

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

ERA Reference no.:	EA/00024/22
PA Reference no.:	PA/08985/21
Project Title:	Proposed excavation and construction of four levels of underground parking, proposed construction of showroom [Class 4B] at ground and first floor levels, proposed construction of offices [Class 4A] at second, third and set-back fourth floor levels. Proposed signage on facades.
Location:	Vacant Plot, Mriehel, Triq l-Intornjatur, Qormi
Screening date:	27/09/2022

I. BACKGROUND

1. Outline of Proposal

1.1 The proposal involves the demolition of the existing walls, excavation of site and construction of a five-storey commercial block with four basement levels for parking. The commercial block would be comprised of a showroom (Level 0-1) and open plan offices (Level 2-4) as shown in Figures 1-2.

1.2 The proposed development has a total gross floor area (GFA) of 23,341.78 m² as shown in Table 1. The proposed basement levels would provide 185 parking spaces and 12 bicycle racks, as illustrated in Figure 3. Access to the car park would be via Triq L-Intornjatur.

1.3 The total duration of the works is estimated at 24 months, divided as follows:

- Demolition and excavation – 3 months;
- Construction – 6 months; and
- Finishing – 15 months.

Table 1: Gross floor areas of the proposed development (Source: PDS dated August 2022)

Level	Use	Gross Floor Area (m ²)
Level -4	Car Parking	2,417.13
Level -3	Car Parking	2,359.48
Level -2	Car Parking	2,389.91
Level -1	Car Parking	2,389.91
Level 0	Showroom	2,079.02
	Offices	226.63
Level 1	Showroom	2,366.78
Level 2	Offices	2,366.78
Level 3	Offices	2,366.78
Level 4	Offices	2,366.78
Roof	Services	2,012.58
Total		23,341.79

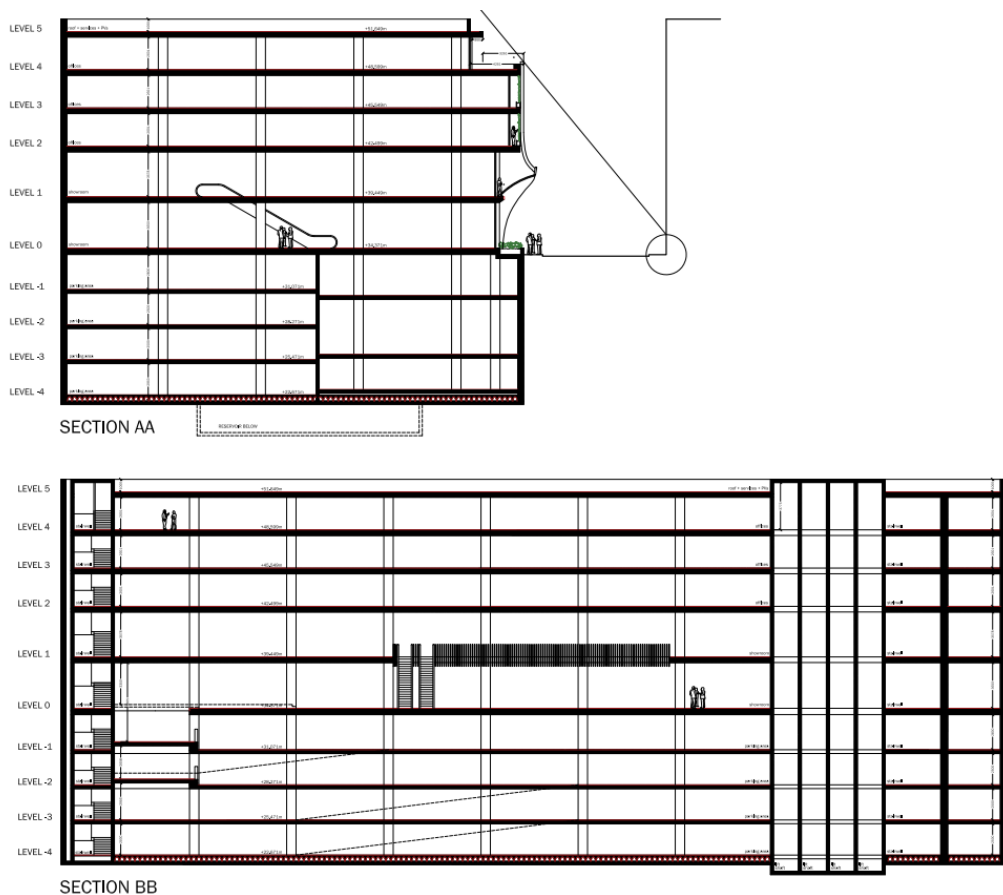


Figure 1: Proposed sections (Source: PDS dated August 2022)

