Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening

(According to Schedule I of L.N 412 of 2017)

PA file no.: PA/7926/16

EA file no.: EA00022/17

Project Title: To demolish existing building within the site boundary and excavate the site. Proposed development of university residence (690 bedroom units), ancillary commercial space, student community amenities, language school, lecture space, office building and underground car park (456 car spaces).

Location: Site at, Ta' Gjalpos off, Triq San Ġwann Tal- Għorgħar, Msida, Malta

Screening date: January 2018

1. Description of Proposal

1.1 Outline of project/development

PA/07926/16 is a full development application by Mr. Pio Vassallo, on behalf of Campus Residence Malta Ltd., for the development of accommodation and community services at the University of Malta.

The need for the said development originates from the fact that the amount of students and staff at the University of Malta, including foreigners, is continuously increasing. A number of these students live at the University run residence in Lija and commute daily to the Msida Campus, however the lease is due to expire in 2018, causing the need for the relocation of student accommodation.

The project entails the: (i) demolition of the existing derelict buildings (including three residency buildings, rural building, three ex-retail premises (Calamatta garden centre), Institute of Digital Games (UoM) and offices (UoM)); (ii) the uprooting and transplanting of existing trees and shrubs; (iii) excavation of the site; and (iv) the construction of University students' housing, community complex, child care centre, language school, office building, underground parking and ancillary facilities.

The construction phase covers an area of approximately 8,780sqm, a gross floor area of approximately 64,000sqm (Figure 1) and 15 storeys, and shall consist of:

1. Student residence approximately 673 bedrooms, providing 968 beds, covering a gross floor area of circa 28,000sqm;
2. A language school with a gross floor area of circa 1,100sqm;
3. Personal fitness (gym & pool) facilities covering circa 644sqm;
4. University office space covering circa 1,800sqm;
5. Lecture halls covering circa 1,020sqm;
6. Student amenities covering circa 1,300sqm
7. Ancillary commercial space covering circa 1,500sqm;
8. Underground car park with a gross floor area of circa 18,700sqm, providing circa 441 car-parking spaces;
9. Back-of-house and general storage of circa 4,500sqm; and
10. Public forecourt, public court (around which the commercial areas and halls of residence are located) and a North facing terrace with outdoor swimming pool overlooking Wied Għollieqa.

The proposed number of storeys and their distribution is available in Table 1.

