum, office space and a private housing scheme at Tower Street in Chichester, West Sussex. The new Museum will be the Museum of Chichester District, an area with one of the longest records of human-ancestor and human occupation in Britain, stretching back half a million years to the time of Boxgrove Man. The Museum's significant geological, archaeological and historical collections contain a wealth of material that will enable it to tell the story of the District in a coherent way for the first time. The Museum will also function as a "heritage gateway" to the District, encouraging visitors to explore it for themselves.

From the initial Expressions of Interest, up to six Architect-led teams will be invited to take part in a competitive interview. For further information visit [www.ribacompetitions.com](http://www.ribacompetitions.com)

**AR AWARDS**

The AR Awards for Emerging Architecture is one of the most prestigious awards for young architects in the world and gives £15,000 in prize money. Inaugurated in 1999, it is sponsored by Buro Happold, Interface and Wilkhahn.

Awards are for built or manufactured work only, and besides buildings, the full range of design activity, from landscapes and urban spaces to furniture and cutlery can be submitted.

The Jury for 2006 will be Christine



Images from the three winning entries for 2005

Binswanger (Herzog & de Meuron, Basel), Peter Davey (Former Editor of The Architectural Review), Mark Dytham (Klein Dytham, Tokyo), 3XN (Aarhus), Benedetta Tagliabue (EMBT, Barcelona) and Paul Finch (Editor of The Architectural Review and Chairman).

For further information and entry form visit [www.arplusd.com](http://www.arplusd.com)

**COVERINGS AWARD 2006**

In an age when sleek glass and steel seem to dominate design headlines, there is still room for creativity in the venerable media of stone and tile. To celebrate accomplishments with these materials, the international trade show and conference "Coverings" recently presented the winners of two awards programs.



Grand prize for his year's Prism Stone in Architecture Awards went to the restoration of the 90 West Street Building, New York, designed by Cass Gilbert.

Photo: Courtesy Coverings

The grand prize in this year's Prism Stone in Architecture Awards program was presented to the 90 West Street Building in lower Manhattan, a survivor of the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. The historic-landmark 90 West Street Building (1905), designed by Cass Gilbert, suffered facade damage during the collapse of the North Tower of the World Trade Centre. The grand prize in the Spectrum awards program, which honours outstanding use of ceramic tile, went to a mural in the Charlotte (North Carolina) Arena. Artist Mike Mandel, of Watertown, Massachusetts created a mosaic of por-

traits of athletes by combining computer technology with old-world craftsmanship.

## PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

For the second year running, Din I-Art Helwa will be awarding a Prize for Architectural Heritage. This award is presented annually for any building project which, in the opinion of the Judging Panel, makes an outstanding and significant contribution to architectural excellence in a Maltese context.

Projects eligible for the Prize include the restoration or conservation of buildings, the adaptation of buildings to new uses, building additions or alterations and new building projects in conservation areas. To be eligible for inclusion the project must have been completed within the twelve months period up to 31 July 2006.

Submissions for consideration for an award are to reach the Din I-Art Helwa Office (133, Melita Street, Valletta) by 31 August 2006. For further details and application form, kindly contact Din I-Art Helwa or KTP.



the Energy Services Directive all the more difficult. For more information on the process of transposition of the EPBD, visit [www.epbd-ca.org](http://www.epbd-ca.org)

## LIVING STEEL

The results of this international competition addressing the use of steel in social housing were announced on June 20 2006 in Vancouver, within the framework of the World Urban Forum. This competition was launched during the UIA World Congress in Istanbul by the industrial group Living Steel.



Night view of Piercy Conner's project

Two sites were proposed for the projects: in Kolkata, India, and Warsaw, Poland. A prestigious jury composed of Glenn Murcutt, Charles Correa, James Barry, Andrew Ogorzalek, Jaime Lerner, and Nicolas de Monchaux selected the winning projects. Piercy Conner (United Kingdom) received first prize for the Indian site with a project entitled "Sym House"; Architectenbureau cepezed b.v., (Netherlands) was chosen for the Warsaw site with the project "Kick Start". Each grand prize winner will receive the amount of 50,000 Euro. For more information visit [www.livingsteel.org/content/view/92/134/](http://www.livingsteel.org/content/view/92/134/)

## WONDERLAND

Wonderland is a network of young architectural practices. The Network has 99 member practices drawn from 9 EU Countries, and the criteria applied to selecting new members is that the prac-

[www.wonderland.cx](http://www.wonderland.cx)

tice must be in the early stages of establishment. The Network has organised a travelling exhibition of the work of the member practices that started in Austria in 2004 and which has visited each of the countries from which practices are drawn. The exhibition culminated in a final event held as part of the Austrian Architecture Days in June.

Wonderland intends to expand its membership to include practices from more EU Countries. It will then publish, twice a year, a magazine that will set down the concerns and experiences of the member practices as they face the challenges of establishing architectural practices in all corners of the EU. The first edition has already been published and was distributed with "A10" the established and well-respected architectural publication. For more on Wonderland go to [www.wonderland.cx](http://www.wonderland.cx)

## TORSANLORENZO 2006

The annual Torsanlorenzo international prize, open to architects and professionals of landscape planning worldwide, aims to highlight completed landscape projects and to promote quality in urban or forest green spaces. It encompasses three types of projects and awards two prizes, in each of the following categories: Landscape design in transformation of the territory; Urban green spaces; Private gardens and parks in cities and suburbs.

The international jury met on the 24 May and awarded prizes as follows:



Tillingford Garden by architect Antony Paul which won the first prize in the Private Gardens and Parks Section of the Torsanlorenzo award.

*Landscape design in transformation of the territory*

1st: Rainer Schmidt (Germany)  
2nd: Jordi Bellmunt & Xavier Andreu (Spain)

*Green urban spaces*

1st: Rainer Schmidt (Germany)  
2nd: Bart Brands & Sylvia Karres (Netherlands)

*Private gardens and parks*

1st: Antony Paul (United Kingdom)  
2nd: Regine Keller & Franz Damm (Germany)

For more information on the winning entries visit [www.premiotorsanlorenzo.it/eng/](http://www.premiotorsanlorenzo.it/eng/)

## CIB W102 CONFERENCE



In October 2007, CSTB and Fraunhofer IRB will be hosting the CIB W102 3rd International Conference titled "Information and Knowledge Management - Helping the Practitioner in Planning and Building".

This conference intends to be an interface to link up researchers and developers of technologies and tools for information procurement and management on the one hand, and the "users", practitioners from the fields of planning and building on the other. What the state of the art tools and technologies are or will be at hand in the near future, in how far they really meet the needs of the users and which problems they face, will be presented and discussed in the scope of this event. It is the objective of this event to intensify the interrelation between information specialists/developers and the end users community, promoting the use and implementation of online information sources in the workflow of planning and building projects.

The organisers have issued a call for papers, which is open until 16 February 2007. For more information, visit the conference website <http://cib-w102.iconda.org/conference2007stuttgart>

Continued on pg 26

# EU DESK

By Simone Vella Lenicker

## EU-US SUMMIT ADDRESSES TRADE IN ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

At the recent EU-US Summit (Vienna, 21st June) the topic of trade in architectural services was discussed with a specific reference to the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) that was signed by the European and American architectural professional organisations in November 2005. Furthermore, during a high level meeting between representatives of the European services sector and the European Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson on the 27th June, in which the importance of achieving substantial liberalisation in trade in services for a successful Doha Round was emphasised, the ACE was able to report that the MRA had been ratified in the interim by the State Architectural Registration Boards of the United States of America with a positive vote of 50 to 1. Following this meeting, Peter Mandelson issued a Press Release indicating that he will be pushing for an ambitious agreement in the negotiations on trade in services in the context of the informal stock-taking on services negotiations.

## ARCHITECTS WELCOME APPROVAL OF REDUCED VAT RATES DIRECTIVE BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

The EU Council of Ministers ratified, without debate, the extension of the validity of the Sixth VAT Directive which permits Member States to apply reduced rates of VAT to certain labour intensive services.

Among these are renovation works to buildings, and coming at the time when certain renovation works will be eligible for funding under the Structural Funds of the European Union this additional measure will be an important stimulus for the construction market and for architects. In facilitating access to architecture it will help to improve the quality of the built environment; a goal that the Architects' Council of Europe as the umbrella organisation of the profession at European level is steadily striving to achieve, for the best interests of all, notably citizens.

Following lengthy negotiations that commenced in the middle of 2005, the Council of Ministers of the EU finally approved the extension of the Sixth VAT Directive allowing aligning Member States to opt to apply reduced VAT rates to certain labour intensive services. Among the services that are currently benefiting from the reduced VAT rate Directive are construction services when works are taking place on existing buildings. It is estimated that approximately 250,000 jobs in the construction sector rely on this Directive. This agreement comes at a timely moment as the negotiations on the future of the Structural and Cohesion Funds is soon coming to a close. Among the new provisions in the rules for eligibility for structural development funds is, for the first time, the renovation of housing estates when they are part of integrated plans, notably in respect of their energy performance.

This provision, linked to reduced VAT for such works is a stimulus to the improvement of the quality of life for thousands of citizens in the European Union particularly in Central and Eastern European States where the quality of existing housing, notably what is usually considered to

be social housing, is generally well below that of the EU-15 States.

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS REACH A DEAL ON THE SERVICES DIRECTIVE

At the informal meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 29 May 2006, EU Ministers reached political agreement on the draft directive on Services in the Internal Market. The Ministers broadly followed the revised Commission proposal, which is largely based on the text adopted by the European Parliament in first reading. Some changes to the scope of the Directive were agreed and there were changes introduced to the Article on Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII), which is of major importance to the architectural profession. In-depth analysis of the impact of the proposed changes has yet to be carried out by the ACE, though first indications are that the provisions for PII will no longer come under the provisions of Article 16 on "Freedom to Provide Services".

The next step in the process is for the Council to adopt its Common Position and deliver it to the European Parliament for the Second Reading. There are strict time limits on the Second Reading procedures, meaning that if the Parliament agrees with the Council text and conciliation is not needed, the Directive could be adopted before the end of the year with publication early in 2007.

## ACE PUTS THE EU CITIZEN AT THE HEART OF ITS POLICIES

At its first General Assembly in April 2006, the Architects' Council of Europe has re-

oriented its priorities so as to put the EU citizen at the centre of its policies. This is to be pursued by incorporating, as a central concern, the achievement of a quality built environment for all in each of the work areas of the ACE.

In an increasingly urbanised Europe where the well-being and health of citizens is a primary preoccupation, the quality of the built environment in which human activities take place is of central importance. Ambitions, in relation to sustainable development, that aim to bring more pertinent responses to urban planning and construction activities are at the heart of the architect's.

The ACE also reviewed its new working structure in order to ensure that its work, which aims to achieve a high quality built environment, will more effectively influence policy and legislative developments at the EU level. In order to respond to this objective in the coming months and years, the ACE intends, henceforth, to undertake more focussed political actions linked to significant external events and to develop, over the next two years, a range of tools and knowledge resources for the benefit of its Member Organisations and all European architects.

