

# Annex I

## Environmental Impact Assessment

### Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

**ERA Reference no.:** EA 00074/18

**PA Reference no.:** PA 04710/18

**Project Title:** Proposed demolition of existing hotel and excavation of site. Proposed construction of two levels of below ground car parking facilities, a chapel, a beach lido with pool consisting of catering facilities (Class 4D) and a mixed use development consisting of commercial spaces at ground floor (mix of Class 4C, Class 4B and Class 3C) with 12 storeys of overlying residential units (Class 1A) and a 13 storeys high hotel (Class 3B) with roof top restaurant (Class 4D) at penthouse level and outdoors pools. Extension of the landscaped area around Torri San Tumas to create a public park and construction of a Public Open space at ground floor above the proposed parking as an extension of the existing promenade.

**Location:** Site at Jerma Hotel, Triq is-Salini, Marsascula, Malta

**Screening date:** January 2019

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#### 1. Outline of proposal

- 1.1. The project involves the demolition of the existing derelict four-star Jerma hotel which has been closed since March 2007 and the eventual development of the site into a mixed use development comprising of commercial units, residential units and a hotel. The proposal consist in one high-rise building which will house the residential units (thirteen floors) and hotel (fifteen floors), as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.
- 1.2. The total site area of the peninsula amounts to 38,055 sqm, having a total gross floor area of 92,000 sqm, split into 61,000 sqm above plaza level and 31,000 sqm below the plaza. The main building, will be developed as described below:
  - Basement level with car park (370 car parking spaces), lido facilities, chapel, commercial establishment and Class 4C food and drink establishment;
  - Commercial unit, including 4B retail premises, Class 4D food and drink establishments, and Class 3C assembly and leisure premises on the ground floor;
  - Indoor pool, spa and landscaped atrium on ground level;
  - Public open space on ground level, including hard and soft landscaped areas as an extension to the existing promenade;
  - Business centre on the ground and first floors;
  - Gym on the first floor;
  - Outdoor infinity pool, sundeck area and soft landscaping on the roof of the gym (second floor);
  - Fifteen overlying storeys, split into:
    - o Class 1A residential units on the east end of the building extending to the first thirteen floors; and
    - o Class 3B five-star hotel rooms and serviced apartments on the west end of the building, distributed over the entire fifteen floors of the building
  - Class 4D rooftop restaurant at penthouse level; and
  - Outdoor pool on roof level.



Figure 1: Proposed development viewed from the North (Source: PDS)



Figure 2: Proposed development viewed from the South (Source: PDS)

## 2. Site context

- 2.1. The site is located in the eastern-most territory of the island of Malta next to St. Thomas Tower, on a protruding low-lying headland known as il-Gzira in Marsascala (Figure 3). St. Thomas Tower (It-Torri ta' San Tumas) and its coastal battery are located immediately across the road on the landward side of the proposed development site; both of these fortifications are scheduled as Grade I monuments through Government Notice 729 of 1995.
- 2.2. Several salt pans are located within the rocky coast around the site, notably at Xifer ic-Cerna and Il-Ponta ta' Barut; Il-Gzira and 'il-Ponta tal-Mignuna'. These salt pans are recommended for scheduling, as Areas of Ecological Importance and Sites of Scientific Importance through the South Malta Local Plan (SMCO 03).