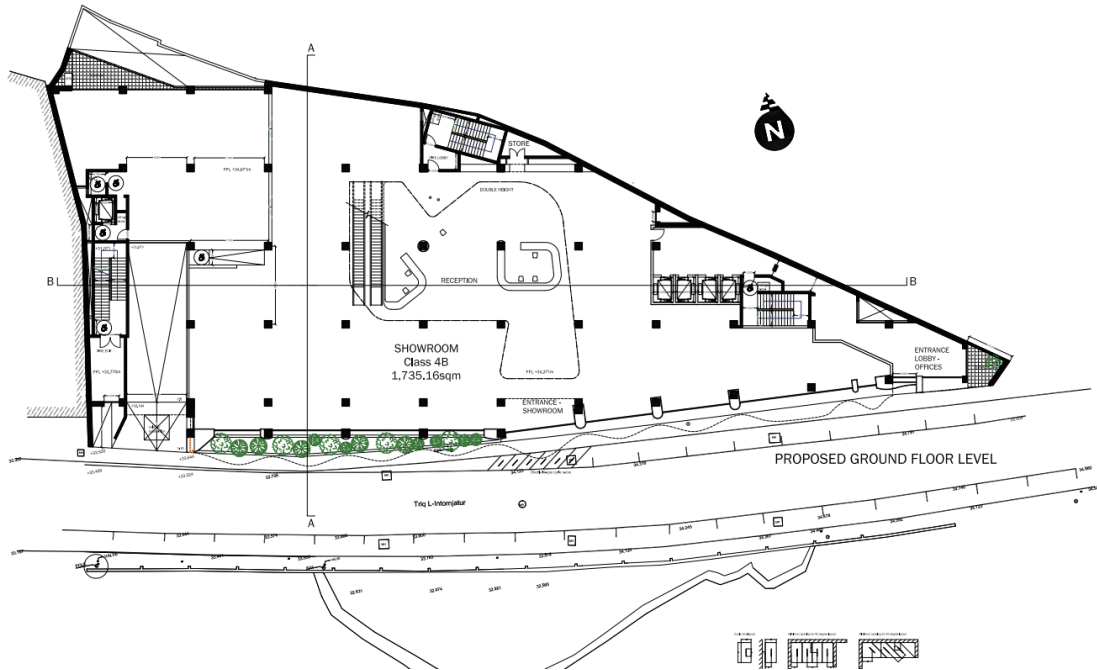


Figure 2: Proposed ground floor (Source: PDS dated August 2022)

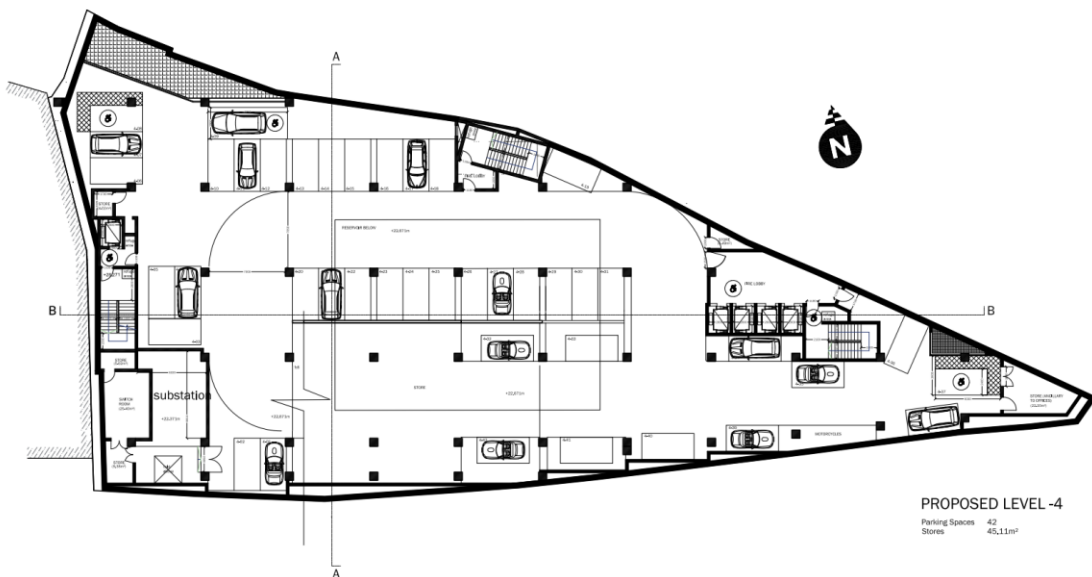


Figure 3: Proposed basement level -4 (Source: PDS dated August 2022)