It is in line with this shift that the ACE has decided to organise a major Summit on the quality of the built environment in the autumn of 2007 in Brussels. It is intended that this Summit will explore the threats that a free market approach poses to the quality of the built environment. Among other things the Summit will explore the reason why, in many parts of Europe, the built environment is still too often below acceptable standards, notably in the housing sector. The objective will be to define and set out how this malaise in society can be addressed, in particular through the adoption and effective implementation of appropriate policies at all levels (European, national, local).



**E**xams have finally come to an end, and this means that the new Saces committee will now be able to dedicate more time to the proposal and organisation of new ideas and activities listed on its agenda.

Organising events such as the Workshop and Designs in collaboration with the Kamra tal-Periti for the second time round event of 'Time for Architecture' means considerable hard work and great effort in order to obtain satisfactory results. This festival will include our yearly 'Designs exhibition' where a number of projects by students of Architecture will be displayed. This exhibition will once again kick off 'Time for Architecture' and the workshop, which is our most popular event of the year, will close the event.

During the week-long workshop, students of Architecture are given a specific topic. They are then divided into groups and, together with an established architect, their task is to develop and realise a small project around the given theme. It is an extremely fun and ideal opportunity where the students taking part live on site, and produce new, original and creative projects. The topic and site to be used however have not yet been determined at this point in time. The committee is working hard to retain a high level of organisation throughout this activity as has been done in past years, and this is reflected in the annual increase in the number of students wishing to take part each year.

The Saces committee has also met up with KSU/KPS representatives and suggestions have been put forward in order to organise a number of events together, some of which will take place once the next academic year kicks off. Such events would include the Careers Convention, the "Faculty weeks" and even a number of charity events. Many of these events offer younger students the opportunity to gain information as regards to the courses the University offers. Saces is primarily an organisation representing architecture students; however, it can also offer practical advice to younger students who are still undecided in their choice of career and are in need of extra reassurance as regards to their choice of studies.

The committee is still in the process of refurbishing the common room which will be finished shortly.

**Paula Curmi**

# Chalet

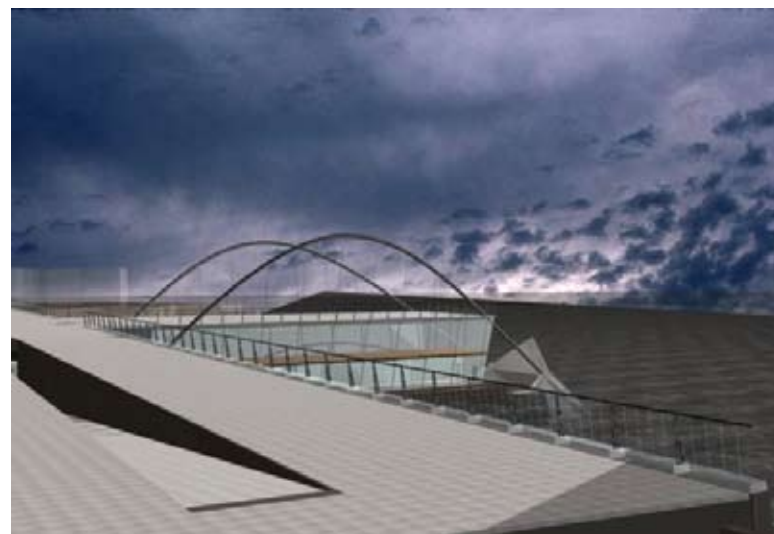
After the Royal opera house site in Valletta, the Chalet site in Sliema is one of the most controversial projects on the island. The area is so attractive that whatever structure is placed there, a landmark will result. Needless to say this site is at heart to many and most expect to see an architectural masterpiece or no intervention at all. The design brief presented by the students was for an ecological marine park. The aim of this is to introduce the general public to the marine life that thrives in our local waters. The country's waters would be hinted at through a set of aquaria,

audiovisual presentations, and finally a dive school, the latter being an invitation to appreciate in open water the flora and fauna observed in the aquaria.

An up market restaurant and a themed goods store are included in the project; these are expected to create the revenue needed for the maintenance of this project.

The philosophical starting point was to create an architecture that is as unobtrusive as possible- an architecture that lets the onlooker appreciate the beauty of the site and possibly presenting the building as a picture frame to the view. The concept evolved around maintaining the spirit of place- the design is focused on sustaining the identity of the natural landscape. Effectively the wish to create a building that is interesting in the designer's eyes is shifted to a desire to satisfy everyone's view with the beauty of the natural setting in itself. This way architecture becomes an altruistic event.

A practical approach to fulfilling the concept was to have the aesthetics of the building solely based on the structure; this would permit a minimum amount of intervention and so maximize the views through the building and onto the site of Ghar id-Dud. The solution adopted was two arched superstructures that suspend the whole development, effectively releasing the whole



of the chalet projection from columns.

The threat of ravaging waves in the winter months (in particular the savage Grigal) is tackled on two fronts. The first line of defense is an underwater barrier reef, that sits just below the water surface; this effectively acts as a break water and doubles as a nursery for marine life due to the texture of the materials used. Eventually this reef will also be a destination for the dive school's guests to appreciate marine life in the open. The second line of defense is a concrete breakwater placed right at the tip of the chalet projection; performing much like a dolphin's head, it deflects waves away from the building.

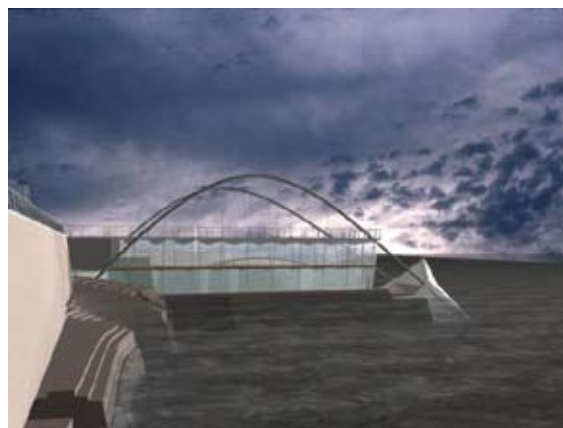
The environmental control is also a two-sided affair. The arch superstructures are tilted outwards at 14 deg, which inclination is maintained on all the three glazed fronts. The effect of this inclination is of eliminating most of the incident radiation and therefore the chance of over heating is greatly reduced.

In the summer months the building transforms by having both of its long facades open up completely. The glazed walls have been detailed in a way to permit its sections to fold one into the other- the added expense of this detail is offset by eliminating the need of air-conditioning in the summer.

The project is divided in two parts, the chalet projection and the volume of space just behind and under the pedestrian level. On the projection one finds the restaurant, a lounge bar and at sea level, the dive school with an entry point to the water through a dive pool in the breakwater.

The educational areas and aquaria lie underneath the promenade, and feature a large water tank over two stories to house the larger fish. At pedestrian level the chalet projection is treated as part of the promenade, so providing a "belvedere" right in the middle of the bay.

**Nicholas Mallia**  
**Thesis Project 2004/05**



# Occupational Health and Safety

**M**any accidents in the construction industry occur as a result of bad planning, lack of organisation and poor co-ordination on site. According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 1300 people are killed in construction accidents each year in the European Union countries. Worldwide, construction workers are three times more likely to be killed and twice as likely to be injured as workers in other occupations. In Malta, most occupational fatalities occur in construction sites, and most of these are due to falls from heights. Furthermore, the construction sector claims the second highest rate of occupational accidents per year, with 16.5% of all reported accidents in 2005 being construction related. Danica Mifsud and Simone Vella Lenicker met with Dr Mark Gauci, Chief Executive Officer of the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHS) on the matter.



## OHS PRIORITIES

The OHS was established in 2002. One of its main priorities was to increase awareness about health and safety issues. The number of occupational injuries reported is, in fact, on the decline, though this may not be completely indicative of the true situation. Product safety has also improved over the years and this has resulted in a reduction of the number of injuries reported. In order to achieve this better awareness of health and safety matters the OHS organises a number of courses, seminars and conferences, and has published a vast amount of literature in the form of leaflets and fact sheets for a range of sectors of the local industry. The latter are targeted towards workers, but more importantly at employers, and deal with a vast range of subjects. Fact sheets specific to the construction industry include information on health and safety on small construction sites, safe roofwork, management of noise in construction, and asbestos in construction. All these fact sheets can be viewed and downloaded from the website [www.ew2004.osha.eu.int](http://www.ew2004.osha.eu.int).



NAPO

The OHS also organises a number of educational programs in schools which run from November to May, and which involve activities revolving around NAPO, a cartoon character intended to help children understand more the importance of health and safety in all aspects of life. Education at primary level is invaluable as it nurtures positive attitudes towards health and safety, and children may even be able to influence their parents in this respect.

Another priority was the setting up of a legislative framework, which is now in place. With regards to the construction industry, a draft Part 1 of the Code of Practice has been issued for consultation. This Part, which may be downloaded from the OHS website [www.osha.org.mt](http://www.osha.org.mt), deals mostly with the introduction of Health and Safety

Management Systems. Some feedback on the draft was received by the Authority and is being considered for inclusion. Dr Gauci expressed his disappointment at the fact that no response was forthcoming from the Kamra tal-Periti. Part 2 of the Code is currently in the drafting stage and will focus on individual activities. Administrative and capacity building is also high on the OHS's agenda. Although the Authority's capacity is not ideal to cater for the local scenario, its personnel are well trained. The OHS has received 1 million Euros worth of training from the EU, some being carried out locally by foreign experts, and some being carried out abroad. All the Authority's inspectors have good general knowledge of various aspects of health and safety and possess a Diploma in Health and Safety obtained through the University of Malta. The Authority also engages specialists, such as engineers, to assist in specific cases. International relations are another priority of the OHS, which represents Malta on six different EU bodies.

## HEALTH & SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION

The OHS covers various aspects of health and safety, across all sectors of industry. One of these sectors is the construction industry. The Code of Practice for the Construction Industry is intended to provide practical guidance on technical, administrative and legal aspects of health and safety in construction. Malta's Health and Safety Legislation falls under the Criminal Code, which identifies a number of actions considered to con-

stitute a criminal offence. The Code of Practice will, once enacted, not replace any legal requirements but will help to ensure a better level of protection of the workers in this sector.

Non-compliance with the Code would not constitute a criminal offence, unless such compliance is specifically requested by the OHS's officials in particular instances. In the case of court proceedings on health and safety matters, it is the onus of the party being tried to prove compliance with the Code or that other precautions had been taken that are considered to be equal to or better than those stated in the Code.

