

ERA Report on the Environmental Impact Assessment

PA 06705/17: Proposed lateral extension and amendments to the approved development in PA 00581/16 for the construction of underground car parking , mixed commercial uses including class uses 4A, 4B, 4C, 3C, 2C, 6A, and supermarket, at, The Quad Business Towers, Triq il-Merghat c/w, Triq l-Esportaturi, Birkirkara, Malta

1.0 Procedural aspects following proposed modifications to the approved development

The current application seeks a lateral extension (of approximately 1,200 sqm) to the proposal including amendments to the original Master Plan to better accommodate the proposed towers, which were not subject to assessment as part of the Environmental Planning Statement (EPS) carried out for the Mriehel Towers proposal (PA 00581/16). ERA had already assessed another application on the extension site (PA 06882/16 - *Proposed excavation only of existing vacant site up to the approved foundation level of PA 00581/16*), where only excavation of the site was being proposed. The latter application was approved in July 2017. ERA's final comments on this application were as follows:

Excavations proposed under this development application are considered to be intrinsically linked to the proposed development on site. Since the majority of the excavation has already been assessed as part of the main development consent process in PA 00581/16, the additional excavation may be considered subject to an update on the geo-environment considerations in the original assessment. The future use of the site in question shall be subject to assessment in terms of the EIA Regulations, 2007 (S.L. 549.46).

Following ERA's assessment on this development proposal; the likely impacts from this proposal (PA 06705/17) are considered to be the following:

- (1) Impacts on sensitive receptors in terms of noise during both construction and operation, in view that the proposed site is closer to the sensitive receptors identified in the EPS for the Mriehel Towers.
- (2) Impacts on air quality during operation, particularly due to the increase in parking space provision (approximately 200 car parking spaces), including cumulative impacts arising from such.
- (3) Impacts on landscape amenity and visual impacts.
- (4) Any other environmental considerations.

In this regard, ERA requested applicant to submit an update to the EPS to discuss these modifications to the proposed development in September 2017. The update to the EPS was submitted to ERA in January 2018 and issued for a 30-day public consultation, with a deadline for comments being the 15th December 2017. During the review period, comments were received by the: (1) Civil Protection Department, received on 18th January 2018; (2) Bicycle Advocacy Group Malta, received on 24th January 2018; (3) Environmental Health Directorate, received on the 26th January 2018; (4) Agricultural Directorate, received on 1st February 2018, (5) Flimkien għall-Ambjent Aħjar, received on 18th February 2018; and (6) a member of the public, received on 15th February

2018. A copy of these comments and respective replies from the EIA Coordinator has been included as an Appendix to this document.

2.0 The 2018 Update to the Environmental Planning Statement

The update to the Environmental Planning Statement provided an update with respect to the following environmental aspects as follows:

(i) **Visual Amenity**

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) used for the visual assessment in the original EPS was considered to be relevant to the visual assessment for this development proposal, which included an additional Viewpoint 12 from the Upper Barrakka Gardens in Valletta. An assessment of the cumulative impacts was also included.

The impact on visual amenity is considered to be of major significance in relation to the view from Triq il-Hofor (Viewpoint 6), to the southwest of the site, which however does not present any change from the original EPS carried out for the approved development. The existing view from this viewpoint, with rubble walls flanking fields, is of a rural scene; the buildings from the industrial estate serve as a backdrop to the view. The proposed development will affect a significant change to the view since it will interrupt the existing, relatively uniform height of the buildings in the backdrop. The visual impact from the other viewpoints ranges from not significant to being of moderate significance.

(ii) **Air Quality**

In terms of air quality, the update to the EPS note that there would be a negligible increase in fine dust (PM₁₀) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations at the nearest sensitive receptors along roads impacted by operational traffic generated by the proposed development. In this regard and as already determined by the original EPS, the impact of the proposal on air quality is considered to be not significant, no exceedances or impacts on sensitive receptors are envisaged.

(iii) **Noise**

Noise impacts on sensitive receptors from the construction phase are considered to be of major significance before mitigation.