2. Site context

2.1 The site (Figures 4-7) is situated along Triq l-Intornjatur, within the Mriehel Enterprise Hub at Hal Qormi. The site has an area of 2,453 m² and is currently an agricultural field. In addition to the various commercial and industrial facilities present within the Mriehel Enterprise Hub, the surrounding area also features agricultural land immediately adjacent to the site (3 small agricultural plots) and to the South and West (on the opposite side of the Mriehel Bypass), and the residential areas of Santa Venera and Hal Qormi to the East and Southeast of the site respectively.

2.2 The site is currently designated for commercial development as per Policy CG14 and the BKM2 Mriehel Industrial Area Policy Map of the Central Malta Local Plan, 2006 (CMLP).



Figure 4: Aerial orthophoto showing the location of the site (in blue) and its surroundings
(Source: PA Geoserver, 2018)



Figure 5: Close-up aerial orthophoto showing the site extent of the proposal (Source: PA Geoserver, 2018)

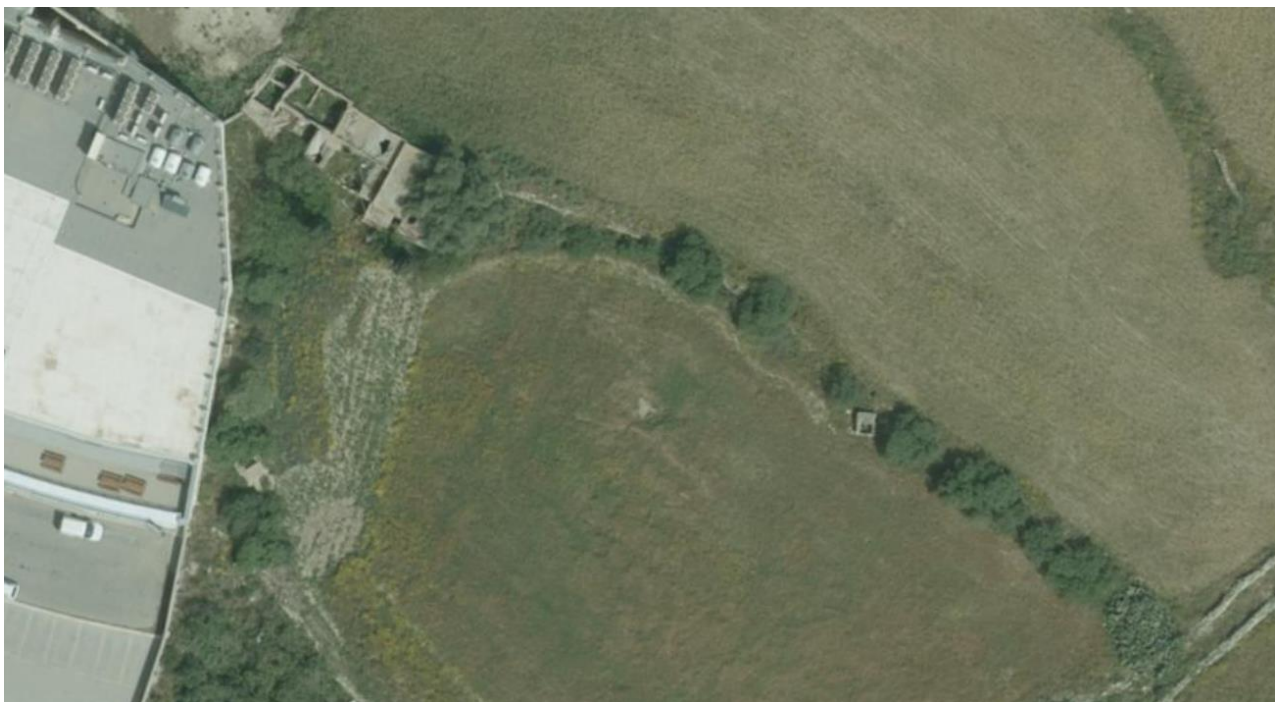


Figure 6: Zoomed aerial ortho-photo showing the current use on site (Source: PA Geoserver, 2018)



Figure 7: Photo taken from site showing site area (Source: PDS dated August 2022)