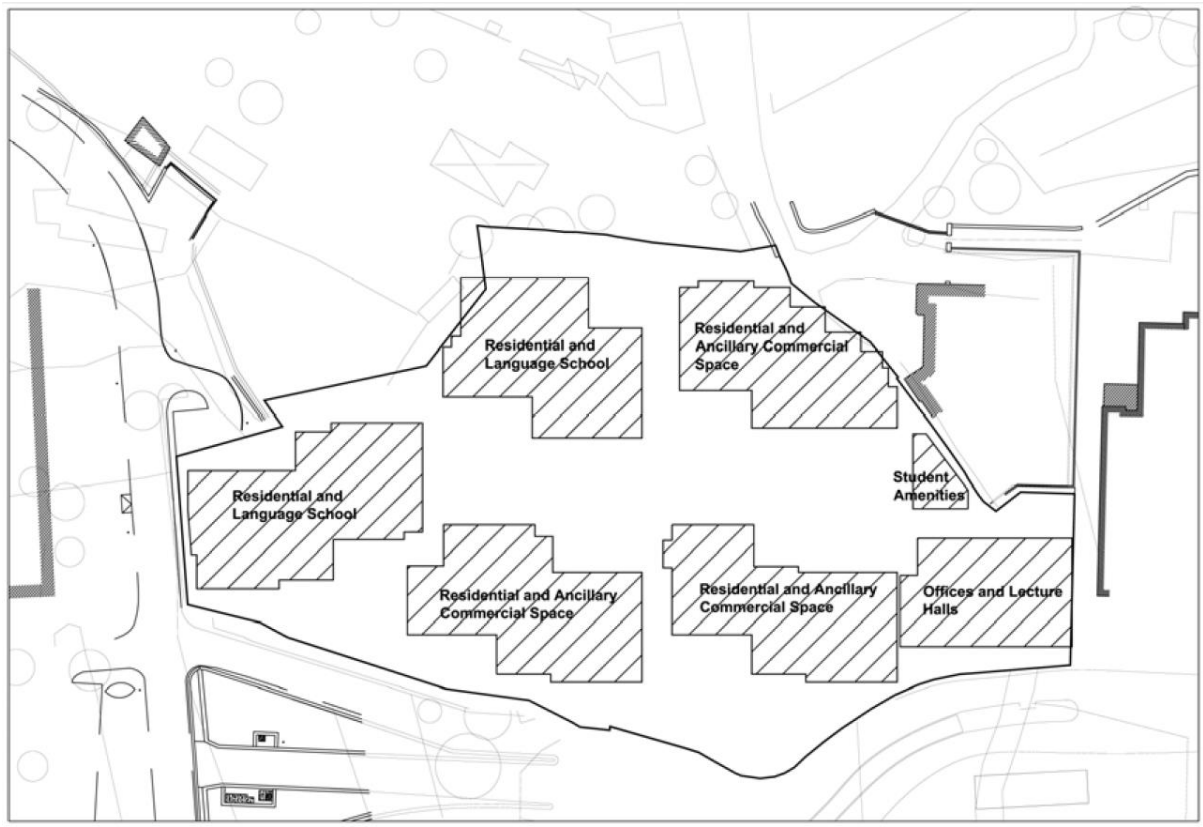

Figure 1: Block plan (Source: PDS)

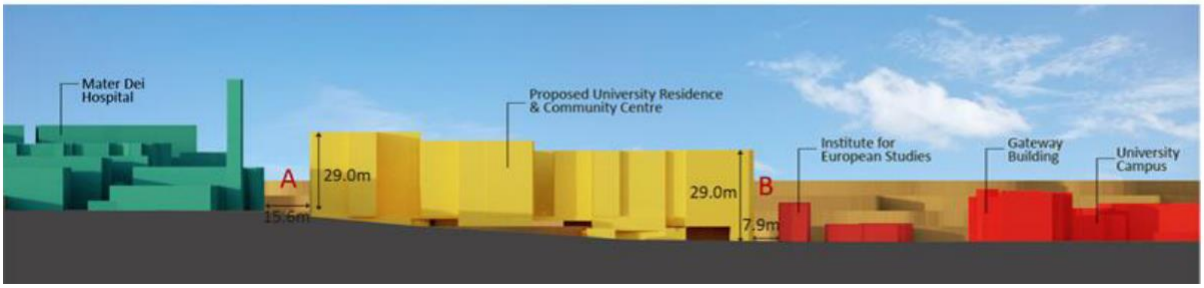

Figure 2: Schematic sectional elevation of the proposed University Residence and Community Complex in relation to the Mater Dei Hospital and the Institute for European Studies (Source: Design Studies)

Table 1: Proposed number of storeys

Use	Number of storeys	Levels
Underground car-park	4	-4A & -4B to -1A & -1B
Commercial space	2	0 & 1
Residence		
Block A	9 & 8	2 to 10
Block B	9 & 8	2 to 9
Block C	8 & 7	2 to 8
Block D	8 & 7	2 to 8
Block E	9 & 8	2 to 9
Language School	1	1
Offices and Lecture Space	7	Entrance at -1 , 1 to 6
Student amenities block	4	1 to 4

The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is expected to reach 885 vehicles.

1.2 Site description and related considerations

The proposed site has an area of approximately 8,780sqm and is located between the eastern boundary of Mater Dei Hospital and the western boundary of the University of Malta, at a site known as Ta' Gjalpos (Figure 3). A car park, which is currently in use lies towards the site's south side.