3.0 Environmental assessment of the proposed development and ERA position

As discussed in the above sections, the update to the EPS concluded that no new significant environmental impacts are envisaged following the modifications and amendments to the development other than those already identified in the previous EPS.

In this regard, the ERA is in agreement with the said conclusions of the update to the EPS and has no further comments to add. No additional conditions are being proposed from an EIA point of view, other than those already included in the previously approved development planning permissions.

Appendix – ERA Comments on update on Environmental Planning Statement

1. ERA Comments

N o.	Page	Para.	Comment	Adi Associates' Response
General Comments				
1	30	2.28	The EPS Update indicates that “currently rain water runs into rain water grilles and eventually to this rain water trench, to eventually flow underneath Dawret I-Imriehel towards Wied is-Sewda”. This is to be clearly indicated on plan.	Plan provided in Appendix 1 .
2	49 – 65	/	Clearer versions of the baseline photographs and the photomontages are to be included in the EPS Update.	Baseline photographs and photomontages are included at the end as Appendix 2.
3	103	Table 5.5	Table 5.5 is incomplete in the hard copy of the document.	Noted. It printed as portrait instead of landscape. Table 5.5 included.
4	109	Table 6.1	Table 6.1 is incomplete in the hard copy of the document.	Noted. It printed as portrait instead of landscape. Table 6.1 included.
5	Appendix 1	/	Clearer versions of the baseline photographs and the photomontages are to be included in the EPS Update.	Baseline photographs and photomontages are included at the end as Appendix 2.
Air Quality				
6	/	/	The EPS update should take into account the cumulative traffic generated by the fully developed site and not for the extension only.	This is in fact what was done. The traffic figures considered in Table 4.1 , and which feed into the air quality assessment (Tables 4.5 to 4.10) consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) As a baseline ('without Scheme') scenario: the traffic figures without the extension (i.e. the Scheme) and also without the development approved by PA 581/16; and (ii) In the 'with Scheme' scenario: the contribution from both the Scheme (i.e. the extension) as well as the development approved by PA 581/16 are added to the baseline figures.
7	/	/	The following equation should be used in order to determine the 90.4 th percentile of the daily average PM ₁₀ readings, $PCT = (1.46 \times AA) - 0.03$ where PCT is the 90.4 th percentile and AA is the annual average.	The methodology used for the assessment is in accordance with the method statement for the original EPS, which was accepted by the former MEPA (now ERA) in April 2015. It is noted that ERA did not issue new Terms of Reference for the EPS update. As explained by ERA,