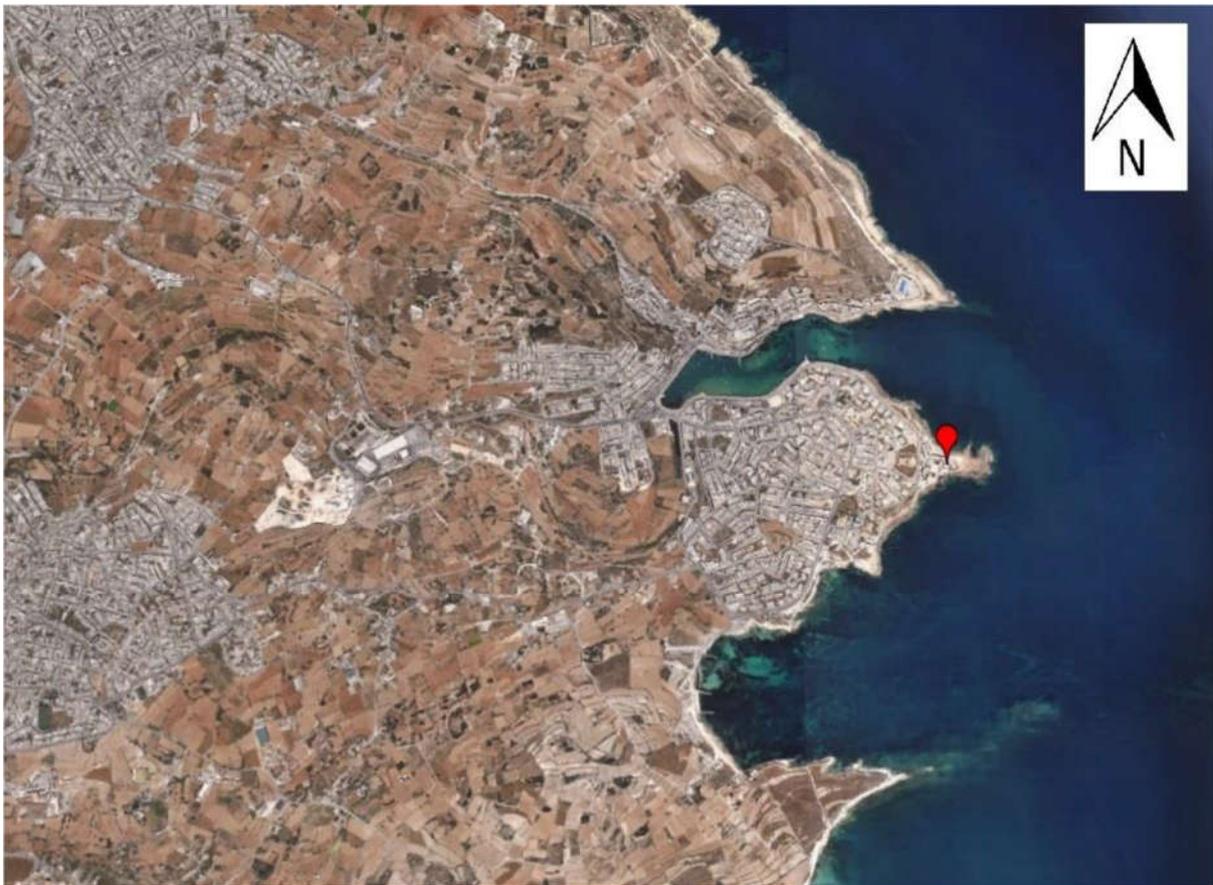


Figure 3: Location of the site (Source: PDS)

## 3. Site history

- 3.1. The Jerma Palace Hotel was opened in 1982. In March 2007, the hotel was closed down and since then numerous complaints were raised by the residents and the Marsascala Local Council for the owners of the site to take action and restore the said site. In August 2016, the Planning Authority (PA) issued an enforcement notice to demolish the dilapidated building. The derelict building still dominates the site to date.
- 3.2. Several planning applications have been submitted over the years for the site, including:
  - PA 2840/93 - Alterations to entrance area. Extension to foyer bar at ground floor level. Site at Dawret It-Torri, Marsascala. This application has been approved.

- PA 6719/95 - Refurbishment to facade. Site at Jerma Palace Hotel, Triq is-Salini, Marsascula. This application has been approved.
- PA 6180/98 - Extension to coffee shop and construction of side entrance. Site at Jerma Palace Hotel, Triq is-Salini, Marsascula. This application has been approved.
- PA 2900/98 - Traffic management and embellishment of area around torri ta' San Tumas, Marsaskala. Site at Dawret it-Torri, Marsascula. This application has been approved.
- PA 0331/98 - To install 5 satellite dish antennas. Site at Jerma Palace Hotel, Triq is-Salini, Marsascula. This application has been approved.
- PA 4862/99 - Embellishment of St.Thomas Tower battery M'Scala (South Embellishment Project). Site at off, Dawret It-Torri, Marsascula. This application has been approved
- PA 5974/00 - Installation of telecommunications equipment and antennae over roof. Site at the Corinthia Jerma Palace Hotel, Triq is-Salini, Marsascula. This application has been approved.
- PA 0358/03 - Installation of telecommunications equipment and antennae over roof (Change in equipment and increase in pole height). Site at the Corinthia Jerma Palace Hotel, Triq is-Salini, Marsascula. This application has been approved.
- PA 3836/08 - Demolition of existing Jerma Hotel & substitution with 5 star hotel and residential units. Site at Jerma Palace Hotel, Triq is-Salini, Marsascula. This application has been passed to a case officer to assess the development proposal in terms of the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development and other established policies. This application is being superseded by the application being assessed.
- PA 1650/10 - To replace dilapidated boundary wall with wrought iron railing (black colour) around historical tower. Site at It-Torri ta' San Tumas, Dawret It-Torri, Marsascula. This application has been approved.
- PA 3604/15 - Rehabilitation and restoration of St Thomas Tower internal and external fabric, including the creation of a multi- sensory museum, audio-visual rooms, installation of panoramic lift, ditch rehabilitation and roof top viewing platform. Site at It-Torri ta' San Tumas, Dawret it-Torri c/w Triq is-Salini c/w, Triq Wignacourt, Marsascula, Malta. This application has been approved.