3. Case history

3.1 This site has been previously subject to the following Planning Control and Planning Applications:

- PC/00062/07: To amend Policies CG14, BK04, QO04 and SV01, and Maps BKM2 and QOM1 of the Central Malta Local Plan, and to amend Policy SMZG01 and Map ZG2 of the South Malta Local Plan, such that the development of the Uses that are indicated on the Application Form and on the Proposals Maps of this application may be allowed subject to conditions in those areas as indicated on the same Proposals Maps. – Approved;
- PA/07465/96: Proposed construction of showrooms, offices and garages used for private cars. – The request for reconsideration submitted on this application is invalid, Refused;

4. Screening Criteria

4.1 EIA Screening

(citations refer to S.L. 549.46, except where otherwise specified):

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46), notably in terms of the following Category II criteria in Schedule I:

- Section 7.1.2.1 (iii) Projects which have: a gross floor area of 10,000m² or more for commercial use, including shops, shopping centres, offices or other business.

5. Documents used for screening

- EIA screening document for PA/08985/21, refer to E-apps PA/08985/21/58a;
- Project Description Statement (PDS), which was referred directly to ERA on 31st August 2022;
- The Planning Authority Mapserver; and
- Central Malta Local Plan, 2006.

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

6. Assessment of Impacts and Ancillary Considerations

(Screening in terms of Schedule III of the EIA Regulations, S.L. 549.46)

Land use

6.1 The site is currently agricultural land and will change to a commercial block consisting of one large block with five storeys above ground and four basement levels. As a result, the proposal will both change and intensify use on site. Although the development will result in the loss of agricultural land, the site lies within an industrial area and would be in line with the surrounding developments. In this regard, no significant impacts are envisaged in terms of land use.

Construction-phase impacts

6.2 The proposal is expected to generate dust, noise and vibrations during the construction phases, especially during excavation works. Such potential impacts are temporary and can be minimised at source as long as the requirements outlined in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09) are properly adhered to. Apart from using hoarding as a means to catch dust and debris, it is advised to integrate it also as a noise barrier to abate and reduce noise impacts during construction towards sensitive residential receptors.

6.3 In terms of waste generation, approx. 26,030 m³ of rock waste is envisaged to be generated during excavation works. Such waste generation is not considered significant as long as efforts are done to maximise the reuse of such material (on- or off-site) and subject that the waste is managed in accordance with the Waste Regulations (S.L. 549.63).

Operational-phase impacts

6.4 The proposed development will attract vehicular traffic towards the site, however the envisaged increase in traffic is not considered to be significant from an air quality and noise perspective, when noting the already existing traffic situation.

6.5 Any operational waste generation will consist of common municipal waste, which is not considered to be significant as long as all the waste is managed in accordance with the afore-mentioned Waste Regulations (S.L. 549.63), and efforts are done to recycle and reduce waste generation at source.

6.6 In terms of sustainability and energy use, ERA requires that the design of the development takes into consideration sustainable measures, such as the following:

- Installation of Building Applied Photovoltaics (BAPVs) or any other renewable energy installations on the roofs of the proposed buildings, and on any other available surfaces;
- Provision of skylights and large apertures, to provide additional natural light;

- Green walls to provide additional shading thereby reducing solar heat gain as well as improving air quality by serving as a green area;
- Use of double/triple-glazed apertures and exterior facade/aperture shading, to reduce solar heat gain; and
- Ventilated cladding system and efficient air conditioning systems.

These measures are also in line with 'Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050' objective to transition towards low-carbon energy.

6.7 The ERA also promotes the local application of EU projects such as the E2STORMED project which deals with the challenge of capturing and reusing storm-water runoff before it flows as surface water, by exploring Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), with the end 18 goal of increasing energy efficiency. The information document published by ERA, 'Investing in the Multi-Functionality of Green Infrastructure (GI)' lists many other sustainable measures and projects. In this regard, it is highly recommended to adopt any relevant sustainable measures to the project.

7 Permitting Requirements

The permit holder shall submit an application for an Environmental Permit to ERA. Application forms can be found on <https://eris.eraportal.org.mt/>.

III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

The above screening concluded that the environmental impacts of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant, and no further assessment in terms of Regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46) is required as long as various preventive and/or mitigation measures are duly incorporated into the mainstream development consent mechanism. ERA does not object to the proposal from an environmental point of view, and EIA screening (Annex I) has concluded that the environmental impacts of the proposal are unlikely to be significant.

The conditions annexed with this document (Annex II) are duly included as an approved document.

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.