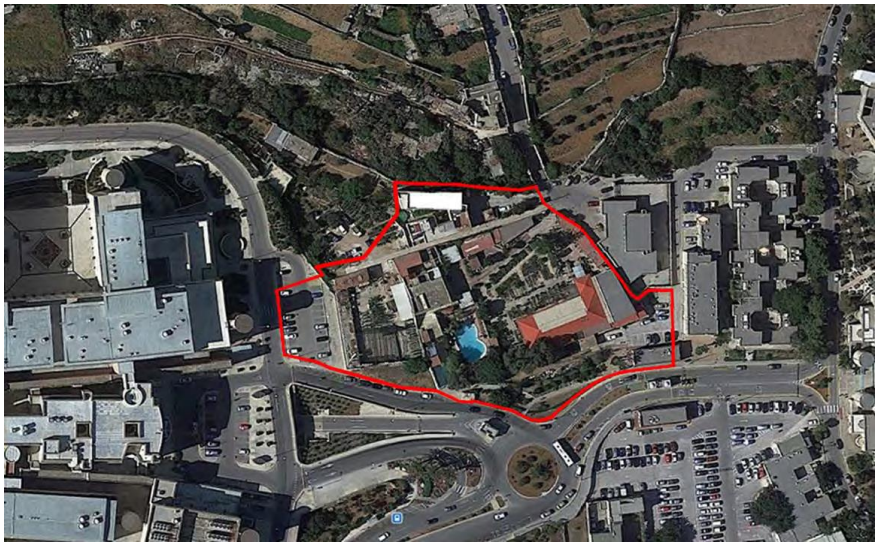

Figure 3: Site plan (Source: PDS)

The site is located South of a Natura 2000 site: NAT 003 - Wied Għollieqa (l/o San Ġwann), designated as a Special Area of Conservation of National Importance (Government Notice 112 of 2007), as declared through the provisions of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulation, 2006 (S.L. 549.44). The abutting site is also designated as a Bird Sanctuary, as declared through the provisions of the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations, 2006 (S.L. 549.42), a Tree Protection Area (GN 473 of 2011), a Level 3 Area of Ecological Importance and a Site of Ecological Importance (GN 241 of 1994).

The site falls within the North Harbours Local Plan and according to Map MP3, it is designated as *Reserved site for future expansion of Government Institutions (NHMP07)*.

2. Relevant history

2.1 ***Relevant EIA/screening criteria*** *(citations refer to L.N 412 of 2017):*

The proposed development falls under Schedule I, Category II, Section 7.1.2.3 and 7.1.2.1 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2017 (L.N. 412 of 2017) and the submission of a Project Description Statement (PDS) was required.

2.2 ***Relevant AA screening*** *(citations refers to S.L 549.44)*

The proposal is located South of a Natura 2000 site: NAT 003 - Wied Għollieqa (l/o San Ġwann), designated as a Special Area of Conservation of National Importance (GN 112 of 2007), as declared through the provisions of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulation, 2006 (S.L. 549.44).

2.3 ***Version of documents used for screening:***

1. PDS dated September 2017 (PA **07926/16/**90a);
2. Updated PDS dated December 2017 (PA **07926/16/**115b)
3. Construction Management Plan dated September 2017 (PA **07926/16/**91a); and
4. Proposed Waste Management Plan dated April 2017 (PA **07926/16/**58a).
5. Design studies (PA **07926/16/**79a)

6. Proposed skyline (PA **07926/16/**67z)

3. Screening Matrix

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts **Briefly describe**	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? **Briefly justify**	Docum entrefe rence
1	Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, landuse, changes in water bodies, etc)?	Yes. Section 1.1 above describes the current land uses and the proposed development. Although the site was formerly occupied by several buildings/structures, the proposed complex will lead to physical changes in the land use due to its height and massing.	Yes ☐ No x Unclear ☐ Yes. The proposal will result in a major intensification of built development in an area which is already developed with low lying structures. The proposal will cause physical changes; however the project will consolidate the existing urban landscape, including Mater Dei hospital and the University of Malta.	PDS Pg 5-6, 9,11, 22 Design studies and Proposed skyline
2	Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes. The proposal will make use of resources which are neither renewable nor in such short supply. During construction, a temporary supply of approximately 600kVA will be required, whereas during operation, energy will be provided from Enemalta, as well as from photovoltaic panels installed on the roof. The proposal will also make use of materials including concrete (reinforced concrete – 18,500m^3; mass concrete – 500m^3; hollow concrete blockwork - 115,040m^2), columns (2,024m^3), glazing (2,155m^2), timber (1,500m^2) and steel (623 tonnes) will be used for this development. However, these are not in a short supply as to be markedly affected by this project per se.	Yes ☐ No x Unclear ☐ No. The use of such resources is not expected to have a significant impact on the environment. Green solutions, such as the use of renewable energy systems (photovoltaic panels) and the use of second class water (from the collection of storm-water in a reservoir with a capacity of 4,700m^3) will be implemented in order to minimise the use of non-renewable resources. As long as the measures outlined in the Waste Management Plan at doc 58a in PA 07926/17 are implemented and waste management is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Waste Regulations (S.L. 549.63), no significant environmental impacts are envisaged.	PDS Pg 14-15, 34-36,39 46 WMP pg 2

