

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

ERA Reference no.: EA/00012/24

PA Reference no.: PA/0452/23

Project Title: Construction of underground basement parking, Showroom at ground floor and Offices Class 4A at upper levels with a different layout from that approved in permission PA/1017/09. Changes include addition of one basement level for parking and a receded level for Office use

Location: Site at Vacant Land, Triq I-Imdina, Zebbug

Screening date: April 2024

I. BACKGROUND

1. Outline of Proposal

- 1.1 This proposal seeks to develop a vacant site (figure 1) with a site area of c. 1,779m² and a gross floor area of the 15,336 m² consisting of an underground basement parking, a showroom at ground floor and three level of offices with a different layout from that approved in permission PA/1017/09. The roof of the proposed development will be utilised for PV panels.
- 1.2 It should be noted that the excavations proposed in this application were already carried out as approved in PA/1017/09. The underground car park will be spread on four basement levels and will accommodate 204 car parking spaces, which include eight accessible-for-all car parking spaces.
- 1.3 The car park exit and the un/loading bay will front a new schemed road that runs parallel to Triq I-Imdina. The PDS notes that this schemed road has not been constructed to date. It will extend Sqaq tal-Ħlas, creating a link between Sqaq Qenċ and Triq Tal-Ħlas.
- 1.4 The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for the proposed development has been calculated to generate 471 vehicles.



Figure 1 – Location of the site (Source: PA Geoserver)

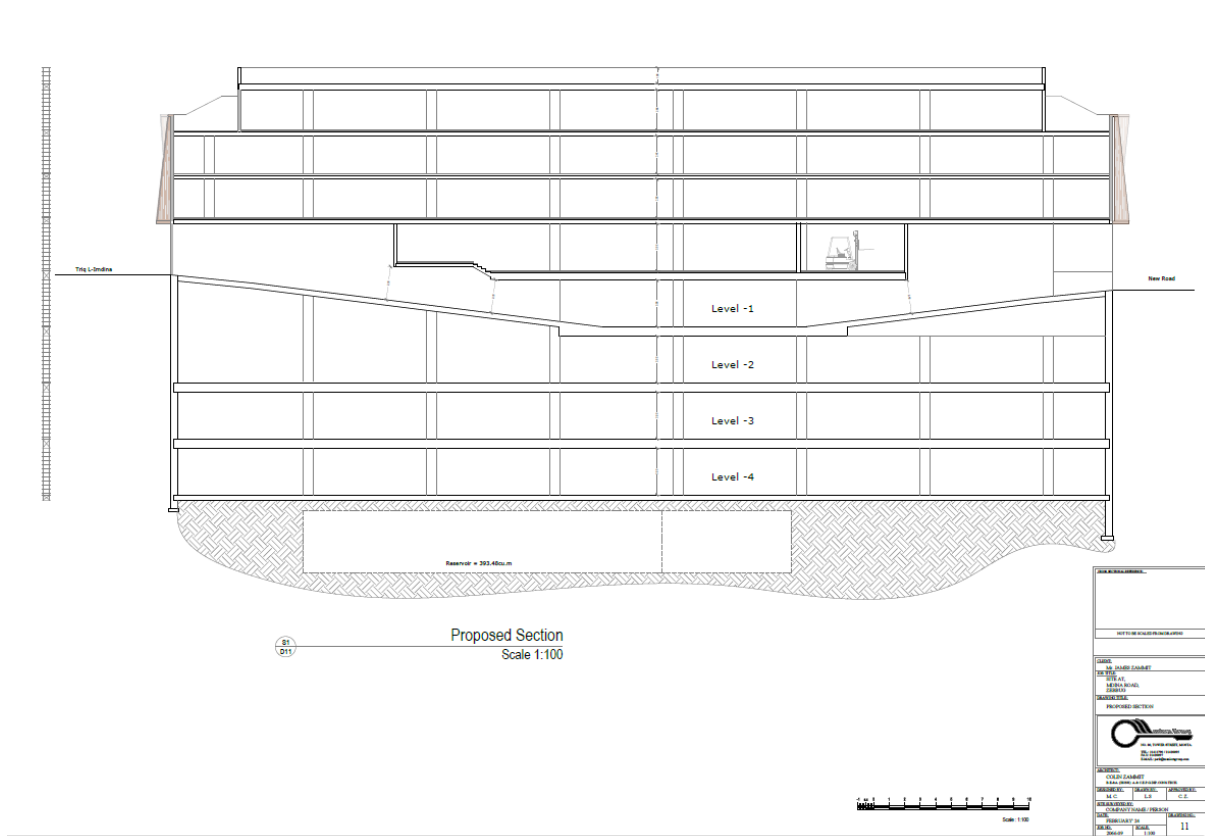


Figure 2: Proposed section (Source: E-Application PA/00452/23/46k)

2. Site context

- 2.1 The proposal is located in a vacant site, which has been already excavated as per para 1.2 and is currently occupied by a variety of trees and shrubs located on Triq l-Imdina. The PDS states that even though a formal tree survey has not been conducted, there is some overgrown vegetation on site that shares characteristics consistent with *Prunus* spp., *Ficus* spp., and *Arecaceae* spp. The vegetation currently present on site will be removed by the applicant before commencement of works.
- 2.2 The proposal is located within an Area of Containment as per the South Malta Local Plan, outside the limits of development of Ħaż-Żebbuġ. The area next to the south boundary of the site is identified as a 'residential' area (POLICIES SMHO 02 – SMSE 04) and the Ħal-Mula Mixed-use Area is specifically zoned for “*retail uses, including showrooms and supermarkets, offices, food and drink outlets, assembly and leisure uses, and industrial uses and warehousing*” (POLICY SMZG 01).
- 2.3 The site is underlain by Lower Globigerina Limestone formation, composed of weak to medium-strong, medium- to very thickly-bedded, cream to yellow wackestone limestones. The proposed development is located on the Malta Mean Sea Level Aquifer (MT0001) and lies outside the 300 m buffer zone of the public groundwater protection zone.
- 2.4 The site is located circa 200 meters from the Zebbug UCA and circa 60 meters from Bieb de Rohan, which is a Grade I scheduled property (G.N. 1082/09). There is a way-side chapel to the east of the site on Triq l-Imdina which is not scheduled.

