

Our Ref: AXH013/EIA

Angelo Xuereb
AX Group
AX Business Centre
Triq id-Difiza Civili
Mosta MST 1741

20th January 2021

PA 06714/20: Demolition of Grand Hotel Verdala and Construction of Hotel and Residential Complex. Triq Inguanez, Rabat

Dear Mr Xuereb,

This statement has been prepared by the EIA Coordinator who carried out the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed redevelopment of the Grand Hotel Verdala, at Triq Inguanez, Rabat. The EIA referred to the proposal taken forward under PA 06044/17, which was approved by the Planning Authority in May 2020. In July 2020, the Applicant submitted a proposal for revisions to the approved development, described as “*Demolition of the existing Grand Hotel Verdala and its proposed redevelopment to achieve a better skyline and urban setting as per outline permit PA 6044/17*” (PA 06714/20).

This statement outlines the results of an assessment of whether the revisions currently being considered by the Planning Authority under PA 06714/20 will have significant environmental impacts beyond that already assessed in the EIA for the development approved under PA 06044/17.

Description of the Revisions to the Development Approved Under PA 06044/17

The revisions being taken forward under PA 06714/20 essentially relate to the design of the development, to the layout, height and massing, and to the elevational treatment. **Table I** outlines a comparison of the development approved under PA 06044/17 (and assessed in the EIA) and the development now proposed under PA 06714/20, in respect of the schedule of uses and floorspace allocations. **Figure I** illustrates the changes in the footprint and site layout. **Figure 2** illustrates the changes in the height profiles.

It is envisaged that there will be a decrease in the Gross Floor Area (GFA), to the scale of 746 m². Notably, in the EIA Report the GFA was quoted as being 28,003 m². The Applicant confirms that this figure for GFA did not accord with the definition for GFA in Regulation I of the *EIA Regulations, 2017* (S.L. 549.46), and that the development assessed in the EIA had a GFA of 32,606 m², in respect of referring to “*the total combined area of all the floors of a building as measured externally*”

without any deduction of internal yards, the spaces overlying them or the thickness of internal or external walls and also includes all cellars, basements and roofs”.

Table I: Comparison of Uses and Floorspace Allocations

Land Uses	Development assessed in the EIA (PA 06044/17)	Proposed Development (PA 06714/20)
Hotel		
Guestrooms	40	26
Virtù Heights Hotel Suites	19	19
Total	59	45
Service Apartments		
Apartment Units	17	17
Private Residential Accommodation		
Residential Units	85	86
Retail Accommodation		
Retail Units	4	2
Floorspace	523 m ²	520 m ²
Car Parking		
Parking spaces	179	176
Gross Floor Area		
Hotel (excluding Virtù Heights Suites Block)	9,897 m ²	9,270 m ²
Virtù Heights Suites Block (already constructed)	2,322 m ²	2,322 m ²
Residential Blocks	20,387 m ²	20,268 m ²
TOTAL GFA	32,606 m²	31,860 m²

Screening Assessment

The EIA carried out under PA 06044/17 assessed the environmental impacts of the development in respect of *geo-environment, cultural heritage, landscape character and visual amenity, noise and vibration emissions, and air quality*. The revisions envisaged by the development proposed under PA 06714/20 have been screened in respect of these topic areas, as well as generally, as follows:

Geo-environment:

The revisions to the development envisage no material changes to the excavation proposals, or to the construction methodology. Therefore, the situation will remain that there will be relatively little excavation involved in the construction, piling foundations will still be used, and it is still proposed to reuse the soil to be removed. Accordingly, it is not considered necessary to update or to conduct a new assessment to determine the environmental impacts in respect of geo-environment.

Cultural Heritage:

The revisions to the development envisage no change to the site boundary and no material change to the nature and scale of the development, or to the construction methodology. Accordingly, it is not considered necessary to update or to conduct a new assessment to determine the environmental impacts in respect of cultural heritage.

Landscape Character and Visual Amenity:

The revisions to the development envisage material changes to the height profile and design of the development. Accordingly, it is considered necessary to update the assessment to determine the environmental impacts in respect of visual amenity; a new visual impact assessment is currently being prepared. It is not considered necessary to update or to conduct a new assessment to determine the environmental impacts in respect of landscape character, since the revisions are primarily design-related and will not alter the potential impacts on landscape elements, local landscape tracts, and character areas as already assessed in the EIA.