OHS officials are empowered by law to issue instructions related to the health and safety at a workplace. These may be of an immediate nature (e.g. removing a direct source of danger) or time related (e.g. compliance within a stipulated period). Officials can be called to a site by private individuals who may report dangerous work practices. They also carry out proactive inspections, and are enabled by law to enter construction sites freely without prior notice being given to anyone involved with the site in question. Some entities have been protesting about this state of affairs and are pushing for planned visits to be carried out. This would have the disadvantage, however, that certain health and safety procedures may be put into place for the benefit of the inspection, but ignored for the rest of the duration of the project.

This is one of the reasons why the OHS is working towards the introduction of Health and Safety Management Systems, shifting away from the idea of an item by item approach and more towards having Risk Assessments, Health and Safety Plans, Health and Safety representatives, etc in place.

The employer is fully responsible for the health and safety of his workers, though this is not always fully understood. Some use the excuse that workers do not like to use protection, without realising that it is their obligation, and theirs alone, to ensure that all protection is provided for



use by the workers and that it is in fact made use of. The OHSA also strongly believes that matters of health and safety should be part and parcel of workers' vocational training, and not something that happens once the worker commences employment. This would ensure that a worker would be aware of health and safety issues from the outset and would be more aware of potential sources of danger through his original training.



AWTORITÀ GĦAS-SAĦHA U S-SIGURTÀ FIUQ IL-POST TAX-XOĠĦOL

### OHSA & OTHER BODIES

The Authority participates on the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC). Dr Gauci mentioned that the Board of the OHSA is already tripartite and discusses health and safety within a tripartite context. Since various constituted bodies are represented on both the BICC as well as on the OHSA Board, there is a risk of duplicating efforts. Furthermore, he expressed his concern that in the past some decisions have been taken at BICC level which require an important input from OHSA – these decisions were taken without any reference to current OHSA priorities and plans of action for the immediate future. He stressed that whereas discussions and consultation on operational health and safety should not be the sole prerogative of the OHSA, the OHSA should remain the national point of reference for such matters.

The relationship of the Authority with MEPA also leaves room for improvement. Legal Notice 281 states that "It shall be the duty of the client to appoint, in respect of every project, a project supervisor for the design stage and a project supervisor for the construction stage." The client should notify the OHSA of the details of such supervisors through a notification form which may be obtained directly from the Authority or downloaded from the Authority's website. This procedure is not being observed. The OHSA has suggested to MEPA to serve as a clearing house on this issue, where it would consult the OHSA on health and safety matters as it

consults on other issues such as accessibility with the KNPD. MEPA, however, has objected to this procedure being implemented.

### RISK ASSESSMENT IN CONSTRUCTION

Construction is one of Europe's biggest industries. It includes the building, civil engineering, demolition and maintenance industries. The trades and crafts include electrical, mechanical and engineering services, surveying and highways, and the professions such as architects. It is also an industry in which many workers are killed and injured in workplace accidents, or suffer from occupationally acquired diseases.

Good practice starts before work begins on site. When a construction project is procured, and during its design, safety and health need to be taken into account. It is important for clients, designers, contractors and other key players to cooperate and work together to achieve good practice. Working as an integrated team, risks can be eliminated, or reduced, by changes in design specification. This process can identify remaining risks, enabling the contractor to take appropriate action.

This action will involve risk assessment. This assessment should consider all the risks and hazards. The assessment should enable action to be taken which can achieve a real reduction in the exposure of workers and others to harm. For a construction project this process is



continuous as the risks will change as the project moves from conception to completion. A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that one can weigh up whether enough precautions have been taken or if one should do more to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill. A risk assessment involves identifying the hazards present and then evaluating the extent of the risks involved, taking into account existing precautions. The results of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment should help users choose which good practice measures are most appropriate.

### SAFE START

Across Europe, 18 to 24-year-olds are at least fifty percent (50%) more likely to be

injured in the workplace than more experienced workers. Behind the statistics are stories of young people having to live with the consequences of accidents and damaged health for the rest of their lives, or dying when they had so much of their lives ahead of them.

With the theme 'Safe Start', the 2006 European Week for Safety and Health at Work was launched on the 20 June in Malta as part of a pan-European campaign to raise awareness about the risks that young workers face at work. The campaign will run until the end of the year but will culminate in the organisation of the European Week between 23 and 27 October



Safe Start logo

2006. Safe Start features a wide range of activities including quizzes, interactive learning materials and events such as good practice awards and a competition to find the European Young Film Maker of the Year on a health and safety theme. Further information about the campaign is available online at [www.ew2006.osha.eu.int](http://www.ew2006.osha.eu.int).

The Safe Start campaign is backed by all Member States, candidate and EFTA countries, the Austria and Finland EU Presidencies, the European Parliament and the European Commission, and by the European Social Partners.

European Week campaigns focus on promoting improved prevention at the workplace level by involving all the relevant stakeholders. This year, the campaign will also promote activities in schools, colleges and the wider education community, and promote the issue among the relevant policy makers in the education field.

**Table 1. Proportion (%) of young workers in the total workforce by economic activity in the EU25 in 2004.**

Economic activity	Proportion of young workers			Total workforce in thousands
	15-19yrs %	20-24yrs %	25-29yrs %	
Total	2.7	7.8	11.5	193, 573
Agriculture	2.7	5.2	7.5	9, 475
Manufacturing	2.4	7.9	11.9	36, 318
Construction	3.6	9.0	11.8	15, 093
Wholesale & retail trade	5.1	10.8	12.9	28, 241
Hotels & restaurants	7.9	14.5	13.0	7, 833
Transport, storage, etc	1.2	6.4	10.6	11, 982
Financial intermediation	n.a.	7.5	13.4	5, 801
Real estate, renting, etc	1.4	7.7	14.3	17, 888
Public administration, etc	0.8	5.5	9.5	13, 999
Education	0.6	3.9	9.7	13, 939
Health & social work	1.6	6.4	10.2	18, 811
Other service activities	4.1	9.4	11.8	8, 873
Activities of households	n.a.	6.9	9.6	2, 063

n.a. = not available  
Source: A statistical portrait of the health and safety at work of young workers, European Commission

# Failure in Construction

Early last May, **Gordon Masterton**, President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, highlighted the need for engineers to treat health and safety as their top priority. “We still have far too many deaths in the construction industry,” he said. “We have come a long way on health and safety, but there is still more than one death per week.” In the construction industry, however, it is not only occupational health and safety that should be given top priority, but also safety in the design and construction methods of the buildings in question.



Collapse of Almuñécar bridge

## SPANISH BRIDGE

An incorrectly positioned section of travelling formwork is thought to have triggered a catastrophic temporary works collapse during construction of a motorway bridge in Spain in November 2005. Failure to position the formwork properly is assumed to have caused it to overbalance and crash to the ground, killing six workers and injuring three others.

The collapse took place near the town of Almuñécar in southern Spain at 3:35pm on 7 November. Five Portuguese workers and one Spanish worker died falling from the structure. Ahead of the collapse, deck contractor Puentes y Calzadas was preparing to move a massive travelling formwork system that was being used to cast a 60m section of the 500m viaduct deck.

The travelling formwork system was moving from west to east as contractors cast the deck. It comprised a rail mounted mobile shutter resting on parallel steel trusses, which spanned 130m between the piers on either side of the central arch. Each pier was fitted with supporting saddles. A specially adapted saddle was also slung around the crown of the arch.

British bridge experts who examined photographs taken before, during and after the collapse said they believed the contractor was moving the temporary works to the east across the central arch section ahead of a concrete pour. Usual practice would allow the travelling shutter to move to the far end of the support trusses before they are, in turn, moved beneath it into their next position. Piers would normally be close enough to each other to allow the trusses to straddle three at once. This is thought to have been

the case for the rest of the viaduct, where the piers were spaced closer together at 100m intervals. But at the arch, the distance between the piers and the arch crown was thought too great to allow the trusses to rest on all three supports at once.

As a result, the contractor would have to align the central load-bearing section of the support trusses to span from the western pier to the arch crown, so that it could cast the western half of the arch-supported deck. Photographs taken just before the collapse show that the contractor was attempting to centre the travelling shutter above the arch crown before moving the support trusses forward to bridge the next span. This would have unloaded the first span and allowed the trusses to be moved without overstressing the tapered ends.

British engineers agreed that while performing the difficult load transfer sequence, a jam may have prevented the shutter from moving, or it may have been incorrectly positioned above the crown. Photographs taken during the collapse and a first-hand examination of the wreckage show that the west ends of the trusses slipped off their saddles first. They buckled in contact with the ground, with the eastern ends toppling to the south of the structure. This collapse sequence suggests that the formwork was positioned to the west of the arch crown, causing it to overload the trusses as they were moved to the east. This is thought to have caused the trusses to slip off the saddles at the western pier.

Damage to the bridge deck box girder's side cantilevers indicates that the eastern ends of the trusses were lifted by the weight of the wrongly positioned shuttering. Launching noses at both ends of the trusses were largely

undamaged and showed no signs of buckling or shearing. This suggests that they came off the western saddle, allowing the trusses to tilt under the weight of the shutters.

### RAFTER COLLAPSE

A 50t steel rafter on Wembley Stadium's northern roof canopy dropped 500mm at one end last March. The 30m long rafter, labelled R24, should have been temporarily connected to a steel girder or leading edge beam. This skirts the edge of the northern roof which overhangs the football pitch. Welders were preparing to permanently weld the rafter to the leading edge beam at the time of the collapse.

Temporary steelwork arrested the rafter's fall and prevented it from hitting workers below. The

rafter is part of the northern roof canopy which also supports part of the stadium's moveable roof. All 3,500 workers on the site were evacuated in accordance with main contractor Multiplex's standard procedure following incidents.

The Health & Safety Executive was notified of the incident but decided not to attend. Multiplex managing director Martin Tidd said that the connection failure was not due to a design fault and that steelwork contractor Hollandia and designer Connell Mott Macdonald were working on a "safe methodology" for the erection of the rafter. The rafter has now been secured in position.

### BOLTED UP

Work to complete phase two of the repairs to the chambers at the Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh is being done by Aberdeen based company MSD Design. It is the final phase of work to secure beams in the roof structure of the parliament building following an incident during which one of these beams came loose and swung over the heads of parliamentary members during a debate in March.

The Scottish Parliament building was in the news in March 2006 after a heavy beam came loose in the middle of a parliamentary debate. The 3.7m long, 100kg beam swung over the heads of members during a debate on Scottish Water. Construction manager Bovis Lend Lease, structural engineer Ove Arup and contractor Laing O'Rourke, who built the chamber, were summoned to the Parliament by officials.

At the time, Tory MSP John Scott, a trained civil engineer, said: "It is outrageous that a building like this has already got these sorts of problems." The beam that came loose was set in a cluster of four and was held in place by a single elaborately shaped stainless steel mould. One industry source criticised the design of the project. He



*Fallen beam at Scottish Parliament*

in compression at all times. Stainless steel nodes welded up from plate and tube hold the structure together.