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
3	Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials or energy, especially any resources which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	Yes. Fugitive dust emissions together with other emissions that generated during site clearance, excavation and construction may have a temporary impact on the nearby Hospital and University of Malta. During operation, NOx and PM10 from the operational traffic are expected. During construction, a temporary supply of approximately 600kVA will be required, whereas during operation, energy will be provided from Enemalta as well as from photovoltaic panels. During operation storage of LPG and diesel will be necessary to generate hot water, generators for backup power and for cooking purposes.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. The impact from fugitive dust during site clearance and excavation (generating around 105,000 cubic metres of inert material) is temporary and of short duration. Given that the site is located next to two sensitive receptors, a hospital and an educational institution, measures laid down in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, S.L.552.09) and through the implementation of the Construction Management Plan should be followed. During operation, the proposal is not expected to exceed 1000 AADT, therefore the impact on air quality is not considered to be significant. In terms of other substances and materials, when considering the nature of the proposal it is not foreseen that there will be any significant generation of substances or materials during both construction and operation, which could be harmful to human health or the environment. In this instance, no significant impacts are envisaged.	PDS pgs 39, 43-45, 47-49
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning ?	Yes. The waste generated by the proposal will be as follows: • 105,000 cubic metres of excavation waste; • C. 1,594kg of municipal waste per day during operation. Sewage waste will be directed to existing WSC sewerage network existing in the area.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ The volumes of rock which will be excavated and generated are substantial. It is possible that the excavated rock will be re-used, however this will only be known once the necessary geo-technical investigations are conducted. As long as the measures outlined in the Waste Management Plan at doc 58a in PA 07926/17 are implemented and waste management is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Waste Regulations (S.L. 549.63), no significant environmental	WMP pg 2 PDS pg 9, 39-41, 44, 46-48

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			impacts are envisaged.	
5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Yes. Particulate matter and dust emissions during the excavation and construction phase and an increase in NO_x emissions during operation is expected.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. During construction, fugitive dust and NOx from site clearance and excavation are temporary and of short duration. Standard mitigation measures for dust control should be enforced in accordance with the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, (S.L.552.09) and through the implementation of the Construction Management Plan During operation, traffic induced air emissions are expected to increase from the existing baseline, due to an expected resultant increase in the traffic volumes attracted to the site. However, the expected AADT as a result of the project is of 885 vehicles, hence no significant impacts are envisaged.	CMP pgs 26-28 PDS pgs 47-48
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes. Noise emissions and vibration are likely to result from the construction activities (namely from the excavation and construction phases) and the operational phase, arising mainly from the additional car-parking spaces and other operational activities. During the operational phase, the site will entail a concentration of activities which may generate noise, specifically the car park area which will attract around 441 vehicles into a confined space and increase the noise generated on site. This is mostly of concern due to high sensitivity of the close receptors (the university and hospital)	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. In terms of noise emissions during construction, these will be short-term and temporary, thus no significant impact is envisaged. The extent and magnitude of noise disturbance to sensitive receptors, namely to the SAC of Wied Għollieqa (and its designations), Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta should be minimised during the construction phase through the adoption of measures laid down in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, (S.L.552.09) and the Construction Management Plan. During operation, even though the proposal is located near sensitive receptors (UoM and Mater Dei Hospital), noise impacts from car generation and other urban related operations	PDS pgs 48, 50 CMP pgs 30-31, 57