				the equation used in the EPS Update actually presents a worse case scenario.																																				
8	/	/	Pollution contours shall be presented for annual NO ₂ levels, annual PM ₁₀ levels and for the PCT.	<p>The methodology used for the assessment is in accordance with the method statement for the original EPS, which was accepted by the former MEPA (now ERA) in April 2015. It is noted that ERA did not issue new Terms of Reference for the EPS update.</p> <p>Additionally, in traffic modelling contour plots do not add value as they only show that the highest concentrations are close to road.</p>																																				
9	/	/	<p>Note that the significance criteria have now been updated, to the following:</p> <p>a) For annual levels of NO₂/PM₁₀ in µg/m³.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="571 694 1220 986"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="4">Change in the annual NO₂/PM₁₀ (dAA) levels due to scheme (µg/m³).</th> </tr> <tr> <th>dAA ≤ 0.4 µg/m³</th> <th>0.8 µg/m³ ≤ dAA ≤ 2.0 µg/m³</th> <th>2.4 µg/m³ ≤ dAA ≤ 4.0 µg/m³</th> <th>dAA > 4.0 µg/m³</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="5" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">CAA for NO₂/PM₁₀ (µg/m³)</td> <td>AA ≥ 44µg/m³</td> <td>MODERATE</td> <td>SUBSTANTIAL</td> <td>SUBSTANTIAL</td> <td>SUBSTANTIAL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>43.6 µg /m³ ≤ AA ≤ 41.2 µg/m³</td> <td>MODERATE</td> <td>MODERATE</td> <td>SUBSTANTIAL</td> <td>SUBSTANTIAL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40.8 µg /m³ ≤ AA ≤ 38.0 µg/m³</td> <td>SLIGHT</td> <td>MODERATE</td> <td>MODERATE</td> <td>SUBSTANTIAL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>37.6 µg/m³ ≤ AA ≤ 30.4 µg/m³</td> <td>NEGLECTIBLE</td> <td>SLIGHT</td> <td>MODERATE</td> <td>MODERATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AA ≤ 30 µg/m³</td> <td>NEGLECTIBLE</td> <td>NEGLECTIBLE</td> <td>SLIGHT</td> <td>MODERATE</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>b) For compliance with the 90.4th percentile criterion for PM₁₀.</p>			Change in the annual NO ₂ /PM ₁₀ (dAA) levels due to scheme (µg/m ³).				dAA ≤ 0.4 µg/m ³	0.8 µg/m ³ ≤ dAA ≤ 2.0 µg/m ³	2.4 µg/m ³ ≤ dAA ≤ 4.0 µg/m ³	dAA > 4.0 µg/m ³	CAA for NO ₂ /PM ₁₀ (µg/m ³)	AA ≥ 44µg/m ³	MODERATE	SUBSTANTIAL	SUBSTANTIAL	SUBSTANTIAL	43.6 µg /m ³ ≤ AA ≤ 41.2 µg/m ³	MODERATE	MODERATE	SUBSTANTIAL	SUBSTANTIAL	40.8 µg /m ³ ≤ AA ≤ 38.0 µg/m ³	SLIGHT	MODERATE	MODERATE	SUBSTANTIAL	37.6 µg/m ³ ≤ AA ≤ 30.4 µg/m ³	NEGLECTIBLE	SLIGHT	MODERATE	MODERATE	AA ≤ 30 µg/m ³	NEGLECTIBLE	NEGLECTIBLE	SLIGHT	MODERATE	<p>The methodology used for the assessment is in accordance with the method statement for the original EPS, which was accepted by the former MEPA (now ERA) in April 2015. It is noted that ERA did not issue new Terms of Reference for the EPS update. It is noted that the results show that the impact is negligible and that the baseline is already below 30 µg/m³ so an update is not warranted.</p>
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1 0	/	/	In order to determine whether an environmental permit or registration is required, the following information is required: the rated thermal input and hours of operation per year of all generators on site.	It is unclear why such a request is relevant to the EPS Update.																																					
Noise																																									
1 1	/	/	<p>No reference to the operational noise coming from increase in traffic has been considered in the EPS Update and this was mentioned as one of the reasons why this EPS is being updated as per the below quoted text:</p> <p><i>“1) Impact on sensitive receptors in terms of noise during both construction and operation, in view that the proposed site is closer to the sensitive receptors identified in the EPS for the Mrieħel Towers.”</i></p> <p>A justification with respect to the scoping out of this environmental impact from the EPS update is to be provided.</p>	In the EPS for PA581/16 operational noise was scoped out because while it was acknowledged that the Scheme in operation will generate additional vehicular traffic in the area, it was considered that noise arising from operational traffic is unlikely to have any significant impact on the nearest residential sensitive receptors because the Traffic Impact Assessment for the Scheme showed that the operational traffic routes to and from the Scheme site would not affect sensitive receptors on Sqaq il-Għadam, corner with Triq L-Esportaturi. Since the traffic arrangements proposed in the TIA are still valid even with the Annex, then operational noise impacts were scoped out of the EPS Update.																																					

2. Consultees' Comments on Update to the EPS

A. Civil Protection Department (Email dated 18th January 2018)

Comments	Consultant's responses
The fire safety report is not included in the report sent, thus the CPD cannot submit any comments to your request.	This is not a requirement of the EIA Update and such a report is not submitted as part of the EIA Update. The architects however stated that the Fire Safety report was submitted to the Planning Authority as part of the processing of the planning application.