The loose member came free from the lower yoke-shaped connection, allowing it to rotate on its pin-jointed upper connection. It was left dangling above the heads of MSPs who later evacuated the chamber. The failure occurred towards one end of the roof, where spans are much shorter, but where member sections are the same as on the long span areas. The glulam strut was located in the stainless steel yoke during erection by two bolts passing through the rear of the yoke into sockets glued into the end grain. These, however, were not designed to take tension. The strut would have had to move a significant distance out of the yoke before it could swing free, a factor which suggests tensile forces were involved.

In a statement to the press, Arup claimed that the bolts were designed to take load, "although in most load arrangements at the connection in question the bolts would be unloaded." This would be the case when the strut was subject to compressive forces only. Arup was basing its investigation on three scenarios, including failure due to incorrect installation of the bolt and an under strength bolt. However, its main line of enquiry centred on the reanalysis of the roof design.

Arup later blamed faulty bolt installation for the failure of the timber strut. Preliminary investigations revealed that one of the two 10mm diameter bolts connecting the strut to its stainless steel node was missing and the other had no head. Arup's report concluded that the failed bolt had jammed during installation due to cross threading. An attempt had apparently been made to remove it "so twisting the head off, or coming close to it," says the report. The report also says that one of the two upper connection bolts removed when the strut was lowered was found to be too short, fuelling suspicions

said: "Is it really sensible to have all those beams across the structure, held in by simple pins or nodes? The structure just doesn't seem strong enough, and clearly there is a problem in the design process." Initial studies showed that the ceiling structure must have moved about a foot for the beam to work free.

Following further investigations, load reversal was identified as the most likely cause for the glulam strut to swing loose. Sources close to the project suggested that the strut had been subject to unforeseen tensile forces which had pulled it free from its stainless steel socket. The strut formed part of a complex three dimensional roof structure comprising laminated oak compression members and steel rods in tension spanning up to 24m structure, and should have been

about poor installation.

Arup has ruled out inspecting every node connection and replacing any damaged or missing bolts. Instead it proposes to modify the strut connections "by adding some unobtrusive additional components."

### POLISH COLLAPSE

Outdated snow loading requirements in Polish building codes have emerged as the key contributing factor to last February's collapse of the flat roof of an exhibition hall in Katowice. More than 60 people died in the tragedy. Around 500 visitors were attending a racing pigeon exhibition in the Katowice Trade Hall when the collapse occurred.

The 100,000sq m building was experiencing the worst winter by far since it opened. It is reported to have had more than 500mm of compacted snow and ice on its roof at the moment of collapse.

The roof of the steel framed building is reported to have been designed to take up to 800mm of normal snow, then in line with the local codes.

However, a recent analysis of Polish snowfall records over the last 50 years has found that in some areas the design snow loading should be up to 70% higher. Recent prolonged sub-zero temperatures could also have increased the chances of overloading from snow and ice. "Under those conditions heat leaking through the roof can melt the lower layers of snow, which refreeze as ice when the heating is off," said UK Steel Construction Institute director Graham Owen. "Over time the density of the 'snow' will approach that of water." Owen added: "The roof trusses were more than 10m above floor level. At that height any excessive deflection would have been very hard to spot."

*All information and images in this article were obtained by courtesy of New Civil Engineer*



*Interior view of Scottish Parliament*

# THE CONSTRUCTION PRO

By Perit Ruben Paul Borg

Member States are responsible for ensuring that building and civil engineering works on their territory are designed and executed in a way that does not endanger the safety of persons, domestic animals and property, while respecting other essential requirements in the interests of general well-being.

## Council Directive 89/106/EEC of 21 December 1988.

The Construction Products Directive 89/106/EEC (CPD) is one of the “New Approach” Directives (European Community laws) intended to create a single European market by removing technical barriers to trade between Member States in the European Economic Area (EEA). The Construction Products Directive applies to construction products, which are produced for incorporation in a permanent manner in construction works including both building and civil engineering works.

### THE PRODUCT SAFETY ACT & CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS REGULATIONS

In Malta, the Product Safety Act came into force on 1st March 2001, repealing the Quality Control (Exports, Imports and Local Goods) Act, Cap 225 of 1971. The Act implements Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3rd December 2001 (Ex 92/59/EEC of 29th June 1992), also referred to as the General Product Safety Directive. The Act sets the framework for the safety of products, product control and enforcement, and the preparation of regulations with respect to products.

The Construction Products Regulations came into force through the Product Safety Act, Cap 427, transposing the Construction Products Directive CPD – 89/106/EEC. These regulations came into effect as from the 1st July 2002, simultaneously repealing the mandatory orders that used to regulate specific fields of construction in Malta.

### THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CPD

The Construction Products Directive aims to remove technical barriers to trade in construction products between Member States, across the European Economic Area (EEA). This is primarily achieved through the following elements;

- Harmonised Technical Specifications;
- Agreed system of attestation of conformity for each product family;
- Notified Bodies;
- CE marking of products.

The Directive provides for harmonised methods of

performance evaluation of products, including common methods of declaration of product performance values, test methods, and methods of conformity assessment. However Member States and private and public sector procurers can set particular requirements on the performance of works and therefore construction products. The required values for the intended uses are chosen by the regulators in each Member State.

Products must be suitable for construction works and fit for their intended use. The essential requirements for the performance of works are the following;

- Mechanical resistance and stability.
- Safety in case of fire.
- Hygiene, health and the environment.

- Safety in use.
- Protection against noise.
- Energy economy and heat retention.

The essential requirements provide the basis for the preparation of harmonised standards at European level for construction products.

### HARMONISED TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Technical Specifications for a product are intended to cover all the performance characteristics required by regulation in any Member State. The Directive states that a Product is presumed fit for use if it conforms to a harmonised standard, a European technical approval or a non-harmonised technical specification recognised at Community level.

The technical specifications are either harmonised European Product Standards (hENs), produced by CEN / CENELEC, or European Technical Approvals (ETAs). If European standards cannot be produced or foreseen within a reasonable period of time, or if products deviate substantially from a standard, the fitness for use of such products may be proved by recourse to European Technical Approvals (ETAs).

A European Technical Approval (ETA) for a construction product is a favourable technical assessment of its fitness for an intended use. The European Organisation for Technical Approvals (EOTA) comprises the Approval Bodies nominated to issue European Technical Approvals (ETAs). A ETA Guideline is intended to establish how Approval Bodies should evaluate the specific characteristics / requirements of a product or family of products. In product areas where no ETAG exists, ETAs can be awarded through the Common Understanding of Assessment Procedure (CUAP).

The voluntary parts of a standard are those parts of the standard not required by regulations.

### SYSTEM OF ATTESTATION OF CONFORMITY

Different attestation levels required by Member States for the same product, result in a significant barrier to trade. Therefore requirements of attestation of conformity are “harmonised” through the CPD.



# DUCTS DIRECTIVE

The attestation system refers to the degree of involvement of third parties in assessing the conformity of the product, according to the relevant technical specification(s). For each product family, the attestation system has been decided collectively by the Member States and the Commission on the basis of the implications of health and safety of the product, and on the particular nature and production process for the product itself.

The CPD refers to six systems of attestation of conformity as follows;

**System 1+:** Product conformity certification, with audit testing.

**System 1:** Product conformity certification, without audit testing.

**System 2+:** Factory production control certification, with continuous surveillance.

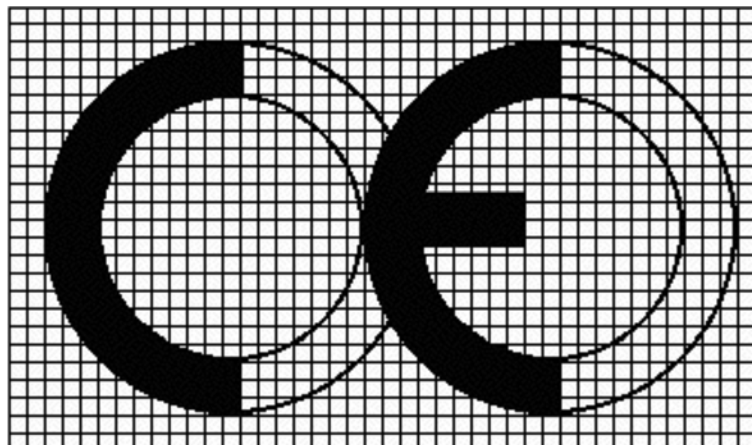
**System 2:** Factory production control certification, without surveillance.

**System 3:** Initial Type Testing.

**System 4:** Manufacturers tasks only.

## THE ATTESTATION PROCEDURES FOR A PRODUCT ARE SET OUT IN THE RELEVANT TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

The manufacturer is required to complete a Declaration of Conformity that is kept with the technical file concerning the product, once all the attestation tasks for the product have been completed. The declaration may be supported by a certificate of product conformity, factory



production control certificate, test laboratory certificates and/or reports, and/or own test results, depending on the attestation system required. An outline of the manufacturers' declaration of conformity is included in the relevant technical specification.

## FRAMEWORK OF NOTIFIED BODIES

Notified attestation bodies are the product certification bodies, fpc certification bodies, inspection bodies and test laboratories that are competent to carry out the attestation tasks. Notified bodies are approved by their respective Member States to carry out certain designation tasks, and then notified to the Commission and other Member States.

ETA approved bodies are designated by the respective Member States, and are also notified to the Commission and other Member States.

## CE MARKING

New Approach Directives provide for the definition of essential requirements, the setting up of appropriate conformity assessment procedures and the introduction of CE marking. The CE mark indicates that the product addresses the regulatory requirements. However it is neither a mark of origin nor a quality mark. Products meeting the essential requirements of the Directive will be eligible for "CE marking" and may be legally placed on the market anywhere within the European Economic Area (EEA). This does not mean that the product is suitable for all end uses in all member States. In the case of the CPD, the route to CE marking is based on compliance with the relevant technical specifications. The product is identified with the CE mark on the product itself, on the packaging, or accompanying documents. Quality marks can also be allowed for, provided their purpose is not confused.

The CE mark includes technical information in the form of declared values, and in some cases, classes of performance. The CE marking can be considered as a technical data sheet that, together with the standard, provides information required by regulators and product specifiers regarding the suitability of the product for its particular intended use, according to the regulations which apply in the Member State where it is sold. The manufacturer is not required to declare values for which regulations do not exist in the particular market sector. (No performance determined; NPD)

## THE CE CONFORMITY MARKING

The CE marking is applicable to an ever increasingly number of construction products, under the Construction Products Directive (CPD 89/106/EEC), as more harmonised European standards are published. Manufacturers face a complex market, affected by regulatory systems, international and national standards and certification requirements. This dynamic environment, and the drive towards harmonisation, has a direct influence not only on the operations of manufacturers, but also on enforcement authorities, specifiers and practitioners.

