



115, Old Railway Road
Balzan, BZN 1619. Malta
+356 2142 1137 | +356 7905 8230
antoine@studjurban.com | studjurban.com

Your Ref: **PA/06433/19**

Our Ref: **0169**

Project Description Statement

Location: *Ta` Xbiex Marina, Triq Ix-Xatt, Gzira and Triq ix-Xatt Ta` Xbiex, Ta` Xbiex, Gzira*

Proposal: *To propose two additional pontoons further to the pontoon approved in PA/5468/10, and ancillary security infrastructure.*

1 | Introduction

This Project Description Statement (PDS) is being formulated in accordance with Schedule II of the EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L.549.46). It is subdivided as follows:

Section 2: Project description, including the whole project's physical characteristics (since this project is part of a larger masterplan), in terms of size, scale, design and phasing, and all envisaged works including detailed envisaged project interventions

Section 3: A discussion on the project's location (with the site boundaries shown on plan), giving regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected

Section 4: A description of the eventual operations

Section 5: A discussion of ancillary requirements (namely access and parking and infrastructural services)

Section 6: A comprehensive description of the environmental aspects likely to be affected by the project, including likely effects of the project on the environment resulting from site changes, expected residues/waste and use of natural resources, as relevant to this project.

2 | Project Description & Phasing

This project proposes two additional floating pontoons to the west of the floating pontoon, approved in PA/5468/10, together with ancillary security infrastructure, so as to form a new marina with reorganised berths at 'Ix-Xatt ta' Ta' Xbiex' in Gzira, referred to as the Gzira Gardens Marina.

The site is along 'Ix-Xatt ta' Ta' Xbiex' in the locality of Gzira bordering the locality of Ta' Xbiex. Access to the proposed site occurs from both sea and land, as discussed in more depth in Section 3 of this PDS.

Permit PA/05468/10 was renewed through PA/04418/19, the relative proposal descriptions are hereunder:

PA/04418/19 - Renewal of PA/05468/10 - Reorganisation of Ta' Xbiex Marina. Upgrading of quay, erection of low voltage switch room and installation of floating pontoon with demountable office on same. This application was approved on 09/07/2019.



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PA/05468/10 - Reorganisation of Ta' Xbiex Marina. Upgrading of quay, erection of low voltage switch room and installation of floating pontoon with demountable office on same.

The proposed works are part of a larger masterplan (Image 01 overleaf), which comprises a holistic redesign of the entire area including the current access-only road and the public garden, following the successful award of a public tender that had been issued by Transport Malta comprising a seaward concession area (the area within which this development planning application is being submitted) and a landward concession area (that will be subject to a separate development planning application). The proposed seaward concession area is described further within the next section of this PDS. The landward design of the masterplan will comprise three main interventions, and will be subject to two separate development planning applications.

The envisaged project phasing is discussed hereunder:

- **PHASE 1:** Pontoon 1 and quay works approved by **PA/05468/10** and renewed by **PA/04418/19**. Preparatory works in connection with Pontoon 1's installation commenced on 30/04/2020 as per submitted Commencement Notice (Doc. 51a in PA/04418/19 refers), which will be followed by the floating pontoon's installation and, later on in the year, by the civil works in connection with the quay's upgrade.
- **PHASE 2:** (the area within which this development planning application is being submitted) will comprise the addition of two more floating pontoons, to consolidate the number of berths that may be accommodated within the area by having a better organisation onto pontoons, thus maximising such berth capacity within a formal and orderly layout.
- **PHASE 3:** Formalisation and rationalisation of the on-street car parking minimising the footprint taken up by the parked cars and transformation of the entire stretch into a pedestrian-priority, low-speed area with a paved finish that is continuous with a fully pedestrian and bicycle-friendly promenade to connect the western Gzira promenade to the eastern promenade of Ta' Xbiex and that had already been largely envisaged in the approved PA/05468/10. The refined design of the promenade shall provide ample space for pedestrians and ancillary landscaping. The formation of this promenade will further guarantee public access to the shore.
- **PHASE 4:** Upgrading of the public garden (Gnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa) to ensure the relevance of the public space by providing an access-for-all, safe, green park, maximising the vegetation and designing around the existing mature trees within the public space and introduction of operator's concession area, both of which are to be subject to development planning applications in due course.