B. Bicycle Advocacy Group Malta (Email dated 24th January 2018)

Comments	Consultant's responses
<p>1) The development in question PA 06705/17: Proposed lateral extension and amendments to the approved development in PA 581/16 at Triq il-Merġhat, c/w Triq l-Esportaturi, L-Imrieħel, Birkirkara does not seem to show adequate bicycle parking in convenient 'front of house' areas for workers and business' sufficient to encourage (soft cues) modal shift in line with the National Transport Strategy plans for Mrieħel industrial estate. This should also include secure long term 'bicycle hangars'.</p> <p>2) The development in question PA 06705/17: Proposed lateral extension and amendments to the approved development in PA 581/16 at Triq il-Merġhat, c/w Triq l-Esportaturi, L-Imrieħel, Birkirkara does not seem to show adequate bicycle routes or mesh connectivity with other routes given the importance of the area as stated in the National Transport Strategy and National Transport Plan where Mrieħel was earmarked for a cycling super route that was part of the NTS's provision to encourage modal shift.</p> <p>3) The development in question PA 06705/17: Proposed lateral extension and amendments to the approved development in PA 581/16 at Triq il-Merġhat, c/w Triq l-Esportaturi, L-Imrieħel, Birkirkara should include bicycle changing and shower facilities as part of its sustainable design brief.</p>	<p>1) A Green Travel Plan was prepared as part of the Traffic Impact Assessment carried out on PA581/16. Bicycle racks are included in the plans.</p> <p>2) Such comments are noted and the importance of bicycle routes is agreed to. The Scheme provides bicycle racks and the Green Travel Plan indicates potential routes.</p> <p>3) Such facilities are included in the project plans, already approved.</p>

<p>4) Mriehel was earmarked for a cycling super route as part of the NTS's encouragement towards modal shift and as such bicycle parking racks, cycle routes and other cycling infrastructure should be designed and built to the National Cycling Strategy guidelines. Until such a document is published no further development should be contemplated OR the proviso that cycling provision can be re-designated after approval to a better or improved design in line with the NCS at developers cost, as part of their sustainability design concept and obligations.</p>	<p>4) Comment noted, but to be addressed to the Planning Authority.</p>
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C. Environmental Health Directorate (Email dated 26th January 2018)

Comments	ADI responses
<p>This Directorate has no further comments to submit regarding the proposed lateral extension and amendments other than those submitted by letter dated 21st August 2015.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

D. Agricultural Directorate (Email dated 1st February 2018)

Comments	ADI responses
<p>Agricultural Directorate is pointing out that for soil movement; it is very important that the necessary permits are in place as per Chapter 236 of the Laws of Malta.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