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
		No emissions of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation are expected. The proposed development lies in close proximity (approximately 5m) to Wied Għollieqa (and its designations).	are not expected to be significant. No significant impacts from heat, energy or electromagnetic are envisaged.	
7	Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes. During both construction and operation, there is a risk of contamination of land and water on Wied Għollieqa (and its designations). This may result from surface runoff which is likely to contain sediments arising from dust and debris deposited on the site as well as foul water arising from ablution facilities.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No significant environmental impact from risk of contamination of land and water is envisaged on Wied Għollieqa, as long as storm-water management measures during construction are implemented. These include: - The excavations at the lowest point of the site in order to form a catchment reservoir, thus any surface water will be collected before it can travel downstream. - Wheel-washing facilities shall be installed at the entrance/exit of the site in order to minimise the dispersion on dust outside the site. Impacts from noise, runoff and dust emissions will be also mitigated through the adoption of mitigation measures through the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09). During operation, no significant impact from noise and surface runoff is envisaged on the SAC due to the nature of the project.	PDs pg 41, 47, 49
8	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	No increase in risk of accidents is envisaged, other than the 'normal' occupational risks typically associated with construction activities.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No significant environmental impacts are envisaged.	/

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
9	Will the Project result in social changes for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Yes. The proposal will further intensify the area from the current land uses to car park, commercial residence, language school, office block and student amenities with a significant increase in building heights (from one storey to eleven storey buildings and four basement levels). During construction it is estimated that approximately 50 persons shall be employed. When fully operational, the proposal will employ around 99 full time (excluding office staff and lecturers) and around 34 part-timers. Furthermore, 968 students will reside in the student residence.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. Although an increase of 928 students is substantial, it is not considered to be significant to induce a social change, especially when considering the related activity already dominant in the vicinity.	PDs pgs 5, 9, 38
10	Are there any such factors which should be considered such as the consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	The proposed development may lead to cumulative impacts associated with the increase in traffic flows. Such is associated with an increase in air quality impacts.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. In terms of air quality, ERA acknowledges that the baseline situation in the area already exceeds the legal air quality threshold, however the proposal per se will not contribute significantly affect the current baseline.	/
11	Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Refer to Section 2.2 above. In addition, native maquis trees in the area include Carobs, Lentisks or Mastic Trees, Almonds, Bramble, and some of the largest Olive-Leaved Buckthorns of the Maltese Islands. Such maquis communities also house a very unique mycoflora, making Wied Għollieqa one of the most	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. The site abuts an SAC. No direct land uptake is expected, however indirect impacts are relevant. Impacts from noise, runoff and dust emissions are envisaged; however the adoption of mitigation measures through the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09) will ensure that the demolition/construction phases	PDS pg 33, 47-49

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
		important 'mushroom' woodland sites of the Maltese Islands.	do not significantly impact the SAC. During operation, no significant impact from noise and surface runoff is envisaged on the SAC due to the nature of the project. In addition, as long as the proposed development is contained within the proposed site, no significant environmental impacts are envisaged on the said SAC.	
12	Are there any areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	Reply to question 11 refers.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ Reply to question 11 refers.	/
13	Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over wintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	Reply to Question 11 refers.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ Reply to question 11 refers.	/
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which	None that are known of.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ None that are known of.	/

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
	could be affected by the project?			
15	Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be effected by the project?	None that are known of.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No significant environmental impacts are envisaged.	/
16	Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The site lies between Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta and will be accessible through Triq San Ġwann tal-Għargħar. Birkirkara/Msida Bypass (Triq Dun Karm) runs at a distance of c. 300m, parallel to the south boundary of the site. During both construction and operation, the proposal is expected to generate traffic to and from the site.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No significant impact is envisaged during construction since the expected increase in heavy vehicles traffic is of a temporary nature. During operation, the proposal is not expected to exceed 1000 AADT, therefore the impact on air quality is not considered to be significant.	PDS pg 33
17	Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Reply to question 16 refers.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ Reply to question 16 refers.	/
18	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes. The proposed development shall consist of an eleven storey high building, thus having potential implications for landscape and visual amenity, including long distance views.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. The proposed development will be visible by motorists and passers-by, however the relevant viewpoints are already dominated by the existing Mater Dei hospital and the University of Malta, thus the proposal will consolidate the existing urban landscape.	PDS pg 9,48