Image 01: Indicative representation of the Masterplan of the Gzira Gardens & Gzira Gardens Marina, showing the seaward, landward and operator's concession areas (Source: Author, 2019)

The pontoon works that will be carried out are similar to Pontoon 1's works and will include:

- Delivery of 17 Ton and 9 Ton blocks (reinforced concrete sinkers) to site
- Lifting with crane of 17 Ton and 9 Ton blocks to sea
- Placing of 17 Ton and 9 Ton blocks to position on seabed using divers and work boats – importantly, **no dredging works** will be carried out on the seabed¹.
- Positioning of pontoons in place and securing to Blocks with Chains – the floating pontoons will be held in place through various connections to the reinforced concrete sinkers, as per submitted

¹ Following the Report on a marine benthic survey undertaken at Ta' Xbiex Marina carried out by EcoServ (submitted at Doc. 117b on e-apps), anthropogenic items that were thrown into the sea along the years and that have subsequently deposited on the seabed shall not be removed. This is due to the presence of the stony coral *Cladocora caespitosaa* recorded from the assemblage of algae on this dumped anthropogenic material at the base of the quay, and evidenced in EcoServ's report.



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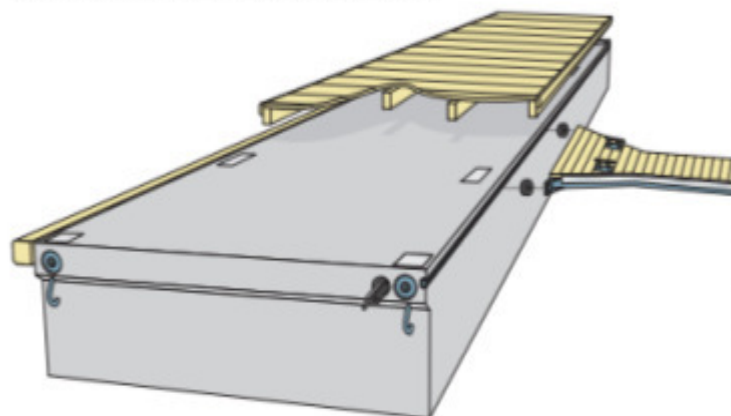
drawings 0169-02-2002 and 0169-02-2010. The pontoons will also be connected to the upgraded quay, which works are covered by the approved permit PA/04418/19.

- Installation of pontoons access bridge and pontoon equipment
- Installation of safety equipment to pontoon
- Installation of M & E works and service modules to pontoon
- Installation of 3.5m-high Security Gates at the entrance of each proposed pontoon. It should be noted that these will **not** restrict public access to the promenade, but only stop the public from accessing the individual proposed floating pontoons.
- Reconfiguration of the rest of the marina, as shown in drawing 0169-02-2001 – Masterplan Seaward.

The proposed pontoons are floating reinforced concrete elements. All three proposed pontoons will have dedicated channels for electricity, plumbing and fire-hydrant installation. The pontoons are divided into approximately 20m sections along their length and are connected by flexible rubber and steel joints.

Image 02 is an excerpt from the Technical Data sheet of these pontoons, reproduced in detail within Appendix 1 of the Project Description Report submitted on e-apps at Doc. 13b and further annexed to this PDS.

Heavy Duty Pontoons 2700, 3300, 4300



TECHNICAL DATA

Concrete strength: 45 N/mm² watertight, steel reinforced plastic fibre concrete. Exposure class according to European EN 206-1 standard.

Core: Expanded polystyrene, density 15 kg/m³

Reinforcement: Partly or fully hot dip galvanised or stainless steel

Optional accessories: Concrete coatings, wooden deck, fixing rails, cable ducts and

Image 02: Technical data on Pontoon B & C (Heavy Duty Pontoons 2700, 3300, 4300), from Float supplier (Source: Marinetek, 2019)

3 | Project Location

The project's location is indicated in Image 03 overleaf, which illustrates the site and its broader context. The site which is the subject of this development planning application forms part of the seaward concession area discussed in Section 2 of this PDS.