E. Member of the public (Email dated 15th February 2018)

Comments	ADI responses																																																																				
<p>I noticed that the updated EIA has something very strange especially in the employment figures. The new application should lead to an increase in the number of employees given there has been an increase in area. I had to use the original project's TIS since the old EIA did not have final employees/area figures. This is a fundamental issue that might effect nearby residents like me. If the EIA employment figures are incorrect then all the other analysis is incorrect. How can the public and authorities carry out a proper assessment?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">new application employees</th> <th style="text-align: center;">old application employees</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Change employees</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Office accommodation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,631</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2,517</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-886</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retail (Class 4B)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">21</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food & Beverage</td> <td style="text-align: right;">146</td> <td style="text-align: right;">42</td> <td style="text-align: right;">104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gymnasium / Day Care Centre</td> <td style="text-align: right;">21</td> <td style="text-align: right;">17</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supermarket</td> <td style="text-align: right;">56</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20</td> <td style="text-align: right;">36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parking/Maintenance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td style="text-align: right;">16</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Showroom</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">1,885</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">2,642</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">-757</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Office accommodation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">37,930</td> <td style="text-align: right;">32,725</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5,205</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retail (Class 4B)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,624</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,155</td> <td style="text-align: right;">469</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food & Beverage</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,120</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1,040</td> <td style="text-align: right;">80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gymnasium / Day Care Centre</td> <td style="text-align: right;">777</td> <td style="text-align: right;">840</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supermarket</td> <td style="text-align: right;">859</td> <td style="text-align: right;">975</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-116</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Showroom</td> <td style="text-align: right;">755</td> <td style="text-align: right;">685</td> <td style="text-align: right;">70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>conference facilities</td> <td style="text-align: right;">386</td> <td style="text-align: right;">930</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-544</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">43,451</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">38,350</td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">5,101</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source Table 2.1 page 10 & Table 2.5 page 35 Updated EIA Employees for PA581/16 as per Table 11 page 27 Original TIS</p>		new application employees	old application employees	Change employees	Office accommodation	1,631	2,517	-886	Retail (Class 4B)	21	23	-2	Food & Beverage	146	42	104	Gymnasium / Day Care Centre	21	17	4	Supermarket	56	20	36	Parking/Maintenance	0	16	-16	Showroom	10	7	3		1,885	2,642	-757	Office accommodation	37,930	32,725	5,205	Retail (Class 4B)	1,624	1,155	469	Food & Beverage	1,120	1,040	80	Gymnasium / Day Care Centre	777	840	-63	Supermarket	859	975	-116	Showroom	755	685	70	conference facilities	386	930	-544		43,451	38,350	5,101	<p>It is pointed out that the estimate of employees in the TIA is based on floor area and not on figures presented by the Applicant or the architect. The TIA is based on 100% occupancy.</p> <p>The architects point out that the figures presented in the EPS for PA00581/16 were actually an overestimation because they were based on a higher floor area than what was actually approved where the actual net usable office space is 27,922 m². The figures presented in the EIA Update are based on 65% occupancy and were compiled by the consultants responsible for the infrastructure of the development. The net usable office space for PA6705/17 is actually 35,378 m².</p>
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Comments	ADI responses
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<p>1. Outstanding issue as to the reason for the amendments/changes to the EIA. The original EIA was prepared in respect of approved permit 581/16. Flimkien Ghal Ambjent Ahjar and other ENGOS challenged the findings and the methodology of the EIA as compiled on several grounds - most notably with regard to the visual impact of the 4 high rise buildings on several historic viewpoints as well as traffic issues and debatable computational models and estimates.</p> <p>The permit is now subject to appeal (Appeal Numbers 271/16 and 272/16) before the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal. Several sittings were held before the Tribunal during which the photomontages presented in the original EIA were scrutinised. At no point during the many sittings held before the EPRT did the permit holder/EIA consultant indicate that a further EIA amendment was being compiled.</p> <p>The public has now been presented with an amended EIA wherein the visual impact of the project is shown to be considerably different and more significant than that presented in original EIA. This, even though there is no change in the height of the high rise buildings and the extension is being proposed laterally.</p> <p>In view of the same, FAA queries the motivation behind the compilation of this amended EIA which we maintain is a thinly disguised attempt to conceal the defective and incomplete original EIA.</p> <p>FAA underlines the fact that changing the EIA AFTER the permit is granted is prohibited under EU law as is evidenced by the recent EU Commission request for action to be taken against the state of Ireland for allowing this to happen. The European Commission is taking Ireland back to the Court of Justice of the EU for its failure to comply with part of the Court judgement of 3 July 2008 (C-215/06, Commission v Ireland), by not properly carrying out an environmental impact assessment for the Derrybrien wind farm in County Galway in Ireland. (https://ec.europa.eu/ireland/news/commission-takes-ireland-back-to-court-and-proposes-fines_en).</p>	<p>1. FAA’s specific comments on the visual assessment are addressed below. Traffic impacts were addressed through a TIA.</p> <p>The EPS Update was requested by ERA in a letter dated 6th September 2017 on PA6705/17 for the proposed lateral extension. The EPS Update addresses the impact of the proposed development as requested by ERA. The EIA Consultants were not requested to give evidence at the Tribunal for Appeals 271/16 and 272/16, and indeed were never present for any of such sittings therefore they could not have brought up the issue of the EPS Update.</p> <p>This is not an amended EIA but an EIA Update requested by ERA. As explained above the motivation of the EIA Update is to address the impacts of the proposed development under PA6705/17</p> <p>The EIA Consultants strongly rebut FAA’s statement that the original EIA was defective and incomplete. As with all the EIAs carried out by Adi Associates over the past 15 years, we have never been found once to be defective, misleading or incomplete. On the contrary all of our EIAs have been certified by ERA (and before it MEPA) to be carried out in an unbiased manner in accordance with the requirements of the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The EIA has not been changed. This is an EIA Update requested by ERA following the submission of a planning application. This is included in Schedule I Section 10 of the EIA Regulations (LN 114 of 2007) or Scheduled I Section 13.0 (LN 412 of 2017) under the heading “Changes or Extensions to Approved Projects”</p> <p>It is unclear what piecemeal approach is being referred to. The original project</p>
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FAA objects to the piecemeal approach taken in the compilation of this EIA.