PA 1650/10 and PA 3604/15 are within the area proposed for this development, where a green park is being proposed.

#### **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 Sections 1.0.2.1 (*Development with a site area of 2ha or more*) and 7.1.2.1 (*Projects which have (i) a site area of 3ha or more; or (ii) a gross floor area of 30,000m<sup>2</sup> or more; or (iii) a gross floor area of 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or more for commercial use, including shops, shopping centres, offices or other business*) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46).

4.2. Documents used for screening:

- a) Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 21st December 2018.

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

#### Type and characteristics of potential impact/s

##### Land and resource use, landscape & visual amenity and Cultural Heritage

The site is already occupied by the derelict Jerma Palace hotel and the proposal is to demolish the existing derelict hotel and re-develop the site as described in Section 1 above. The proposal will result in the intensification of build development. As a result impacts on land use, visual and landscape amenity are unclear and require further studies, especially due to the increase in gross floor area and that a portion of the residential/hotel block is proposed to extend over the existing revetment.

The proposal will also convert the area (c. 4,000sqm) around St. Thomas Tower (which is listed as a Heritage Site in the South Malta Action Plan (SMMS 13)) into a green park, which will be open to the public.

##### Ecology

Several protected species are found along the coastal stretches including the golden samphire *Limbarda crithmoides*, rock samphire *Crithmum maritimum* and caper bush *Capparis orientalis*, sea squill *Urginea pancration*, along with plantations of tamarisk trees *Tamarix* sp. and mexican fan palms *Washingtonia robusta*. Although protected, such species are common throughout the Maltese archipelago and therefore any impacts resulting from the proposal are not expected to be significant.

Taking into consideration that the Jerma Hotel has been abandoned for more than a decade, the presence of bat roosts is a possibility. Several bat species that have been recorded in Malta are listed in Annex II, Annex IV and/or Annex V, in this regard, an impact may be envisage on such species (including: *Myotis punicus* [Annex II] and *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* [Annex IV] to mention a few). Further studies may be required to determine their absence/presence and any potential impacts.

##### Waste

A total of 30,000m<sup>3</sup> are expected from the demolition of the derelict hotel and an additional 78,000 m<sup>3</sup> of inert waste are expected to be generated from the excavation of the site to cater for the basement level.

##### Nosie & vibration and Air Quality

The proposal will generate dust, noise and vibration during both demolition, excavation and construction phases, thus will potential have a negative nuisance on the nearby residential dwellings. The proposal is also expected to generate an increase of 1,384 vehicles (AADT). Such increase is expected to generate NO<sub>x</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> as well as operational noise. The increase in the number of vehicles and increase in traffic, during operation, are expected to have an impact on air quality and noise, thus further studies are required.

##### Coastal works

A large column will be constructed within the revetment to support a portion of the residential/hotel block which will be cantilevered. The PDS states that no coastal engineering works are expected at this stage, however due to its immediate proximity to the waterline in a very exposed stretch of rocky coast there may be the need to in the future to propose coastal engineering works to protect the development from wave action. In this instance, ERA is of the opinion that the structures encroaching on the coast should be receded further inland to avoid such interventions on the coast.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. EIA Screening Conclusion and recommended way forward

The above EIA screening concludes that the proposed development qualifies for an EIA as per Schedule I, Category II Sections 1.0.2.1 and 7.1.2.1 of the EIA Regulations, 2017 (**S.L. 549.46**). The EIA Report would need to address the following aspects:

- 1.1. Land use and visual amenity
- 1.2. Direct and indirect impacts on the coastal environment;
- 1.3. Emissions to air and noise with respect to traffic generation in and around the proposed site;
- 1.4. Production of demolition and excavation waste and its disposal; and
- 1.5. Construction-phase impacts.

### 5.2. Screening 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.