Noise and Vibration Emissions:

The revisions to the development do not envisage material changes to the nature and scale of the development (including the parking provision), or to the arrangements for vehicular access to / from the site. There will be a marginal reduction in the number of car parking spaces provided on site. However, there will also be reduction in the number of hotel guestrooms (from 40 to 26), which will likely serve to reduce the traffic generated by the development. The vehicular access point is proposed to be relocated a short distance from Triq Inguanez to Triq Santa Katerina. However, there will be no change in the route for vehicles approaching and leaving the site; vehicular traffic will continue to approach along Triq Inguanez and leave via Triq Santa Katarina. Accordingly, it is not considered necessary to update the assessment to determine the environmental impacts in respect of noise and vibration emissions.



Adi Associates
Environmental Consultants Ltd
Kappara Business Centre
113 Triq Birkkara
San Gwann SGN 4197, Malta
Tel/Fax +356 21378172 / 21378177
info@adi-associates.com
www.adi-associates.com

Air Quality:

As mentioned, the revisions to the development do not envisage material changes to the nature and scale of the development, to the traffic expected to be generated, to the arrangements for vehicular access to / from the site, or to the vehicular routes to / from the site. Accordingly, it is not considered necessary to update the assessment to determine the environmental impacts in respect of air quality.

Yours sincerely,

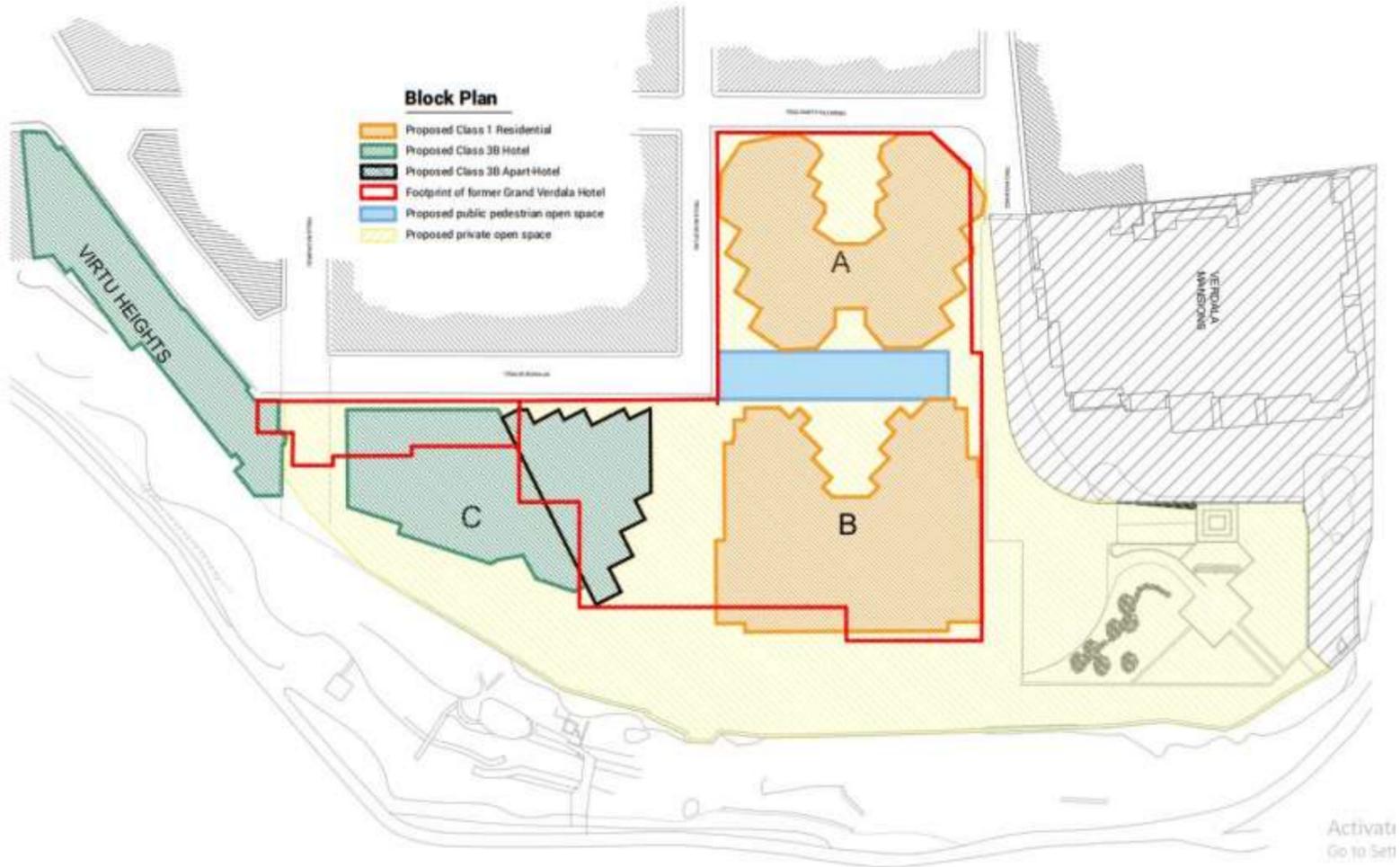
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eilis McCullough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'E' and a long, sweeping tail.