3. Relevant Site history

3.1 Planning Control:

- PC/00054/10: To establish the land use zoning, the building height limitations, the road alignments and other relevant planning parameters for the Area of Containment in line with the requirements of Policy SMCM 05 (Areas of Containment) of the South Malta Local Plan (2006). Site at 'Ta' L-Imagħzel', Triq l-Imdina, Zebbug, Malta. Permit was granted.
- PC/00018/15: Proposed link road between Sqaq Tal-Hlas and Sqaq Il-Qenc and elimination of planned turning space at the end of Sqaq Tal-Hlas. Site is between Sqaq Tal-Hlas and Sqaq Il-Qenc, Zebbug, Malta. Permit was granted.

3.2 Planning Applications:

- PA/07906/20: Construction of 4 basement levels of parking spaces, 2 Class 4A offices and 2 showrooms at Ground Floor Level, 2 showrooms at First Floor Level, 1 Class 4A office at Second Floor Level and 1 Class 4A office at Third Floor Level. Site at, Triq l-Imdina, Zebbug. Status: This screening request has been withdrawn.
- PA/01017/09: Amended application PA5243/95, PA1442/98 (renewal) and PA2592/03. To carry out internal and external alterations to approved development and addition of intermediate level. Site at, Triq l-Imdina, Zebbug (Malta). This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.
- PA/02592/03: Application for an additional basement and internal and external alterations to previous permit No. 1442/98. Site at, Triq l-Imdina, Zebbug (Malta). The request for reconsideration has been granted overturning the original decision.
- PA/01442/98: To erect basement parking, ground floor showroom and first floor offices. (Renewal of PA 5243/95). This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission. PA/05243/95: To erect basement parking, ground floor showroom and first floor offices. Site at, Triq l-Imdina, Zebbug (Malta). This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.

3.3 Stop and Enforcement Notice:

- EC/01370/96: Erection of a room without permit. Site at Triq L-Imdina, Zebbug (Malta). Illegalities were removed.
- EC/00251/03 Excavations without permit. Site at, Triq L-Imdina, Zebbug (Malta). Permission was granted to sanction illegalities.
- EC/00551/09: Derelict vehicle left on site. Site at, Triq L-Imdina, Zebbug (Malta). Case is still active.

3.4 Dangerous Structures

- DS/00168/08: Request for removal of danger. Site at, Triq I-Imdina, Zebbug, Malta. Application was accepted.

4. Screening Criteria

4.1 EIA Screening

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

The proposed development falls under the scope of Schedule I Category II Section 7.1.2.1 (iii), involving projects which have a gross floor area of 10,000m² or more for commercial use, including shops, shopping centres, offices or other business, of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46). Therefore, the proposal is screened in terms of the EIA Regulations.

5. Documents used for screening

The following documents were used for the assessment:

- a. Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 27/02/2024 (PA/452/24/71a);

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, landscape and visual amenity

- 6.1 The site is located outside development zone within an Area of Containment, where other commercial outlets are located. The development will bring a change in land use from a vacant plot to an urban type development. When noting the location of the site, its position within an Area of Containment, and its site history, no significant environmental impacts are envisaged.

Construction Phase Impacts

- 6.2 Being a vacant site, no demolition works are required. The proposal will generate minimal quantities of excavation material and dust in view that the site has already been mostly excavated in line with preapproved permit PA/1017/09. The said temporary and localised impacts can be minimised at source in line with the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09).
- 6.3 Concrete and steel reinforcement will be utilised during the construction phase together with other material during the design stage.

- 6.4 The closest noise sensitive receptors (including residential dwellings and a restaurant) are located circa 50m away. The construction noise emerging from the site will be masked by the busy traffic along Triq l-Imdina, Zebbug, located in front of the proposed site.
- 6.5 In view of the above, the environmental impacts vis a vis excavation, air quality and traffic, during construction, are not significant.

Operation Phase Impacts

- 6.6 Common municipal waste which will be generated during operations is not considered significant as long as all the waste is managed in accordance with the Waste Management Regulations (S.L. 549.63), and efforts are done to recycle and reduce waste generation at source.
- 6.7 The proposal will generate an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 471 vehicles, therefore no significant impacts on air quality are expected.
- 6.8 From a traffic operational point, when considering the hourly peak proposed of vehicles, it is unlikely that they will generate doubling of traffic, thus no further assessment is required.

Energy and Water Use (recommendations)

- 6.9 The ERA recommends that to mitigate impacts on resource use during operation, the design of the development should take into consideration sustainable measures such as:
- Skylights and large apertures, to provide additional natural light;
 - Roof gardens and green walls, to provide additional shading as well as improving air quality by serving as a green area;
 - Double/Triple-glazed apertures and exterior facade/aperture shading; and
 - Ventilated cladding system and efficient air conditioning systems.

III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

Following screening of this proposal, ERA concludes that the impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA, in accordance with Regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46).

ERA conditions in Annex II are to be included as part of the development permit.

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.