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Image 03: Location of the site and its neighbouring context (Background Image from Planning Authority - Map Server, 2019)

From the sea, the site is accessed through Il-Port ta' Marsamxett connecting the proposed marina extent to the rest of the seaward area. A number of marinas are already present along the natural harbours in Marsamxett (Image 04 overleaf). From the land, the site is accessed through a secondary road branching from the local access road at Triq ix-Xatt Ta' Xbiex – this road is currently characterised by haphazard on-street parking and unsafe pedestrian paths or pedestrian amenities. Along the quay the proposed site abuts an access-only road that also doubles up as a surface car park, beyond which lies the existing 'Gnien il-Kunsill Ta l-Ewropa'. This space is designated as 'Public Open Space NHRL 03' within the Local Plan's Gzira & Ta' Xbiex Policy Map (GT1).

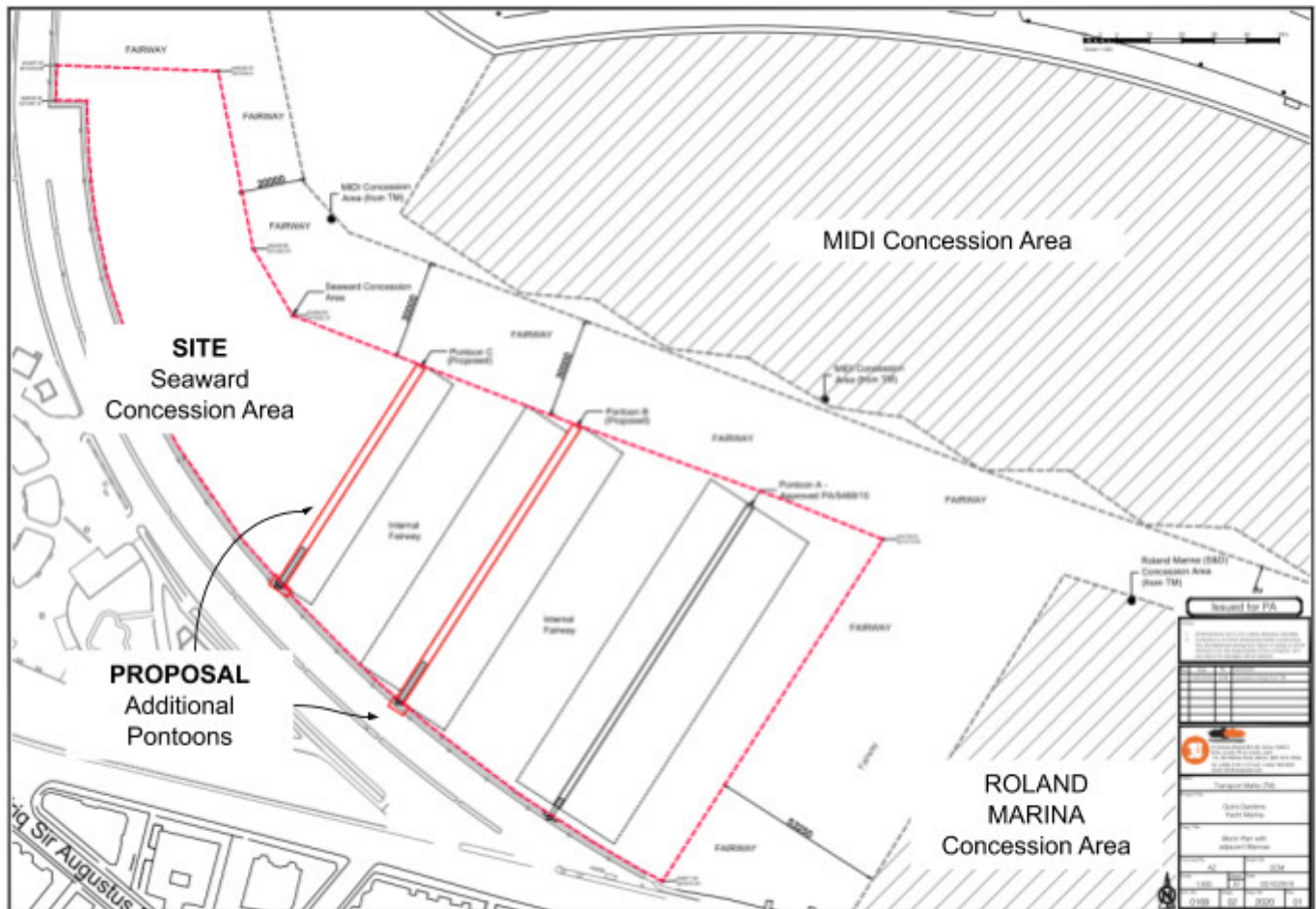


Image 04: The seaward concession area within which the two proposed pontoons are located, in the context of the MIDI Concession Area and the Roland Marina Concession Area – Dwg. 0169-02-2020-01 - Block Plan submitted on e-apps at Doc. 118b (Source: Author, 2019)

