

Delimara Lighthouse: History, Restoration and now Delightful Holiday Accommodation

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A short 15-minute drive from Malta International Airport towards Delimara Point, the extreme southern tip of the Maltese archipelago, is a landmark building that is an important testimony of Malta's maritime industrial history: Delimara Lighthouse. The road to the lighthouse skirts the picturesque fishing village of Marsaxlokk and the many beautiful swimming bays and creeks that adorn the southern coast of the island can be found along the way.

Delimara Lighthouse was built between 1852 and 1854 during the British period and is the last remaining free-standing lighthouse on Malta, the only other one in the country being the Ta' Giordan lighthouse on Gozo. It was commissioned by Governor Richard More O'Ferrall in 1850. He was governor of Malta between 1847 and 1851 and is remembered for having granted a partly-elected Council of Government in 1849. He also encouraged trade and helped the mercantile community to form the Chamber of Commerce.

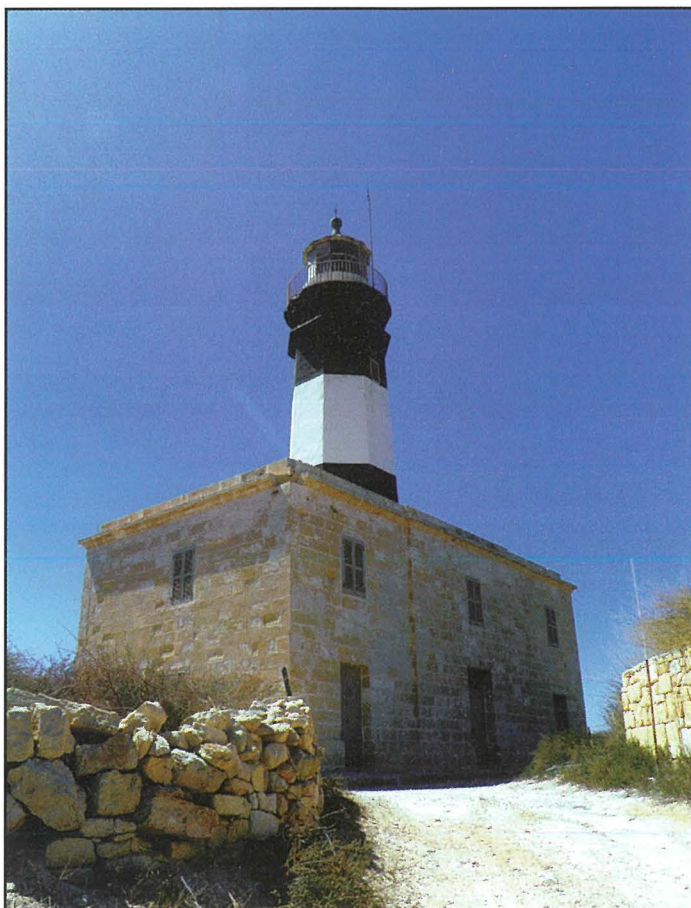
It is thought that the name 'Delimara' could be attributed to a corruption of the Arabic term *dejr l-innara*, meaning 'the house of the lantern'. The lighthouse stands at a height of 24 metres, dominating the cliff over Marsaxlokk Bay, and was an important reference for ships coming from the Barbary Coast and Egypt. With the construction of the Suez Canal, which stimulated maritime traffic between Asia and Europe, increased numbers of naval vessels had to be guided safely to Valletta's harbours.

The signalling system for each lighthouse was designed so that it could be recognised by its own individual series of flashes. Those of Delimara were alternate red and white with a radius of visibility that spread out up to 15 nautical miles. Erected for the security of Her Majesty's navy and commercial shipping, both lighthouses, together with other beacons along the coast of the Maltese Islands, bolstered the commercial treaties that Britain had established with France and China in 1860, Belgium in 1862 and Italy in 1863.

The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1985, its role superseded by the new AFM tower built nearby. It was entrusted to *Din l-Art Ħelwa* by its owner, the Malta Maritime Authority (MMA), today Transport Malta. To commemorate its 50th anniversary, *Din l-Art Ħelwa* took the initiative to restore this landmark monument with the financial support of the MMA and GasanMamo Insurance Co. Ltd – a project that has now been completed.