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	An old rural building (livestock shed) is of vernacular importance due to the presence of dry stone walls and ''xorok tal-qasba''.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No significant environmental impacts are envisaged, however consultations with the relevant cultural heritage authorities through the mainstream development consent process may be considered.	PDS pg 49
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	No. Most of the site is reserved for future expansion of government institutions in North Harbours Local Plan (NHMP 07), and is currently occupied by derelict structures, vacant residences, offices, an unused and unscheduled rural building.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No significant impacts are envisaged.	PDs pgs 13, 22
21	Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	The proposed development is located in the proximity of San Ġwann (c. 200m), Msida (c. 330m) Birkirkara (c. 400m) and Gżira (700m). The site lines c. 500m from the San Ġwann Industrial Estate NHSG 04 as stated in Map SG1 in the North Harbours Local Plan.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No. Reply to question 1 refers.	Map SG1 in the North Harbou rs Local Plan
22	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Most of the site is reserved for future expansion of government institutions in North Harbours Local Plan (NHMP 07).	Yes □ No x Unclear □ The proposal is in line with the relevant plans.	PDS pg 13 North Harbou rs Local Plans NHMP 07
23	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built	Yes. The proposal lies in close proximity to the University of Malta and Mater Dei Hospital. It is also located in the	Yes □ No x Unclear □ During construction, no significant impacts are envisaged, due to the temporary nature. In addition, any possible impacts during construction may	PDS pg 47-48

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
	up, which could be affected by the project?	proximity of San Ġwann (c. 200m), Msida (c. 330m) Birkirkara (c. 400m) and Gzira (700m).	be sufficiently mitigated through the application of mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L.552.09) and through additional conditions to be included in the mainstream development process mechanism. During operation, the proposal is not expected to exceed 1000 AADT, therefore the impact on air quality is not considered to be significant.	
24	Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Sensitive areas around the proposed site include the University of Malta and Mater Dei Hospital.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ During operation, impacts significance from dust is not expected to be significant due to short and temporary duration of the phase. During operation, no significant environmental impacts are envisaged, especially since the proposal is related to existing uses.	PDS pgs 47-48
25	Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	Reply to question 11 refers.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ Reply to question 11 refers.	/
26	Are there any areas on or around the location which have already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g.	Yes. The site lies between Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta and will be accessible through Triq San Ġwann tal-Għargħar. Birkirkara/Msida Bypass (Triq Dun Karm) runs at a distance of c. 300m, parallel	Yes □ No x Unclear □ Reply to question 10 refers.	PDS pg 33

Que No:	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Docum entrefe rence
	where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	to the south boundary of the site. During both construction and operation, the proposal is expected to generate traffic to and from the site.		
27	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, or subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No. The likelihood of such extreme events in the area can be considered to be minimal.	Yes □ No x Unclear □ No significant environmental impacts are envisaged.	/

4. Conclusion

4.1 EIA screening conclusion

The proposal falls within the scope of Schedule I, Category II, Sections 7.1.2.1 (Projects which have: (ii) a gross floor area of 30,000m^2 or more; and (iii) a gross floor area of 10,000m^2 or more for commercial use, including shops, shopping centres, offices or other business) and 7.1.2.3 (Car-park with a gross floor area of 15,000m^2 or more) of the EIA Regulations, 2017 (L.N. 412 of 2017).

Following detailed screening in accordance with Schedule III of the aforementioned regulations and screening matrix above, it is concluded that impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an Environmental Impact Assessment

4.2 AA screening conclusion

The proposal lies within the Natura 2000 site: NAT 003 - Wied Għollieqa (l/o San Gwann), designated as a Special Area of Conservation of National Importance via Government Notice 112 of 2007, as declared through the provisions of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulation, 2006 (S.L. 549.44).

Given the nature of the proposal, no significant environmental impacts from risk of contamination of land, air and water during both construction and operation are envisaged on the integrity of the habitats, species and the Natura 2000 site as a whole, provided that good practice mitigation measures are applied. These include storm-water management measures ((i) excavations at the lowest point of the site in order to form a catchment reservoir and (ii) wheel washing facilities at the entrance/exit of the site to minimise dust dispersion) and adoption of mitigation measures through the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulation (S.L.552.09).

In conclusion, no further assessment as per Regulation 20 of S.L 549.44 is considered necessary.

4.1 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, or failure to honour any conditions tied to the screening conclusion, would need to be re-assessed and the merits of this screening would need to be re-opened.