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*The Construction Products Directive; Council Directive 89/106/EEC, 21 December 1988.*

*Malta Standards Authority; [www.msa.org.mt](http://www.msa.org.mt)*

*Perit Ruben Paul Borg is a Structural Engineer and Quality Management Systems Auditor. He is member of the KTP Built Environment Technical Committee.*

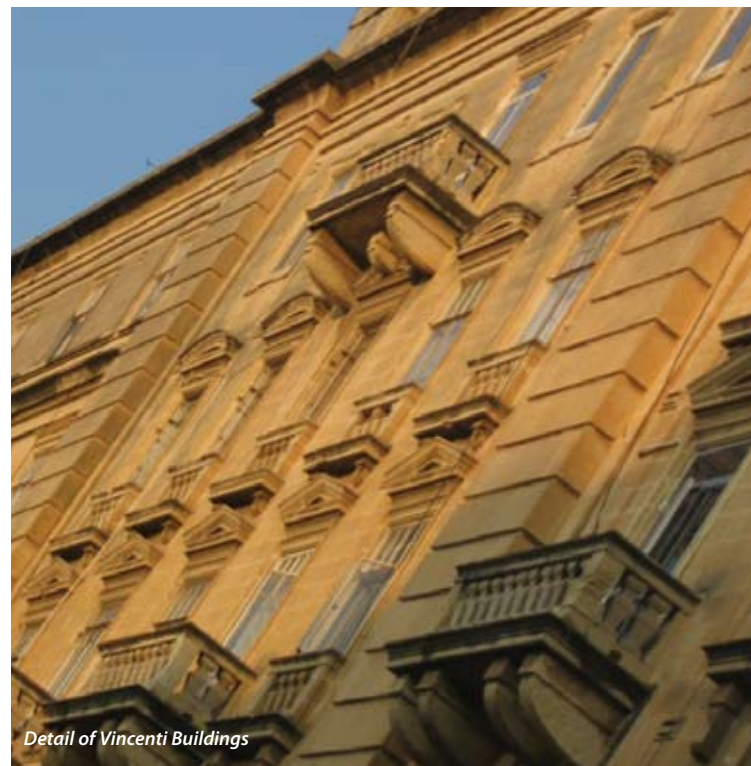


# The Architecture of Gustavo R. Vincenti (1888-1974)

**A**t the turn of the twentieth century Malta was witnessing a housing boom in areas that were then fast becoming suburbs of Valletta. Casal Paola, Hamrun and Sliema were the main protagonists of this phenomenon. Whilst the first two were being developed into working class housing schemes, it was in Sliema that many of Valletta's inhabitants purchased land in order to construct summer pied-a-terres. As having a Sliema address soon became increasingly fashionable with the more affluent property investors, so did having lavish residences decorated to the tastes that were in vogue at the time. This gave young architects the opportunity to experiment with new styles in reflection of what they perhaps saw on tour in Europe and elsewhere early in their careers. Gustavo Romeo Vincenti, was one such architect.



Vincenti Building in Old Bakery Street, Valletta



Detail of Vincenti Buildings



Born in Valletta in 1888, Vincenti at a young age showed inclinations towards architecture, becoming a perit at age 23. What distinguishes this architect from his contemporaries such as Giuseppe Psaila (1891-1960) is his property-related business acumen. Coming from wealthy stock, Vincenti was able to purchase land, design houses and then later sell them off to a growing clientele. Amongst Vincenti's earlier buildings are a number of Art Nouveau terraced houses located in Sliema, most of which are thankfully still standing.

In his dissertation discussing the Art Nouveau movement in Malta, Norbert Attard describes Vincenti's use of this style as "executed in an economic, matter of fact and elegant manner without the bombasm of Psaila..."<sup>(1)</sup> Ribbons, bands, the ubiquitous tassel and buckle as well as the 'circle in square' motifs are common features in many of Vincenti's early works. An interesting touch is the architect's interpretation of the Maltese closed balcony. Continuous horizontal and vertical elements give the facades a flowing character yet still attaining certain rigidity, an all-in-all quite geometric feeling. The Italian Liberty-style and early Art Deco grammar come to mind when appreciating these buildings.

The Art Nouveau movement in Malta however was rather short-lived and unadventurous. In his critique Attard states that "there was no attempt to develop new



(nouveau) and freer (liberty) structural forms. Rather it was a question of renovating the decorative traditions of Latin Baroque.”<sup>(2)</sup>

In fact much of the architecture being built at this time had strong Classical connotations or at most were Eclectic compositions. Vincenti’s portfolio included a number of such examples including the apartment block overlooking King George V Gardens in Floriana as well as the nearby residences in Harper Lane, named after his children. His largest and most famous building project was Vincenti Buildings in Valletta completed just before

World War II.<sup>(3)</sup> This large condominium replaced the former bakeries of the Knights of St. John, occupying an entire block of the city’s gridiron layout.

At the same time that Vincenti was working on his Valletta property, he was also constructing a complex of four residences in Ta’ Xbiex, also known collectively as Vincenti Buildings but individually named after the four Evangelists. Stripped almost completely of any form of ornamentation, these houses evoke a spirit of an architectural language yet to come. Undoubtedly, Vincenti realised that Modernism was the way forward, not least from an economic point of view. This style is epitomised in his personal mansion in Grenfell Street, St. Julian’s where fillet-edged cubic volumes pierced picture windows and divided with spacious concrete cantilevers all sit on a podium of garages. With this creation it is evident that Le Corbusier’s ideology was greatly admired by Vincenti.

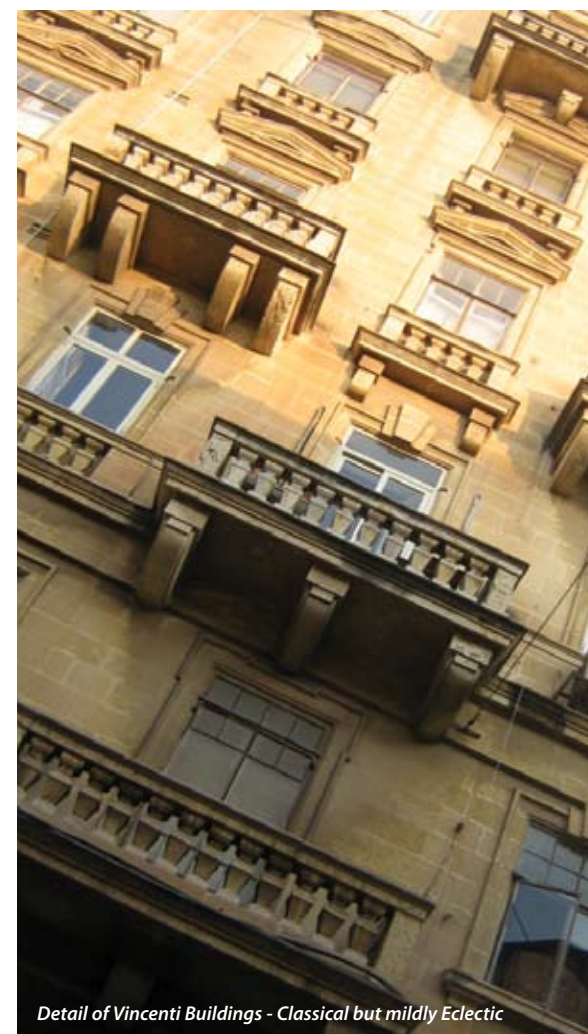
Gustavo Vincenti has left for posterity a small but varied collection of buildings which reflect those styles that were fashionable in pre and post World War Two Malta. Today it can be noted that the authorities acknowledge this with respect to his earlier Art Nouveau and Eclectic works. Yet one hopes that those buildings with attributes to Modernism, like similar examples created by other architects, are soon equally recognised as architectural legacies of which there are so few in our Islands, and are equally seen as worthy of conservation, before it is too late.

**Perit Edward Said**

(1) Attard, Norbert, *Art Nouveau Architecture in Malta*, unpublished B. E. & A. (Hons) dissertation, May 1977, p. 45

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 4

(3) Thake, Conrad and Quentin Hughes, *Malta - War & Peace, An Architectural Chronicle 1800-2000*, (Malta 2005), p. 146



*Detail of Vincenti Buildings - Classical but mildly Eclectic*



*Private house, St. Julian's - Vincenti's architectural interpretation of Modernism*



*Detail from one of Vincenti's residences in Sliema*



*Terraced houses in Dingli Street, Sliema - Vincent's quasi-industrialist approach here yields an architectural style more akin to Art Deco*



*Vincenti Buildings in Ta' Xbiex - four semi-detached residences designed along Modernist lines*

# The potential application of urban design codes in the Maltese planning system (Part 2)

By Perit Antoine Zammit, MSc (Lond) *The following is Part 2 of an article that was published in the preceding issue of tA.*

## ELEMENTS OF URBAN DESIGN CODES FOR MALTA

The content analysis of local policy documents, discussed in the previous issue, highlighted the need to address the townscape and public realm (including the streetscape) dimensions that relate to the Local Plan level and that in turn set a comprehensive urban design context for DC2005. These two aspects could thus become the foundations on which to

build local urban design codes.

Figure 1 outlines the content remit of urban design codes for Malta. This rationale also doubles up as the codes' basic structure. A number of generic elements applicable locally at a Local Plan level can be grouped together within the remits of 'townscape' and 'public realm'. This is followed by a discussion of specific elements that relate to particular settlement zones and building typologies therein.