The 40 existing berths along the quay, as well as the current state of this quay are shown in the Image set 05 overleaf. In turn, Image set 06 that is extracted from EcoServ's *Report on a marine benthic survey undertaken at Ta' Xbiex Marina* (submitted at Doc. 117b on e-apps), illustrates underwater conditions at present.



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Image set 05: Images of the site and its surrounding context at present, including existing berths and the current state of the quay (Source: Author, 2019)



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Image set 06: Images of the conditions underwater at present. **Top** – Photographs showing the assemblage of algae on low energy infralittoral rock present on bedrock and boulders at the base of the quay. This assemblage was characterised by turf algae and a heavy sediment cover on the rocks. **Bottom** – Photographs of individuals of the stony coral *Cladocora caespitosa* recorded from the assemblage of algae on low energy infralittoral rock on the vertical face of the quay (left) and on boulders/rubble (top right) (Source: EcoServ, 2019)

4 | Project Operations

The proposed extension of the Gzira Gardens Marina seeks to consolidate the number of berths that may be accommodated within the area by having a better organisation onto pontoons, thus maximising such berth capacity within a formal and orderly layout.

Project operations will be primarily related to day-to-day berthing activities, occurring in a formalised and organised manner along the two pontoons and thus characterised by moored vessels and vessel movements in the marina. The presence of the Gzira Gardens Marina will nevertheless imply some other ancillary activities, such as ensuring that the seabed is kept free from debris and pollutants, as well as the continuous upkeep and maintenance of the quay, the promenade and the garden.

The rehabilitation and upgrade envisaged to the overall area at Gzira Gardens Marina, discussed further in the following section, is envisaged to bring about an increased number of people to the area, with ancillary pedestrian amenities to supplement the footfall and the production of an important recreational public space for residents and visitors of all ages. In turn, it is envisaged that the increased footfall will



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bring increased economic activity to the entire area and the presence of more people within the area will provide further safety to the spaces themselves, through natural surveillance.

5 | Ancillary project requirements

The ancillary project requirements are largely related to future phases of the masterplan, as discussed in Section 2 above, including:

- **Parking:** A better organised and formal on-street car parking area is envisaged just off the quay that will reduce the amount of cars currently parking haphazardly on site and ensuring, through the area's transformation into a pedestrian-priority paved area, low vehicular speeds and an extension to the envisaged continuous promenade. The area will be monitored to ensure that vehicles are only parked within the designated bays.
- **Ancillary amenities:** The ancillary amenities will comprise the upgraded adjacent public garden (Gnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa) that will be a safe green park, accessible for all, designed around the existing mature trees within the public space. An operator's concession area is also envisaged within this area, housing the marina's administration offices and services.

In terms of **servicing** requirements for the two pontoons, heavy duty electrical and water supply modules will be installed on the quay to service each pontoon, feeding off from the service culvert that will be constructed as part of the quay works approved via PA/04418/19. In addition, each pontoon is to have an access bridge/deck and a security gate at each entrance, in order to stop the public from accessing the individual proposed floating pontoons.

6 | Potential Environmental Impacts

In-depth preliminary research has been carried out in order to establish the best possible pontoon structures that would not be detrimental to the marine environment wherein they will be placed. It was **decided to go for floating structures, rather than fixed, and would thus be primarily held in place with sinkers that would be placed onto the seabed.** In this way no disruption to the seabed is being envisaged. In addition, **no dredging works** are being proposed as it is not required for the proposed berths. This will ensure that there would be no destabilization of the current marine conditions.

As further detailed in the Technical Specifications provided in Appendix 1, there is no element of plastic within these pontoons, unlike some other pontoons currently in place in other areas. Their materiality, composed of aerated concrete, makes them more environmentally friendly, while also being more stable and allowing for a good longevity (fifty-year guarantee).