Eilis McCullough
Senior Planning Consultant

Figure I: Comparison of Footprint and Layout

The red outline shows the footprint of the former Grand Verdala Hotel

Proposed under PA 06714/20



Approved under PA 06044/17

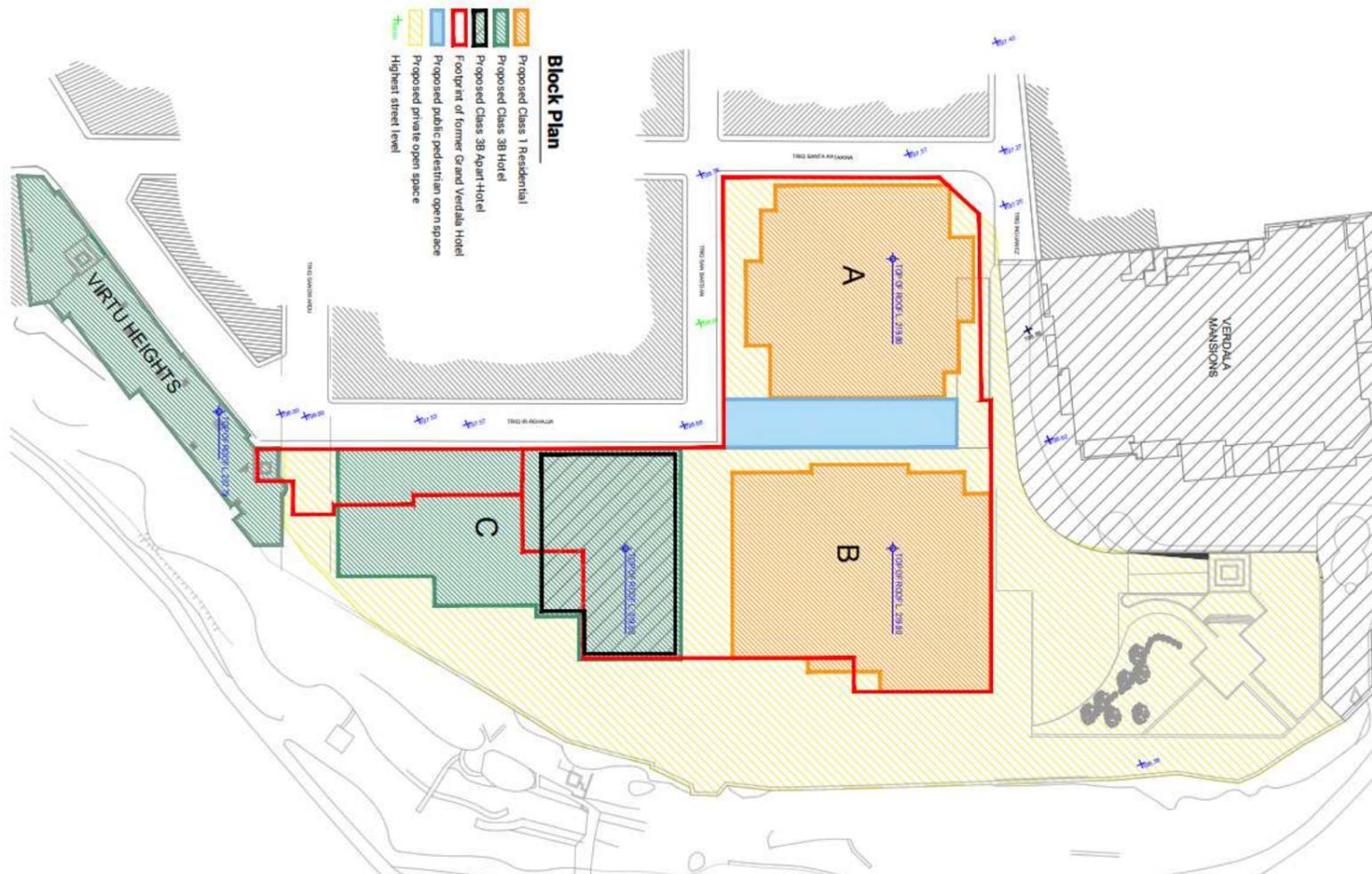


Figure 2: Comparison of Height and Massing Profile (profile of development approved under PA 06044/17 shown in green)