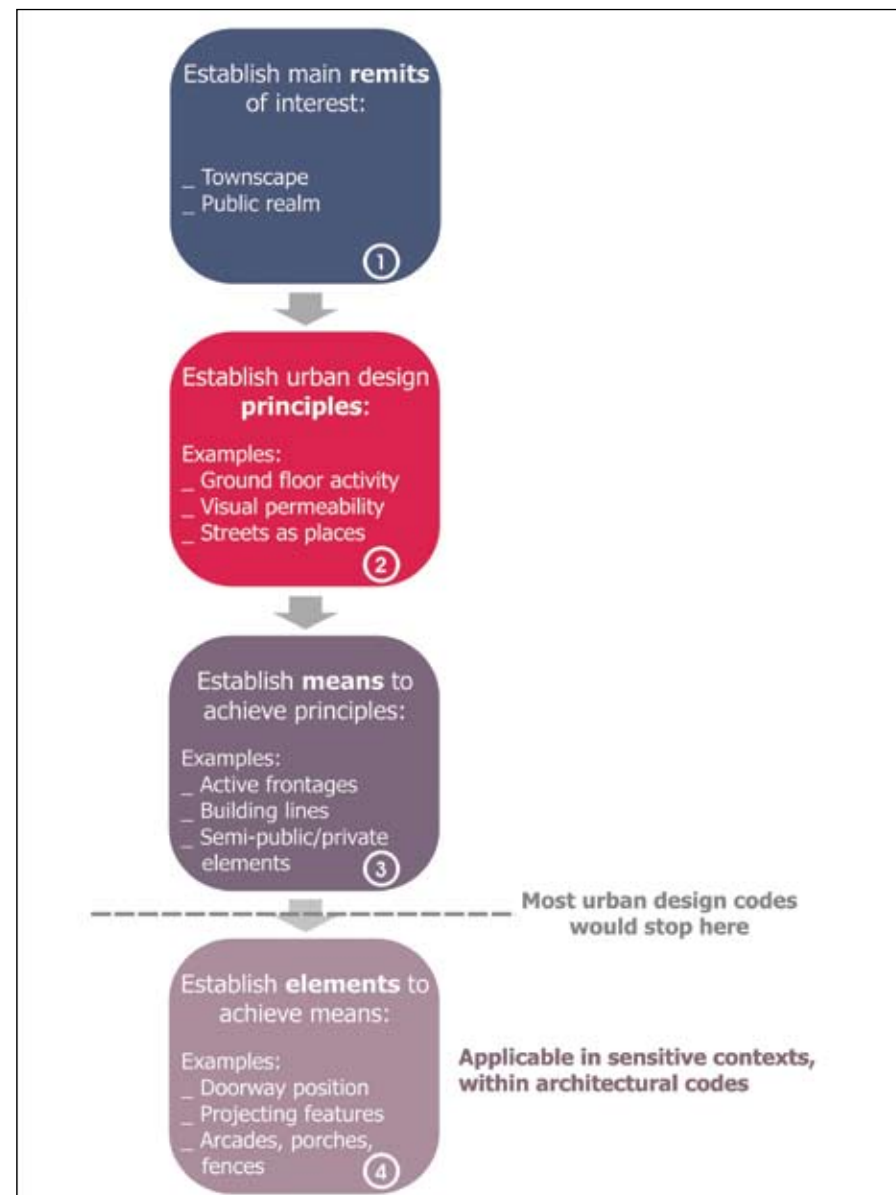


Figure 1: Rationale underlying Maltese design

## GENERIC ISSUES AT LOCAL PLAN LEVEL

### Townscape-related

The design codes would deal with the general composition of the built environment, including issues of skyline and high buildings (particularly their impact on views and vistas).

### The public realm

The codes would also be concerned with the creation of a positive public realm and would deal with:

(a) **Spatial qualities of the public realm**, including:

- **Spatial configuration** – space formed by building enclosure and the spaces between buildings. In this respect, offsets in building lines (setback or projections) should contribute positively to the creation of public spaces.

- **Streets** as places in their own right; local street patterns and streetscapes, covering issues such as streetscape rhythm, height limitations and available links to surrounding spaces and streets.

- **Urban structure and urban grain** – particularly where new urban extensions link to older areas.

- **Visual linkages** within streets and public spaces – active frontages would provide both physical and visual links between buildings and spaces. Design codes would also specify what types of 'dead' frontages are allowable, together with minimum and maximum allowable distances between such frontages and heights (where applicable).

Where high-rise buildings are located within existing urban areas, design codes would specify design requirements for open space released by the FAR application. This space should be of high design quality and should help to knit development together to form an attractive and coherent whole linked to the rest of the locality rather than becoming an urban lacuna.

(b) **The relation of built form to the public realm**, including:

- **Building façades** in relation to public spaces – the location and treatment of entryways onto streets and spaces and

the specification of ground floor activity.

- **Massing** of built form in relation to the definition of public spaces – issues of scale and form, relating also to the need to design large blocks and structures carefully, breaking down large frontages into manageable parts.

- The design and location of **public** and **landmark** buildings – codes should allow these buildings to provide an identity and focus to public spaces.

- The design of **structures** within and the extent of **projections** onto public spaces, as well as **extensions** to buildings that create semi-public/private environments.

**Specific issues**, on a locality-by-locality basis; for instance:

(1) Design codes for urban development in **rural areas** should follow detailed landscape character studies and should be particularly concerned with the relation to topography and the design treatment of urban fringe developments, including the integration with characteristic items within the Maltese landscape.

(2) **New growth areas** could contain design codes regulating, for instance, block layout/orientation, the variety of urban block structures and the location of private parking at the back of buildings.

(3) In **redevelopable areas** and **infill developments**, codes would emphasise the creation of physically and visually permeable walkable mixed-use clusters that integrate with the surrounding urban fabric; and possibly specify a degree of occupancy standards for 'living over the shop' in new retail development.

(4) **Sensitive areas** and **inner historical cores** would be characterised by further detailed prescription regarding urban structure, street patterns, the treatment and screening of public car parking located near or within these areas and the relation of shopfronts to adjoining buildings. Additional architectural codes would prescribe specific building details, including choice of materials, façade detailing, solid: void ratios, architectural style and colours.

## IMPLEMENTING THE URBAN DESIGN CODES

With regard to the form of local urban design codes, initial hypotheses suggest a document (possibly Supplementary Planning Guidance, as foreign experience shows; Punter and Carmona, p332) that contains:

- Generic items at a Local Plan level, subdivided into provisions for different types of development; and
- Individual elements on a locality-by-locality basis, improving current Local Plan Area Policies.

In terms of applying this within an implementation structure for design codes, Friedman (p286) argues in favour of a framework wherein an established vision guides a design code. Design codes would substantiate and build on existing local policy making, as part of an approach that includes a visionary, strategic and directive component (Butina Watson p69), summarised in Figure 2.

## SHORT-TERM APPLICATION OF DESIGN CODES

It is clear, however, that even if design codes were eventually deemed to be ideal solutions in the Maltese context, they would not be introduced immediately or everywhere. At present, four possible scenarios for using design codes in Malta can be envisaged:

- Guidelines established at project inception as part of a Development Brief for current and upcoming sizeable **capital projects**.
- **Sensitive areas**, such as UCAs, where an ongoing high degree of design detail is required to ensure appropriate development.
- **Planning gain agreements**, where codes could be used to guarantee high-quality public embellishments and improvements in the public realm completed through such agreements.
- Localities wherein **high-rise structures** are being approved within existing urban fabrics.

## LIMITATIONS TO INTRODUCING DESIGN CODES IN MALTA

Design codes have arguably been most successful in sizeable developments. Development in Malta, however, occurs on a 'plot-by-plot' basis and the majority of planning applications at MEPA are for small-scale proposals. This is a consequence of the fact that the urban landscape is composed of a multitude of individually owned sites. This fragmentation constitutes a major impediment to introducing comprehensive design coding for a substantial area. Ideally a system should be created whereby various owners are brought together to work within a comprehensive framework. Such a system would allow individuals to work within an established code as part of a masterplan, building on small parcels of land within a larger scheme. Moreover, foreign experience has shown that design codes are futile within a discretionary planning system, where development applications have to go through the same development control process. These are larger problems that will not be solved by adding another tier called 'design coding'.

## WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF DESIGN CODES

Therefore, the further-reaching contribution of design codes is the fact that they call for a wider revision of planning issues (Krier, p119). Codes will not work if they are part of a fragmented planning system (Plater-Zyberk, pxii) that is still based on a set of outdated principles that are now irrelevant.

Design codes could eventually form part of a package in a revised planning framework. Whether this would imply replacing the discretionary process by a regulatory one or complementing a slightly modified discretionary system by design codes remains to be studied in further detail. Clearly, in these discussions Government should play a very active role.

As Rouse suggests, design codes have the potential "to mark a gradual but ongoing shift in the planning system, from a reactive to a proactive model of control" (Rouse, p18). Although design codes will not be the only solution, they can definitely constitute a very good part of it.

## SUMMARY

- The **content** of Maltese urban design codes should deal with 'townscape' and the 'public realm', referring continuously

to the relation of spaces with building surfaces, forms and façades. The codes should reinforce a locality's local character and, for this reason, they should be preceded by a thorough character analysis that informs a strong vision for the locality.

- The codes would address both **generic** and **specific** elements. Individual settlement types would however have their unique variables requiring the formulation of site-specific codes.
- The codes would be very diverse and there would be varying levels of **prescription** and **detail** depending on the individual localities. In particular, UCAs would have more detailed design codes. The codes should not impose specific solutions and be overly prescriptive. Most importantly, however, the level of detail adopted in the design codes should allow them to remain flexible documents that allow for future growth and that can adapt to changing circumstances, particularly in response to market fluctuations.
- The codes should be **positive** and **comprehensive** documents, drafted in a user-friendly fashion and containing numerous **illustrations**.

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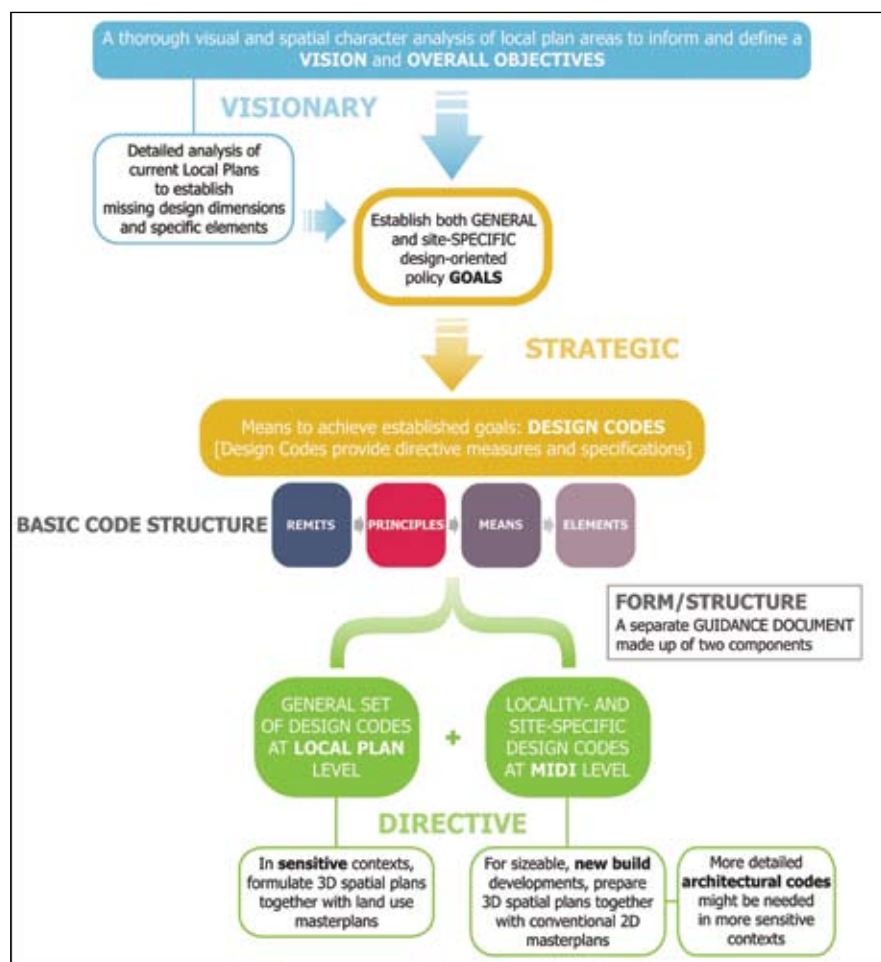