2) Clarification regarding mode of computation/estimate of the number of employees which the Scheme will generate.

The estimated number of employees generated by the Scheme are listed in Tables 2.1 page 10 & Table 2.5 on page 35 of the Updated EIA,.
These are reproduced below.

Having compared these figures with those listed in Table 11 on page 27 of the Original TIS (PA581/16), it appears that there is a significant decrease in the number of employment figures. This discrepancy is odd, seeing that the new application should lead to an increase in the number of employees given there has been an increase in area.

A clarification on this point is required, as it either means that the employment figures estimated in the TIS (PA 581/16) were completely off the mark or that random computational methods and models are being adopted, with a shifting of the goalposts at whim and leading to obfuscation as to the true parameters which are being studied.

A comparative table is being reproduced below.

	new application employees	old application employees	Change employees
Office accommodation	1,631	2,517	-886
Retail (Class 4B)	21	23	-2
Food & Beverage	146	42	104
Gymnasium / Day Care Centre	21	17	4
Supermarket	56	20	36
Parking/Maintenance	0	16	-16

was subjected to EIA and approved. The proposed change to the approved project is likewise being subjected to EIA as required under the EIA Regulations.

2. It is pointed out that the estimate of employees in the TIA is based on floor area and not on figures presented by the Applicant or the architect. The TIA is based on 100% occupancy (as a worst case scenario).

The architects point out that the figures presented in the EPS for PA00581/16 were actually an overestimation because they were based on a higher floor area than what was eventually approved. The figures presented in the EIA Update are based on 65% occupancy and were compiled by the consultants responsible for the infrastructure of the development.

Showroom	10	7	3
	1,885	2,642	-757
Office accommodation	37,930	32,725	5,205
Retail (Class 4B)	1,624	1,155	469
Food & Beverage	1,120	1,040	80
Gymnasium / Day Care Centre	777	840	-63
Supermarket	859	975	-116
Showroom	755	685	70
conference facilities	386	930	-544
	43,451	38,350	5,101

Source Table 2.1 page 10 & Table 2.5 page 35 Updated EIA

Employees as PA581/16 Table 11 page 27 Original TIS

3. Discrepancy between Photomontages presented in Original EIA and those presented in updated EIA.

As can be seen from the images below the photo-montages produced for the lateral extension contrast greatly with the photo-montages of the original development filed by the very same consultants, now showing the true massive impact on the historic viewpoints of Mdina from Valletta. This confirms FAA's claims that the original photo-montages did not give a true picture of the development.

The permit holders and EIA consultants had declared that the 4 tower blocks would have a minimal visual impact. As seen from these photo-montages, the views from Valletta to Mdina are seriously compromised - hardly the minimal or negligible impact originally stated. A clarification is sought as to how the same compilers of photomontages of the same sites can come up with such disparate images and conclusions.

- The photomontages prepared for the EPS Update for PA6705/17 were based on the guidelines contained in MEPA's *Best Practice Guide – Visual Simulations (2015)*, which came into force in March 2016. The photomontages prepared for PA 581/16 were prepared in accordance with the practice at the time as the EPS was submitted before the entry into effect of the MEPA guidelines on preparation of photomontages.