The potential environmental impacts of these two pontoons have been identified within EcoServ's report on the marine benthic survey that was carried out, submitted on e-apps at Doc. 117b. The Marine Benthic survey concluded that "[n]o habitats of conservation interest that are protected by national or



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international legislation were recorded from the study area” (p8) and envisaged the following potential environmental impacts

(A) During the **construction phase** of the works, namely:

- Mortality of biota attached to any material that will be cleared from the seabed.
- Disturbance to biota in areas adjacent to the works from machinery and other equipment used.
- Input of suspended particles to the water column, primarily through disturbance and re-suspension of bottom sediments during placement of sinkers and installation of the floating pontoons.
- Release of toxic substances and contaminants from disturbed sediments.

The above impacts would potentially come about as the sinkers are gradually guided onto the seabed and pontoons installed.

(B) During the **operational phase** of the works, namely:

- Shadowing of the assemblage of algae on low energy infralittoral rock by the floating pontoons and moored vessels.
- Input of suspended particles to the water column, primarily through disturbance and re-suspension of bottom sediments as a result of vessel movements in the marina.
- Increase in ambient noise levels due to vessel movements in the marina.

This concludes the Project Description Statement.

Dr Antoine Zammit B.E.&A. (Hons.) (Melit.) M.Sc. (Lond.) Ph.D. (Lond.), *perit*
Founding Architect and Urban Designer



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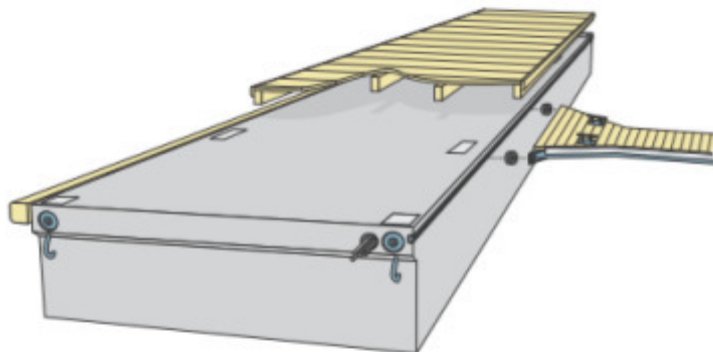
Appendix 1

MARINA

M2712HDS M2715HDS M3312HDS M3315HDS M4312HDS M4315HDS

Heavy Duty pontoons 2700, 3300, 4300

The **Heavy Duty pontoons** have been designed for boat moorings in modern marinas, overpass bridges and landing stages. They are very strong and maintenance free with high loading capacity and long service life. Internal cable ducts are available for water and electricity. The Heavy Duty pontoons can be moored either by piles, chain or Seaflex and have been designed for economic freight and easy installation.



TECHNICAL DATA

Concrete strength: 45 N/mm² watertight, steel reinforced plastic fibre concrete. Exposure class according to European EN 206-1 standard.

Core: Expanded polystyrene, density 15 kg/m³

Reinforcement: Partly or fully hot dip galvanised or stainless steel

Optional accessories: Concrete coatings, wooden deck, fixing rails, cable ducts and fenders (timber or plastic)

FLOATS	M2712HDS	M2715HDS	M3312HDS	M3315HDS	M4312HDS	M4315HDS
Length (m)	11,92	14,92	11,92	14,92	11,92	14,92
Width with fenders (m)	2,7	2,7	3,3	3,3	4,3	4,3
Concrete width (m)	2,4	2,4	3,0	3,0	4,0	4,0
Height (m)	0,85	0,85	0,85	0,85	0,85	0,85
Weight (t)	10,9	13,6	12,3	15,4	16,4	20,6
Net capacity (kN/m ²)	4,6	4,6	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0
Freeboard (m)	0,46	0,46	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50
Strength of joint (kN)	2x322	2x322	2x322	2x322	2x322	2x322
Joint gap (mm)	35	35	35	35	35	35

Exact unit weight and freeboard are subject to detailed specification of the unit, equipment and mooring methods.

Marinetek operates a policy of continuous development and reserves the right to change specifications without notice.

Revision date: 15.01.2008

MARINETEK GROUP

Vattuniemenkatu 3
FI-00210 Helsinki, Finland
WEB www.marinetek.net

TEL. +358 (0)9 682 4100
FAX +358 (0)9 682 41030
EMAIL info@marinetek.net

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