Figure 2: Structure Diagram for Design Codes in Malta

# www.thebluebucket.org

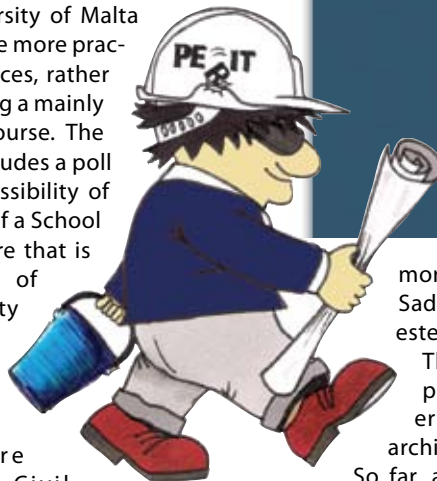
**www.thebluebucket.org is now in its fifth month of operation. Launched in March, the website is envisaged as a platform for architectural debate primarily focussing on the Maltese islands and seeks to attract the involvement of all those with an interest in the quality of our built environment. In broad terms, the goal of the website is to provide a venue for and encourage users to engage in architectural debate with the aim of stimulating a collective effort to produce a higher quality built environment. The main feature of this site is the Forum, where topics for discussion are floated for debate. Users can discuss these topics and also propose other topics for discussion. The Forum is split into two main sections: the BlueBucket Debating Forum, which is open to all registered users of the site; and the KTP Forum, which can be accessed only by members of the Kamra tal-Periti.**

Registering for the BlueBucket Debating Forum is easy. Users can just click on the "Register" button on the top right hand side of the screen, then agree to the terms and conditions of the site. Once this step is done, one can then fill in the online registration form with one's details, and the registration process is thus complete. Once the registration is confirmed, the user can then log in and participate freely in the Forum. This means that the user can view all posts, reply to any post and even set up his or her own topic for debate. Registering for the KTP Forum is also a simple matter. Only paid-up members of the KTP are eligible to participate in this forum. Members must first register as per the above instructions. In order to become a member of the KTP private forum, one must then send an email to [team@thebluebucket.org](mailto:team@thebluebucket.org), including one's real name and BlueBucket username. Access will normally be granted within 24 hours. Should it transpire that someone requesting access to this Forum is not a member of the KTP, the user will receive a reply asking him or her to update their membership status, following which access to the Forum will be granted.

## TOPICS

There are currently six active topics within the BlueBucket Debating Forum. One topic posted recently bears the title "The Faculty of Architecture." Here, the debate revolves about the proposal that the course being offered by the University of Malta should involve more practical experiences, rather than just being a mainly theoretical course. The topic also includes a poll about the possibility of the creation of a School of Architecture that is independent of the University of Malta.

One student of the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering made good use of the Forum when she asked for help regarding one of her course assignments. This was concerned with the so-called Marsovin apartments in Qawra (1967), designed by Perit Joseph Spiteri. Through the site, this student was able to obtain information on how to get in touch with Perit Spiteri, which she did and whom she eventually met. Hopefully the assignment was also well-graded! Another topic deals with the issue of the partial demolition of Joseph Huntingford's School in Qala. This building, an architectural gem in its own right, was the victim of inconsiderate development and parts of it have been demolished in order to make way for a new ITS training facility. One contributor to the debate looks at the response of the media to this loss, and writes, "The local papers seem to have latched on to the fact that Malta has lost part of its architectural heritage. This seems, however, to have been short-lived. One would have expected that with articles with titles such as "Auditor accuses MEPA of 'gross act of vandalism' in Qala school" (MaltaToday), "Planning Authority failing in its duties" (MaltaToday), and "Demolition of architectural gem starts" (The Times), there would have been



more of a general public outcry. Sadly it seems that few are interested in the fate of our culture...." This debate also includes a poll which asks whether modern buildings of important architectural value be protected. So far, all who have participated in the poll have voted in favour.

The KTP Forum currently consists of only one ongoing debate, related to the recently proposed Schedule of Tariffs proposed by the Kamra tal-Periti. Following an EGM where this proposed schedule was discussed, the topic was also posted onto the KTP Forum to allow periti to freely and openly discuss their views and put forward their proposals and suggestions on this new tariff. The discussion in the forum discusses the need to have fee bands as proposed by the Kamra, and the way forward in terms of EU regulations and restrictions. It also addresses the problems of undercutting. One user proposes that rather than a total reworking of the Tariff, the Kamra should be looking at updating the rates in the current Tariff K before moving on to a more radical change in the schedule of fees.

## RESPONSE

Although the site now has about sixty five registered users, the participation in the debates is still somewhat feeble. One must ask whether the website is in fact serving the purposes for which it was set up. Is the site not so easy to use? Are people not interested in participating in an architectural debate? Has the site not

been publicised enough? It is of particular concern, for example, that the topic dealing with the new schedule of tariffs has only had four participants. Are the Kamra's members not interested in this essential part of their professional practice, or is there some other underlying reason for the lack of response to this debate? Your feedback on the above is essential if the site is to serve the profession adequately. Do send your comments and suggestions directly to [team@thebluebucket.org](mailto:team@thebluebucket.org), or write in directly to this journal on [thearchitect@ktpmalta.com](mailto:thearchitect@ktpmalta.com) should you wish your comments to be considered for publication. Readers of this article are also strongly encouraged to register into the site, and to participate in the ongoing debates – together we can work to influence decision-makers by making our voices heard on issues that are particularly at heart to the local architectural scene.



**Log on and have your say at [www.thebluebucket.org](http://www.thebluebucket.org)**

# IMPRESSIONS AESTHETICS & DESIGN

This book consists of an extensive collection of photographs of local architecture. In the preface, Minister Ninu Zammit says that "Each picture in this publication indeed does not only tell a thousand words, but I believe should also solicit many questions."

The authors of the book, Periti Vincent Buhagiar, John Ebejer and Alberto Miceli Farrugia, took most of the photographs in the publication themselves. In the introduction to the book, one of the authors states that this publication is in no way intended to be exhaustive; rather it is intended to stimulate debate among Maltese architects, a small step towards a mature critique of architecture, aesthetics and design.

Published by Midsea Books in association with the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC), this book is divided into seven parts. The first, titled "Volume", shows examples of how volumes generate scale and space hierarchy, creating intermediate spaces. The section on "Layer" illustrates the fact that just as human skin varies in thickness in different parts of the body depending on the degree of protection required, so does a building have its own

levels of protective mantles, working as layers, giving it the right degree of seasonal exposure or shelter as necessary.

"Fragments" is the title of the third section of the book, and shows images of different elements of buildings that work together to produce one harmonious whole. "Elements," the fourth section of the book, looks at the relationship that buildings have with nature's key elements: earth, wind, fire and water. The fifth section deals with "Colour," and allows the person leafing through the book to catch glimpses of the use of colour in our local architecture.

Surface texture generates the sensual perception of a material. This topic is illustrated in the sixth part of the book, "Texture," where the effects of different textures in buildings are investigated. The seventh and final section of this book deals with "Streetscape" and takes a look at how each individual building in a street, while being unique in its own right, contributes to create a unity of parts that form our local streetscapes.

In the foreword to this publication, Peter Serracino Inglott states: "I confess that until now I shared the



prevailing impression that, from an architectural point of view, Malta of the last decade has been, more or less, a wilderness. This book, however, provides an array of peepholes on a scattering of oases in the midst of the non-depicted desert. I for one had hitherto been unaware of most of them." May whoever comes across this publication also discover the wealth of our local architecture through the images portrayed within.

ISBN: 99932-7-086-5

*Book review by Simone Vella Lenicker*

## www.bsif.co.uk

www.bsif.co.uk, the website of the British Safety Industry Federation aims at providing the browser with all safety related issues with links to many safety-related



sites and companies. Through the website, the Federation also assists in sourcing of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and other safety equipment. In recent seminars it was highlighted that 63% of accidents/incidents involving PPE are the result of inadequate selection, use, maintenance and training. Not one report mentioned that the PPE had failed to perform. Thus, many injuries and incidents per year could be avoided! The website is very easy to navigate and use. Information is available to members of the BSIF on most aspects of safety.

## http://mt.osha.eu.int

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is an EU organisation that has been set up to serve the information needs in the health and safety area. <http://mt.osha.eu.int> is the portal of the



Maltese Focal Point for this organisation. This site is part of a network of similar organisations in various EU and non-EU countries and one can find links to many of these bodies worldwide. The site contains downloadable documents on occupational health and safety in Malta as well as statistics of accidents at the workplace. Through the website, the Agency provides guidelines for employers and workers for good health and safety practices in various situations encountered at the workplace. The news section of the site seems to be updated quite regularly and contains interesting articles about varied topics related to health and safety.

**Website reviews by Katia Mifsud**

## www.theirm.org

The Institute of Risk Management is a UK-based professional educational body aiming to promote technical and ethical good practices and provide courses in risk management. Membership to the Institute is



open worldwide to professionals in many risk-related disciplines such as insurers, health care professionals, lawyers and engineers among others. The Institute offers an on-line course leading to a Diploma in Risk Management through the website [www.theirm.org](http://www.theirm.org). Through the website, one can also join any of the Special Interest Groups that provide a forum for exchange of information and experiences. Also featured is a job listing area as well as details of the various conferences and fora organised by the Institute.