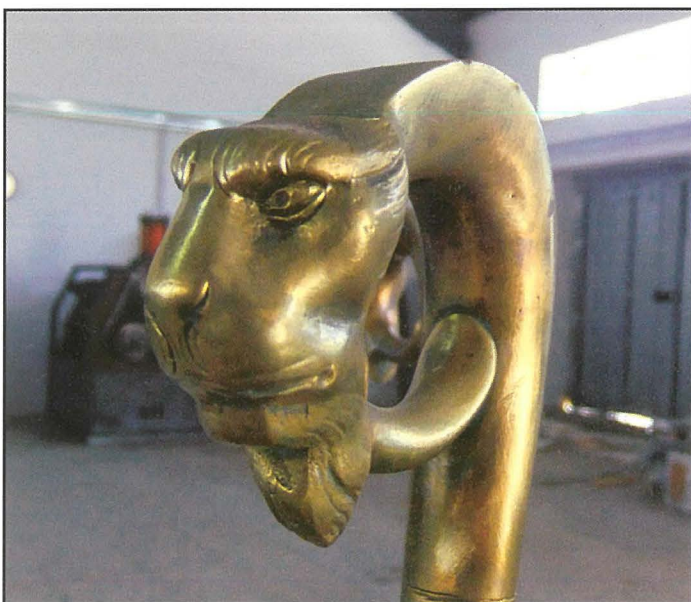
The restoration was planned by *Din l-Art Ħelwa* in three phases, with the final aim of offering visitor accommodation in a historic site. First of all, the masonry was secured together with apertures and external paintwork, which was followed by the refurbishment of the interiors. The third phase was the most complex: the restoration of the Fresnel lens, the beacon mechanism and its intricate system of hand-cut concentric glass prisms that is unique to the lighthouse and the only one of its type in Malta. The lantern's neoclassic, solid bronze pedestal holding the copper fuel tank was also restored. The lack of services to the area was a constant challenge, while the lighthouse's inaccessibility – and inclement weather – often held up work.

The lighthouse provided accommodation for the lighthouse-keeper and had space for two families. Today, it is divided into two apartments that can accommodate up to ten people, either separately or together. These are available for rent to the discerning visitor



Delimara Lighthouse

Details of the fuel container which used to light the Lighthouse





Delimara Lighthouse seen from the sea

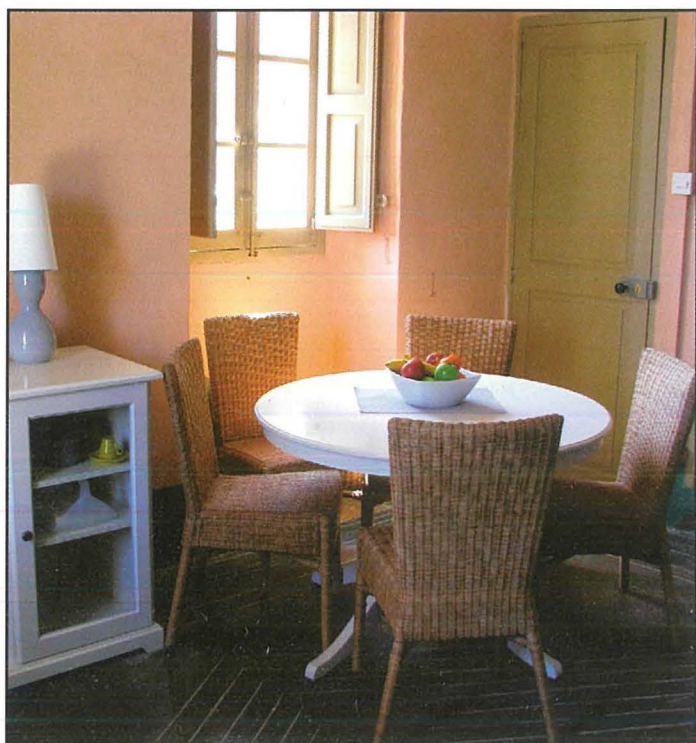
wishing to have a total escape holiday. All proceeds from rentals will go towards the upkeep of the 17 heritage sites held in trust by *Din l-Art Helwa*.

The simplicity of the keeper's apartments has been retained, with special touches, such as the hanging mosquito nets over each bed, the original stone elements in the kitchen and the colourful lime wash colour-scheme originally used. The views from every room, including the toilets and bathrooms, are spectacular, and one feels in touch with nature looking at the sea and the lighthouse's wonderful surroundings.

The commercial port – far across the bay – provides viewers with a different distraction: watching the incoming and outgoing mercantile traffic. The proximity of St Peter's Pool, the beautiful Kalanka Creek with its turquoise water only three minutes away, and other "out of the way" swimming places, is an added bonus to holiday makers, as are the lovely walking trails and the Xrobb L-Għagin Nature Park. It is a place to go to and relax, leaving everything behind and yet being close enough to the vibrant restaurants and atmosphere of Marsaxlokk.

Din l-Art Helwa hopes that the restoration of Delimara Lighthouse will lead to the formation of a heritage coastal trail and the regeneration of the whole Delimara promontory which is important for the many remains of wartime defence systems and for its largely unspoilt rural and coastal landscape.

The dining area in one of the apartments



Heritage Accommodation Information

The two lighthouse-keeper apartments have different layouts and can be rented individually or together. Each apartment sleeps five.

Apartment A is the smaller of the two, consisting of a spacious entrance/sitting and dining area combined with a sofa bed that sleeps two, a kitchen and a guest toilet. There is a traditional internal Maltese stone staircase leading to the first floor which comprises a bedroom with three single beds and a bathroom and shower combined.

Apartment B is larger, with its ground floor consisting of a spacious entrance/sitting room with a sofa bed that sleeps two, a large kitchen/dining area combined and one single bedroom, shower and toilet.

A traditional stone staircase leads to the first floor, which consists of one twin bedroom, a bathroom and dressing room.

For further information regarding bookings and tariffs, please email info@dinlarthelwa.org