The EPS Update for PA6705/17 is not an amended EIA, it is an EPS Update to take into account the lateral extension and other proposed changes to the Quad Towers development. Since this EPS Update is being prepared following the compilation of MEPA's *Best Practice Guide – Visual Simulations (2015)*, then the EIA Consultants used this methodology in the EPS Update.

It is pointed out to FAA that the consultants are independent of the developer and have no interest in 'not giving a true picture of the development'. The methodology is based on best EIA practice which was adopted for both the EIA for PA581/16 and for this EIA Update.

Photomontage from Hastings, Valletta **Original Application (2016)**



Photomontage from Hastings, Valletta **New Application for Lateral Extension (2018)**



These photomontages cannot be compared. In order to determine the impact of each, they are to be compared against the baseline photo presented against each one.

Although the 2016 montage was taken with a different lens (and in line with the practice back then), it cannot be directly compared with the 2018 montage but only with the base photo for the 2016 image.

Likewise the 2018 photomontage. This should be compared to the base photo taken in line with the new MEPA guidelines.

Appendix 1: Plan showing rainwater flow

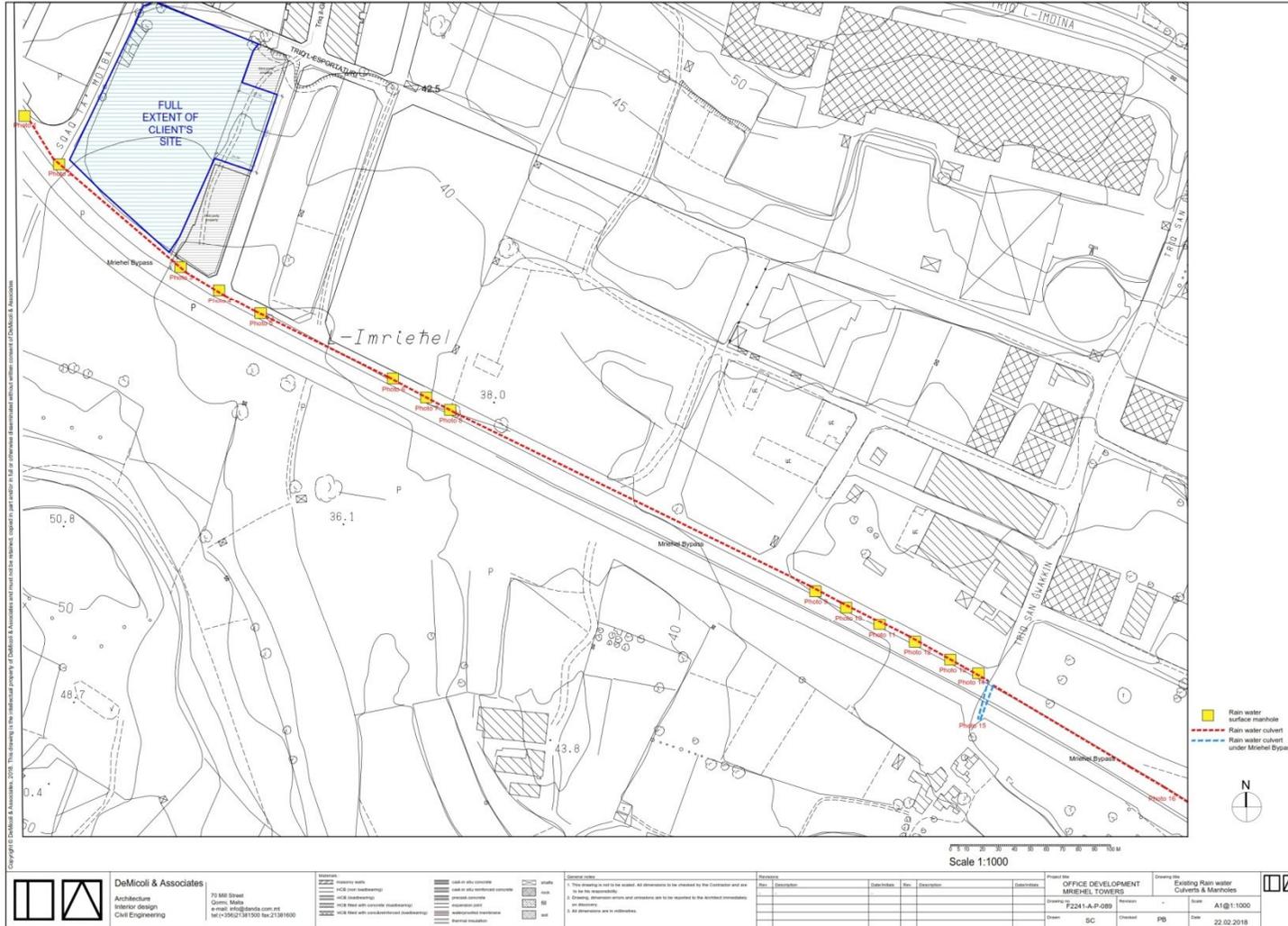


Table 5.5: Summary of noise impacts

Predicted impact	Beneficial / adverse	Nature, scale and type of impact						Policy Importance (Inter/national/local)	Probability of impact occurring (Likely/unlikely/remote/uncertain)	Significance of Impact (Major / minor / not significant)	Proposed mitigation measures	Significance of residual impact
		Excav'n/ Constr'n/ Oper'n	Extent of impact (nat/local /site)	Direct/ indirect	S'term/ l'term	Perm/ temp	Revers/ Irrevers					(Major/ minor / insignificant)
Noise impact on sensitive receptors from construction activities	Adverse	Excav'n / Constr'n	Local	Direct	S'term	Temp	Revers	Local	Likely	Major significance	CMP with specific noise control measures Noise monitoring	Minor

Table 6.1: Summary of Impacts