BOOKS

WEBSITES

Now to 27 August 2006; Swedish Museum of Architecture, Sweden  
**BRUNO MATHSSON: DESIGNER AND ARCHITECT**  
[www.arkitekturmuseet.se](http://www.arkitekturmuseet.se)

Now to 3 September 2006; The Netherlands Architecture Institute, Netherlands  
**CHINA IN ROTTERDAM: CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN CHINA**  
[www.nai.nl](http://www.nai.nl)

Now to 3 September 2006; Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, Finland  
**FINNISH ARCHITECTURE 0405**  
[www.mfa.fi](http://www.mfa.fi)

Now to 10 September 2006; Vitra Design Museum, Germany  
**JOE COLOMBO - INVENTING THE FUTURE**



[www.design-museum.de](http://www.design-museum.de)

Now to 24 September 2006; MAK Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria  
**AIR ARCHITECTURE - YVES KLEIN**  
[www.mak.at](http://www.mak.at)

Now to 15 October 2006; V&A + RIBA Architecture Exhibition Gallery  
**IN THE RING - 250 YEARS OF CIRCUS DESIGN**  
[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

Now to 29 October 2006; MAK Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria  
**CANTILEVER CHAIRS: ARCHITECTURAL MANIFESTO AND MATERIAL EXPERIMENT**  
[www.mak.at](http://www.mak.at)

Now to 20 October 2006; MAK Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria  
**JOSEF HOFFMAN - CARLO SCARPA**  
[www.mak.at](http://www.mak.at)

15 - 25 August 2006; Florence, Italy  
**WORLD RENEWABLE ENERGY CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION**

[www.wrenuk.co.uk](http://www.wrenuk.co.uk)



30 August - 2 September 2006; Stockholm, Sweden  
**EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN HISTORY**  
[www.historia.su.se/urbanhistory/eah/invitation.htm](http://www.historia.su.se/urbanhistory/eah/invitation.htm)

6 - 8 September; University of Geneva, Switzerland  
**25TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PASSIVE AND LOW ENERGY ARCHITECTURE**  
[www.unige.ch/formcont/plea2006/presentation.html](http://www.unige.ch/formcont/plea2006/presentation.html)

10 September - 19 November 2006; Venice, Italy  
**10TH EDITION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL BIENNIAL OF VENICE**  
**THEME: META-CITIES**  
[www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

11 - 15 September 2006; Lorentz Centre, Netherlands  
**GEOMETRIC PATTERNS IN ISLAMIC ART**  
[www.lorentzcenter.nl](http://www.lorentzcenter.nl)

11 - 17 September; Florence, Italy  
**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR: FORUM UNESCO - UNIVERSITY AND HERITAGE**  
[www.fuupfirenze.ne](http://www.fuupfirenze.ne)

16 - 17 September 2006; London, UK  
**OPEN HOUSE LONDON**



[www.openhouse.org.uk](http://www.openhouse.org.uk)

September 2006 - January 2007; Victoria and Albert Museum, UK  
**EXHIBITION - LEONARDO DA VINCI: EXPERIENCE, EXPERIMENT AND DESIGN**  
[www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)



21 - 24 September 2006; London, UK  
**100% LIGHT 2006 - ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING**  
[www.100percentlight.co.uk](http://www.100percentlight.co.uk)

21 - 24 September 2006; London, UK  
**100% DESIGN 2006 - CONTEMPORARY INTERIOR DESIGN IN LONDON**



[www.100percentdesign.co.uk](http://www.100percentdesign.co.uk)

4 October 2006; London, UK  
**CONFERENCE: STRUCTURAL SAFETY  
 ACROSS THE LIFESPAN OF BUILDINGS**  
 conferences@ice.org.uk

4 – 6 October 2006; Budapest, Hungary  
 Annual Conference of the “Architecture for Science and  
 High-Tech Facilities” Work Programme (UIA)  
**THEME: “THE HIGH TECH  
 CAMPUS IN THE CITY - THE ECO-  
 TECHNOLOGICAL DILEMMA”**  
 For further information contact KTP

19-22 October 2006; Moscow, Russia  
**14TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL  
 OF RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE**  
 archunion-russia@mail.ru

30 October – 4 November 2006; Nicosia, Cyprus  
**CONFERENCE : THE E-VOLUTION**

**OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
 IN CULTURAL HERITAGE**

www.cipa2006.org  
 15 – 17 November 2006; Istanbul, Turkey  
**ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION  
 FORUM 3 : GLOBAL AREA FOR  
 ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION**  
 www.mimed.net/gaea

25-29 November, 2006: Dhaka, Bangladesh  
 Society, Architects and Emerging Issues  
**COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF  
 ARCHITECTS 18TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
 CONFERENCE, AND STUDENT FORUM**  
 www.comarchitect.org

17 - 18 September 2007; Beijing, China  
**5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFER-  
 ENCE ON CURRENT AND FUTURE  
 TRENDS IN BRIDGE DESIGN,  
 CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**



www.bridgemanagement2007.com

16 – 18 October 2007; Stuttgart, Germany  
 CIB W102 3rd International Conference  
**“INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE  
 MANAGEMENT - HELPING THE  
 PRACTITIONER IN PLANNING  
 AND BUILDING”**



http://cib-w102.iconda.org/conference2007stuttgart



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I, the undersigned, would like to apply for full membership of the Kamra tal-Periti.  
 Please find this CV duly filled in together with a photocopy of my Warrant, and relative fees due.

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Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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Graduate	Lm 15
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Full Member	Lm 25
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Retired Member	Lm 5

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

**KTP membership  
 entitles paid-up only  
 members to a number  
 of benefits, including:**

**ACTIVITIES**

- Discounted rates for participation in conferences, workshops and seminars organised by the KTP. An intense programme of events is currently being planned for 2006 including Time for Architecture 2006.
- Discounted rates for participation in the diverse CPD programmes organised by the KTP.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

- The quarterly KTP publication, the Architect, which provides comprehensive coverage of practice matters and contributions by various professionals on a number of topical issues.
- A monthly email bulletin, KTP News, which ensures that members are updated with the latest developments within the profession.
- Complimentary weekly copy of Business Today, published by Mediatoday.
- Opportunities to network with

thousands of architects through the KTP's affiliations with international organisations including the UIA, ACE, UMAR and CAA.

- Regular communications by email containing information about local and international architectural competitions.
- Access to member-only sections on the KTP website, www.ktpmalta.com such as the forthcoming Property Valuations Database.
- Advice on assessment of fees.

**BENEFIT SCHEMES**

- Participation in benefit schemes that the KTP may, from time to time, enter into.
- KTP is currently negotiating deals with a number of corporate partners that will entitle its members to avail themselves of a number of benefits, including competitive insurance rates when taking out Professional Indemnity insurance policies as will be made obligatory under forthcoming legislation.
- Through affiliation with the Malta Federation of Professional Associations, members will also be able to avail themselves of discounted Life and Health Insurance policies with BUPA.

Continued from pg 9

## THE CAMPUS REINTEGRATES THE CITY

This Work Programme has launched a call for contributions for its next meeting and seminar that will take place in Budapest on 4 to 6 October 2006, on the theme The High-Tech Campus within the city - the ecology/technology dilemma. This seventh edition of the international seminar will examine the conditions of the return of scientific research facilities within cities, and within the context of their evolution and that of the current environment. For further information visit <http://high-tech.bme.hu/IGS/ENG/>

## MEPA SCHEDULES 17 PROPERTIES



*The Australian Bungalow in Luqa, one of the buildings scheduled by MEPA. The bungalow is over 70 years old. Images and information on all the other structures scheduled may be viewed on the website [www.mepa.org.mt](http://www.mepa.org.mt)*

The Malta Environment & Planning Authority has notified the owners of seventeen properties in Malta and Gozo that the site has been afforded the protection of scheduling. The scheduled properties are the following: Palazzo Francia, Lija; Palazzo Stagno, Qormi; Palazzo Parisio, Naxxar; Palazzo Curmi, Zejtun; Palazzo Pescatore, St. Paul's Bay; Il-Kunvent, Zabbar; Is-Simblija, Dingli; Dar ix-Xemx, Nadur; Rubble wall, Lija; Rural structure, Zurrieq; Ta' Baldu Complex, Rabat; Officer's Mess at Fort Campbell, Mellieha; St. George's Barracks, St. Julian's; Nicca ta' l-Infetti, Birkirkara; Australian Bungalow, Luqa; Roseville, Triq San Anton, Attard; Underground flourmill, St Paul's Bay. These buildings were scheduled for their architectural, historical or contextual significance. The scheduling was considered as urgent due to neglect, pillaging and vandalism and requests for re-development of these sites. Many of these sites

also have established gardens which give the surrounding developments an internal open space as was traditional in the old fabric of Maltese development. Only four of the sites being scheduled are in a very good condition. These are Palazzo Parisio, the Underground flour mill, the rubble wall and the Simblija complex. The other sites are either suffering from unauthorized intervention, deterioration or neglect.

## CHURCH WINS AWARD

The designs of a church at Hal-Farrug by Richard England and conceptual designs of a chapel overlooking Filfla won the Grand Prix award at the International Academy of Architecture at Interarch in Sofia, Bulgaria. The designs were chosen from among 200 entries from 15 countries. The design for the Hal-Farrug church, which was featured in the last issue of tA, will eventually be presented to the Malta Environment and Planning Authority.



England said that the church "has been conceived primarily as a church for our time; a composite structure based on a geometry of rotations, inclinations, oscillations and fluctuations."

## ADDOLORATA CEMETRY

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority has approved an extension of approximately 20,000 sq. m. to the southern side of Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery.

With this extension, it is estimated that some 1800 new graves will be made available to the public. The extension will be over an area which has hitherto been used as a dumpsite for building rubble. The site will be landscaped to render it more harmonious both with the

use of the site and with the surrounding countryside.

## CLIFTON CROSSING



Inspiration from nature helped Egyptian architect Youssef Ghali to win the £5,000 first prize in the Clifton Crossing Competition with his leaf-like asymmetrical structure. Ghali's design won over the judging panel for its "lightness, elegance and transparency."

"The design inspires a feeling of soaring - almost bird like - above the Avon," said the judges, led by design gurus Michel Virlogeux, Mark Whitby and Jim Eyre. "It certainly takes advantage of the rocky site and seems to enhance depth of the gorge."

View the winning entry and many others at <http://research.cen.bris.ac.uk>

## UMAR & SD-MED



The signing of the cooperation agreement between UMAR and SD-Med which place at the headquarters of the Ordre des Architectes Francais in Paris on the 28th June. The photo shows Patrice Genet UMAR President, and Stella Kyvelou for SDMed with David Pace UMAR Secretary-General at the back. SD-Med (<http://www.sd-med.org>) aims at enhancing transferability of innovative techniques, tools and methods to implement sustainable building within the Mediterranean. This is the first cooperation agreement between UMAR and a regional organisation. This forms part of the gradual shift of UMAR's activities from an inward orientated

programme to one which seeks strategic partners for programmes which have a common Mediterranean theme.

## LOCAL PLANS

On the 7th August, Government approved five Local Plans which had been drafted by MEPA for all localities in Malta and Gozo. This completes the set of Local Plan for the Maltese islands. The local Plans most recently approved are those of South Malta, Central Malta, Gozo & Comino, North West and the local plan for the North Harbours. The Grand Harbour Local Plan had been approved in 2002 and the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan had been approved in 1995. The local plans aim at regulating development both on a regional level and also on the level of localities. To do this the local plans provide for urban regeneration, conservation of architectural heritage, promotion of tourist activity, improved social and community amenities and aids to industry. All local plans can be downloaded from the MEPA website [www.mepa.org.mt](http://www.mepa.org.mt)

## ACCESS FOR ALL

The National Commission Persons with Disability has recently published the Access for All Design Guidelines 2006. In their introduction to the guidelines, the editors Fred Bezzina and Joseph Spiteri

state that, "In designing buildings it is important that everybody including persons with disability are able to access and use the internal and external facilities associated with the development, building or facility... The objective of Access for All should be not only seen as a legal requirement, but one that enhances the usage of any development."

This document is divided into three main parts. Part 1 presents the general principles and guidelines of accessible design. Part 2 provides the technical information regarding the design specifications that should be adopted to provide accessible features of a development. Part 3 deals with accessibility in specific types of buildings and facilities.

