

# Creative Clusters: A cultural sustainable project for Fort St Elmo?



Aerial shot from Grand Harbour side (Photos: MIMCOL report 2007)



- ▶ a sustainable *culture-led* regeneration project for Fort St Elmo
- ▶ Dialogue with stakeholders is essential in order to reach its full potential and in recognition of a 'democratic culture' (Holden, 2008)

- ▶ Unless the economic, social and physical or environmental aspects of the regeneration project are seen to, the regeneration process will not materialise as being one of culture but just that of a restored site.

## The case for Culture bringing about economic success:

- ▶ *"Culture whether as a central part of a regeneration initiative, or as a substantial component of a broader programme, can play a distinctive role in bringing economic benefits to an area. It does not just bring direct economic improvement by providing employment and regenerating revenue, but can have a wider economic impact on the general prospects of an area by making it a more desirable place to live and work, and subsequently, for businesses to invest."* (DCMS 2004)

# The case for the social aspect within regeneration:

- ▶ *"My own blunt evaluation of regeneration programmes that don't have a culture component is they won't work. Communities have to be energised, they have to be given some hope, they have to have the creative spirit released."* (Robert Hughes as quoted in DCMS 2004)

## The aesthetic and environmental sensitivity to the sense of place:

- ▶ *"The key to successful transformation is not only what type of change is promoted, but how it is carried out. If it is delivered in a manner which is in tune with the soul of a place, it is likely to succeed. But if it goes against the grain of local distinctiveness and identity, it will struggle to take root and is more likely to falter."* (A. Minton as quoted in DCMS 2004)

- ▶ culture-led regeneration needs to be seen as a process, as although the site may be physically transformed within a relatively short period, the economic and social goals will take a longer time to reach, but also need to be accomplished in order to be successful.

▶ “people want to live in an interesting city where quality of life is assured...”

Richard Florida (2002)

- ▶ creative clusters inspired scheme for the site that will be based on connective cultural enterprises that have been statistically proven to be successful entrepreneurial initiatives which according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2004) '*has grown at an annual compound rate of over 7 per cent.*' (Anheier & Yudhishtir, 2008).

# Pjazza d'Armi (Upper St Elmo)



# Lower St Elmo



# Interviews were conducted with stakeholders

- ▶ *Who are the stakeholders?*
- ▶ *The possible creative use of site,*
- ▶ *Economic, social and physical impact,*
- ▶ *Building considerations: What type of development should be allowed here?*
- ▶ *Commercial considerations*

# War Museum current site



- ▶ the definition of culture will be restricted to two versions of the word according to David Throsby's broader meaning of culture, which is
- ▶ 1. the way people live, which relies on their identity
- ▶ 2. the functional meaning of culture that includes the further definitions of 'creativity', 'symbolic meaning' and 'intellectual property' (Throsby 2003)

# The definition of creative cluster and cultural regeneration is explained as follows:

- ▶ creative as in the concept of the creative or cultural industries which has been defined as the '*production and distribution of creative goods*' by Evans and Shaw (2006, p.4). Therefore, a creative cluster would be a gathering of creative or cultural industries that would feed off each other.
- ▶ regeneration has been defined as '*breathing new life and vitality into an ailing community, industry and area [bringing] sustainable, long term improvements to local quality of life, including economic, social and environmental needs*' (Evans & Shaw 2006, p.4, as quoted from Local Government Association, 2000). A culture-led regeneration is one of three models proposed by Evans and Shaw.

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- ▶ Richard Florida (2002) argues that “strong cultural facilities and creative networks are key to economic success in modern urban societies”. According to Florida, a large percentage of the workforce is increasingly geographically mobile, engaged in forms of employment in which creativity and innovation are the source.

- ▶ its previous use as a battleground can also be seen in its present and future purpose, battling for a cultural space, for cultural sustainability and its future use will see it battling as an important world-class world heritage site that gives meaning to human purpose.

## “the cultures of cities” (Zukin 1995)

- ▶ Zukin’s concept can be applied here, in that “the very diversity of the population and their need for cultural and economic exchanges create unpredictable spaces of freedom: the markets, restaurant kitchens, designated landmarks and parades that become both sites and sights of new collective identities. This is the city that people cherish”.

Thank you

