

Meeting	EIA Public Consultation for EIA in relation to the following development permit application: PA 06044/17 - Demolition of the existing Grand Hotel Verdala and its proposed redevelopment to achieve a better skyline and urban setting. The development consists of class 1 residential units, class 4B ancillary retail use and class 3B 5 star Spa Hotel. Site at: Former Grand Hotel Verdala, Triq Inguanez across, Triq Ir-Rghajja, Rabat, Malta
Date	2 nd July 2019
Duration	17:00 -18:30
Location	Ghajn National Water Conservation Centre, Triq Ghajn Qajjet, ir-Rabat, Malta.
ERA representatives	Kevin Mercieca (Deputy Director); Josianne Abela Vassallo (Team Manager), Stephanie Farrugia (Senior Officer)
Minutes taken by	Stephanie Farrugia

Mr. Kevin Mercieca opened the meeting giving details about the proposed development which is currently subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (*PA 06044/17: Demolition of the existing Grand Hotel Verdala and its proposed redevelopment to achieve a better skyline and urban setting. The development consists of class 1 residential units, class 4B ancillary retail use and class 3B 5 star Spa Hotel. Site at: Former Grand Hotel Verdala, Triq Inguanez across, Triq Ir-Rghajja, Rabat, Malta*)

Details vis-à-vis the purpose of the meeting were provided, in particular that the meeting was part of the EIA process. It was also clarified that this was not the decision-taking meeting but was being held to present the EIA findings and to gather feedback from the public in due time for any relevant considerations to be factored in during the process.

Eilis McCullough on behalf of Adi Associates delivered a presentation explaining the studies carried out as part of the EIA. She referred to an architectural model of the proposed development on display. She also pointed out new changes to the proposed development which were not reflected in the slides and in the EIA in particular:

- i) The multi-purpose hall and some restaurant space in the hotel (Block C – Levels -2, -1 and 0) has been replaced with an additional 14 serviced apartments (increase from 17 to 31 serviced apartments). In this respect, the change in uses in respect of the AADT was recalculated and was not considered significant with respect to both the air quality assessment and the traffic noise assessment due to a slight increase by 35 (from 859 to 894).
- ii) A minor change in the footprint where Block B interfaces with Block C, but no change in the Gross Floor Area. The change in the footprint results in a change to the façade overlooking the ridge, but at ground level only. In this regard, the change was also not considered significant with respect to the visual amenity assessment.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca opened the floor for comments after the presentation.



Public individual #1:

Asked whether all the traffic generated by the hotel will pass from Triq Inguanez near Verdala Mansions.

Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi Associates):

Ms. Xuereb confirmed that all the traffic, except for the coaches, will pass from Triq Inguanez. Coaches will pass from the route indicated by the blue arrows (shown on screen).

Public individual #1:

Asked about the increase in traffic flow that will be generated as a result of traffic passing from Triq Inguanez.

Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi Associates):

Ms. Xuereb confirmed that there will be an increase in traffic flow and a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), requested by the Planning Authority, was separately prepared. This is distinct from the EIA where the study conducted was on the noise and air quality likely to be generated by the project using the data obtained from the TIA.

Public individual #2:

Why doesn't traffic pass from the other streets?

Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi Associates):

Ms. Xuereb explained that the most frequented route has been studied to determine the worst-case scenario in the Traffic Impact Assessment. In the studies, the worst-case scenario with respect to traffic management was assessed.

Public individual #3:

When the traffic goes through Triq Inguanez, will there be a tunnel so that the residents in the hotel use it or will there be another street leading to the hotel?

Perit Christian Spiteri (project architect):

Perit Spiteri clarified that the hotel will have access to the parking for the residents. He explained that vehicles will pass from the route indicated by the orange arrows, whereas coaches will use the route indicated by the blue arrows. All the vehicles will be able to park in the garage accessed from Triq Inguanez. The hotel will have a drop off zone indicated by the blue arrows in the illustration.

Public Individual #1:

Remarked that the owners of the 85 apartments will not necessarily own one car per unit and therefore the traffic flow will be large.



Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi Associates):

Ms. Xuereb explained further the illustration showing traffic flow. She stated that studies were undertaken at the route showing the two coloured arrows in view that the impact at this area will be the worst. Traffic flow in one day was established at 850 cars.

Mr. Angelo Xuereb (Applicant – Royal Hotels Ltd.)

Mr. Xuereb remarked that he still holds a permit to develop a 200-room hotel. The Verdala Mansions have 36 apartments and no traffic jams have been generated. The new boutique hotel will have 40 rooms.

Private Individual #4:

After Inquanez Street in front of Verdala Mansions, is that still going to be a private road with a barrier?

Mr. Michael Warrington (Royals Hotel Ltd.)

Mr. Warrington stated that what is private land will remain private land.

Mr. Emmanuel Borg (Resident):

Mr. Borg asked how was air pollution measured and sampled. He stated that in the morning there is a problem with traffic coming out of St. Sebastian Street. With this project, the traffic problem will be exacerbated. He further enquired when the air quality monitoring was carried out in view that at the moment there are road works being carried and which have increased traffic.

Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi Associates):

Ms. Xuereb replied that air quality was measured using a 6 week air monitoring station. The impact was assessed along all the area marked in red on the slide. The Annual Average Daily Traffic is used to assess traffic generation in 24 hours. The traffic impact assessment assesses the peak hour flow and traffic congestion. In the air quality assessment, the number of cars that pass from the area marked in red in 24 hour period is assessed and the value is added to the vehicles on the network to determine the impact on the air quality. In this case the value is 850 vehicles which is considered low and normally an air quality study is not requested if the AADT value is below 1000. All the traffic data from the roads in red in PM10 and NO2 has been collected and sent to the UK for the modelling of the cars on the network. ERA provides the parameters on how to assess the impact. The area has a low volume of traffic but ERA still wanted the assessment to be carried out. The study was carried out in December 2018 and January 2019.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director)

Mr. Mercieca clarified that the methodology and guidelines for air quality are established by ERA and are available on ERA's website. ERA has a network of air quality monitoring stations around Malta and it ensures that the results presented for specific projects are representative of what is expected to result in those particular areas.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca closed the meeting by confirming that the points raised have been recorded and noted. He also thanked the participants and invited them to send any further comments, preferably by email to eia.malta@era.org.mt, or by post to *'The Director, Environment and Resources Authority, Hexagon House, Spencer Hill, Marsa'*, by Tuesday 9th July, 2019.