Asset Impacted	Beneficial/ Adverse / Neutral	Nature, scale and type of impact						Policy Importance (Internat. / National / Local)	Probability of impact occurring (Likely / Unlikely / Remote / Uncertain)	Significance of impact (Major / Minor / Not significant)	Proposed mitigation measures	Significance of residual impact (Major / Minor / Not significant)
		Const'n / Oper'n	Extent of impact (Nat. / Local / Site)	Direct / Indirect	S- term / L- term	Perm / Temp	Revers / Irrevers					
Visual Amenity												
Viewpoint 1: Pjazza tas-Sur	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 1: Pjazza tas-Sur (cumulative)	Neutral	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 2: Triq Giuseppe Stivala	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 3: Is-Salib tal-Għolja	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Minor to moderate	None	Minor to moderate
Viewpoint 3: Is-Salib tal-Għolja (cumulative)	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Minor	None	Minor
Viewpoint 4: Triq il-Merġat	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 5: Triq l-Esportaturi	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 6: Triq il-Hofor	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Major	None	Major
Viewpoint 7: Dawret l-Imrieħel	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 8: Triq l-Imdina	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 9: Triq Giuseppe Garibaldi	Neutral	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Not significant	None	Not significant
Viewpoint 10: Triq il-Barrieri / tal-Gibjun	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Minor	None	Minor
Viewpoint 11: Gnien Hastings	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Viewpoint 12: Upper Barrakka	Adverse	All	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	Local	Likely	Moderate	None	Moderate
Air Quality												
Impact of vehicle emissions on sensitive receptors – change in NO ₂ and PM ₁₀ annual averages and number of daily PM ₁₀ exceedances	Adverse	Oper'n	Local	Direct	L-term	Perm	Revers	National	Likely	Not significant	None	Not significant
Noise												
Noise impact on sensitive receptors from construction activities	Adverse	Excav'n / Constr'n	Local	Direct	S'term	Temp	Revers	Local	Likely	Major significance	CMP with specific noise control measures Noise monitoring	Minor