

Annex I

Environmental Impact Assessment

Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

ERA Reference no.:	EA/00071/18
PA Reference no.:	PA/08966/18
Project Title:	Proposed construction of elderly care home consisting of residential rooms at ground, first and second floor level; ancillary facilities at basement -1 level and storage, car park and equipment at basement -2 level.
Location:	Plots B, C, D, Vjal il-Hamsa U Ghoxrin ta' Novembru, Zejtun, Malta
Screening date:	January 2019

1. Outline of proposal

1.1 PA 08966/18 is an outline development application for the construction of an elderly care home consisting of both single and double residential rooms at ground, first and second floor level; ancillary facilities at basement -1 level and storage, car park and equipment at basement -2 level. Soft landscaping is also being proposed. The proposal will cover a site area of c. 1,460 m² (Figure 1, 2 and 3).



Figure 1: Aerial photo of site, 2016 (Source: PA Geoserver)



Figure 2: Aerial photo of site (close up), 2016 (Source: PA Geoserver)



Figure 3: Site photo taken during ERA site visit on 17/12/2018



1.2 The total area is broken down as follows:

<u>Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Residential and front desk (including circulation spaces)	195m ²
Ancillary facilities (basement level -1)	70m ²
Parking, equipment and storage (basement -2)	110m ²

2. Site context

- 2.1 The site proposed for development lies circa 70m away from Zejtun, along Vjal il-Hamsa u Ghoxrin ta' Novembru, which will also be used as access to the site. The site lies Outside Development Zone (ODZ) on the outskirts of Zejtun.
- 2.2 In addition, the site lies within an Agriculture Area (SMAG 01) as indicated in the South Malta Local Plan (SMLP, 2006 – Map ZN 5 – Environmental Constraints Map).
- 2.3 Currently, the site is being utilised as agricultural land.
- 2.4 The proposal is located:
- Adjacent to other agricultural areas;
 - c. 330m west of the Zejtun Urban Conservation Area;
 - c. 75m east of a farm; and
 - c. 200m north east of a fuel station.

3. Site history

3.1 N/A

4. EIA Screening (*citations refer to S.L. 549.46, except where otherwise specified*):

- 4.1 The proposed development falls under the scope of Schedule I Category II Section 7.1.2.2 (Construction or extension of hotels, holiday complexes, holiday villages, hostels, homes for the elderly, hospitals or associated development, if located wholly or partly outside development zones and not covered by Category I) of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46).
- 4.2 Documents used for screening:
- Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 27th November 2018 (PA/08966/18/54a).



4.3 The following are potential impacts envisaged on the surrounding environment.

Type and characteristics of potential impact/s

4.4 The construction of an elderly care home on this site would introduce a dominant urban development which is incongruous within the rural characteristics of the surrounding rural environment.

4.3 This area is in fact identified for its agricultural value in the South Malta Local Plan through Map ZN 5 and protected through the provisions of policy SMAG 01 and there is a presumption against development which is not related to agriculture so as to mitigate the accelerated loss of this resource and preserve the amenity of the area. The proposal is in direct conflict with the Local Plan's designation and corresponding policies for the area thereby prejudicing the effectiveness of such zoning as an environmental safeguard.

4.4 In addition, the proposed development also runs counter to Rural Objective 1 and 4 of the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development (SPED) in that the proposal is not considered legitimate or necessary within the rural area.

4.5 The proposed introduction of a free-standing major development in an area which is located outside existing committed development zone and which has so far retained its open rural character, is likely to open up to additional development pressures and associated impacts on the surrounding lands.

4.6 In light of the above, the main concerns raised by this development relate to the uptake of virgin land outside the development zone, and associated issues vis-à-vis visual amenity and the rural landscape, both directly in view of the nature and location of the proposal and as a result of cumulative impacts of ancillary development pressures on the surrounding area of influence. Additional effects of the proposal on air quality and noise during construction, and increased traffic flows on Vjal il-Hamsa u Ghoxrin ta' Novembru are also potentially relevant.



5. ERA Conclusion

EIA screening conclusion and recommended way forward

- 5.1 The PDS has been reviewed and it has been determined that the proposed development would qualify for an EIA as per Schedule I Category II Section 7.1.2.2 of the EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46). However, the relatively basic issues identified in the screening (namely, rural land uptake and ancillary considerations) cannot be adequately addressed through detailed EIA studies.
- 5.2 This concern is already reflected in ERA's objection to the development, as already outlined in ERA's response in doc PA/08966/18/50a. ERA considers that there is no valid justification for the further loss of undeveloped rural land and associated environmental impacts to accommodate such development beyond the development zone boundary.

Disclaimer

The above screening results, the ensuing conclusions and recommendations are without prejudice to any required changes or updates should the development proposal be eventually modified or should the information/assumptions provided turn out to be incorrect. Any deviations of the proposal from this submission would need to be re-assessed and the merits of this screening would need to be re-opened.