

National Inventory of the Cultural Property of the Maltese Islands

NICPMI Inv. No. | 1686 **Date of Publication** | 28 June 2013

Property Name Fort St Elmo

Fort St Elmo Address

Town Name Valletta Toponym -**Local Council** Valletta

Property Owner Government Managing Body Heritage Malta / Police Academy

Guardianship Deed

Modern (16th to 18th Century AD)

Phase Early Modern: Knights of St John (16th Century)

Cultural Heritage Type & Value

Property Function

Historical **Cultural Heritage**

> **Property Value** Outstanding

Assessment Fortification **Conservation Area**

Outline Description

Bastioned fort

Architectural

Property Description

Fort St Elmo was built in 1552 and the original structure contained a star-shaped plan, with four acute arms, two of which form a short demi-bastioned front but by 1565, the work had acquired a large detached triangular cavalier, a ravelin, and a few other hastily built outworks. During the Great Siege of 1565, Fort St Elmo received the initial brunt of the Turkish attack, and although suffering heavy damage was quickly rebuilt. With the foundation of the new enceinte of Valletta, particularly after the fort was enclosed within a vast apron of bastions (i.e., the Caraffa Enceinte) erected in 1680s - its role was eventually changed to that of a keep of the new fortress. This period saw various modifications to the fort, including the incorporation of the cavalier into the main enceinte (this involved the demolition of the northern ramparts and the filling-in of the ditch which separated the fort from the cavalier) around the late 17th-century, the construction of new landward gate and the remodeling of the $piazze\ basse$ (the original entrance to the fort was situated on the Grand Harbour side - Porta del Soccorso); and the construction of a complex of arcaded barracks and church set around a central piazza in the early decades of the 1700s. The British, after 1800, continued to heavily invest in its defences, upgrading both its armament and its resistance to bombardment. The sea front defences received considerable attention, particularly the cavalier, which housed a succession of heavy RML guns, breech-loaders and QF-guns and was heavily modified with concrete structures and magazines. A lighthouse, which was erected around 1633 on top of the cavalier, was dismantled at the start of WWII.

Scheduled by MEPA Yes G.N. No. 133 **Degree of Protection** Grade 1 G.N. Date 2001

S.C. Spiteri, Fortresses of the Knights (Malta, 2001), 252-61; The Great Siege, mdlxv (Malta, 2005), 120-39; 'In search of Fort St Elmo 1565' in Military Architecture.com, http://www.militaryarchitecture.com/index.php/Building-Methods/in-search-of-fortst-elmo

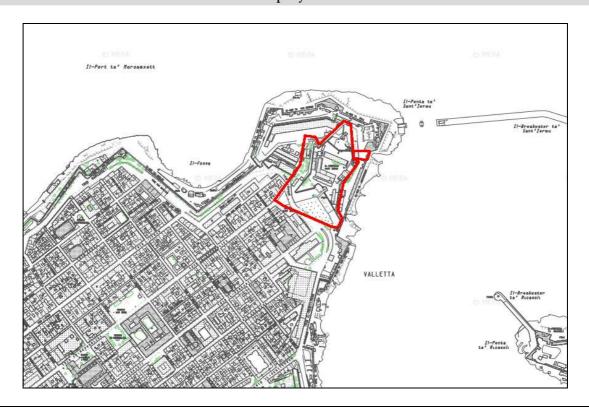
Recommended **Bibliography**

Hoppen, The Fortification of Malta by the Order of St John 1530-1798 (2nd Edition, Malta, 1999), 12, 38-40, 41-49 49, 52-67, 70-1, Caraffa Enceinte 97-9, 111, 118, 133, 134, 148, 225, 242, 253, 255

Q. Hughes, Malta, a guide to the fortifications (Malta, 1985) 188-96: Q. Hughes & K. Thake, Malta, The Baroque Island (Malta, 2003), 53

Coordinates: Easting 56638 73377 Northing: Coordinates

Property Plan



Property Images

