

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

Appropriate Assessment

Screening according to S.L. 549.44

ERA Reference no.:	EA/00019/25
PA Reference no.:	PA/07438/24
Project Title:	The conversion of an existing approved disused fireworks factory into a proposed olive oil production including ancillary stores, agricultural stores and a small ancillary retail shop, and planting of new trees.
Location:	Site at, Triq Panoramika, Dingli
Screening date:	August 2025

I. BACKGROUND

1. Outline of Proposal

The project entails the conversion of the former existing fireworks factory located Outside Development Zone to an olive oil production facility and ancillary stores, agricultural stores and retail shop. The proposal includes the planting of new trees.

The proposed works include the (refer to Figures 1-5):

- removal of existing debris from the collapsed road level room and from the collapsed passageway;
- reconstruction of the room (i.e. retail shop) at road level;
- reconstruction of dry rubble wall and four course low limestone wall at road level;
- use of crazy flagstone paving for parking area and area in front of retail shop;
- construction of two underground cesspit with bowser extraction;
- removal of existing canopy;
- construction of external passage with cement and crazy flagstone paving;
- construction of a timber trellis over external passage;
- alterations to internal walls in room 1 and convert into staff kitchen, staff room, store, bathroom and staff changing room;
- alterations to internal and external walls in rooms 2 to 10 and conversion into specialised rooms for olive pressing. The external walls are to be constructed in limestone;
- removal of rooms 11 and 12 and reinstatement of vegetation;
- removal of internal walls between room 13 and 14, and convert into agricultural store and garbage disposal area; and
- conversion of room 1 into a control room and creating an un/loading area to the east of the site.

The site covers an area of approximately 12,620m². The existing buildings have a cumulative footprint and Gross Floor Area (GFA) of approximately 490 m², whereas the proposed structures have a GFA of 475 m². The parking area is approximately 113 m². No changes are envisaged to the footprint or to the building heights.

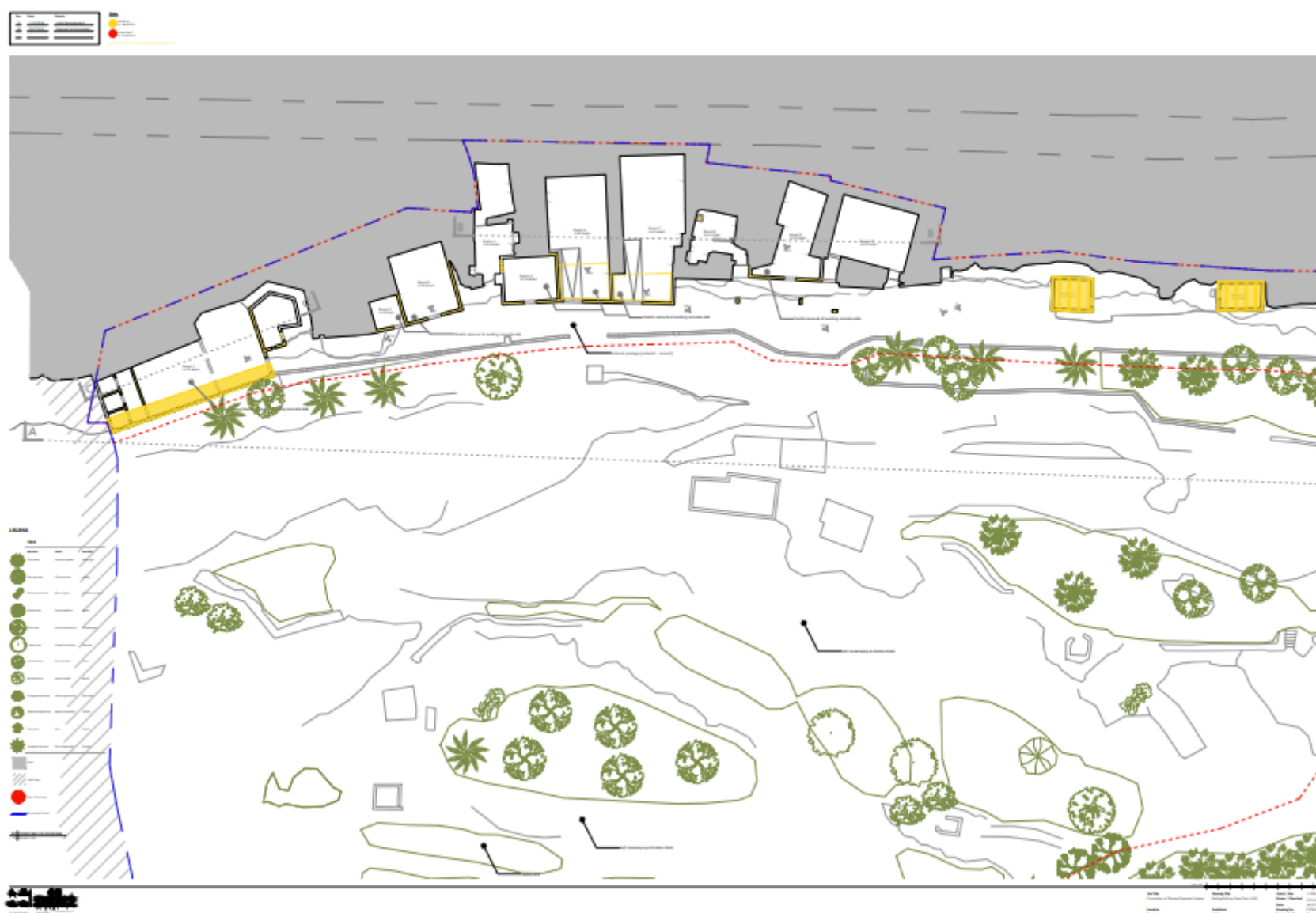


Figure 1: Existing Built-up (1of2) (Source: PA/07438/24/76b)

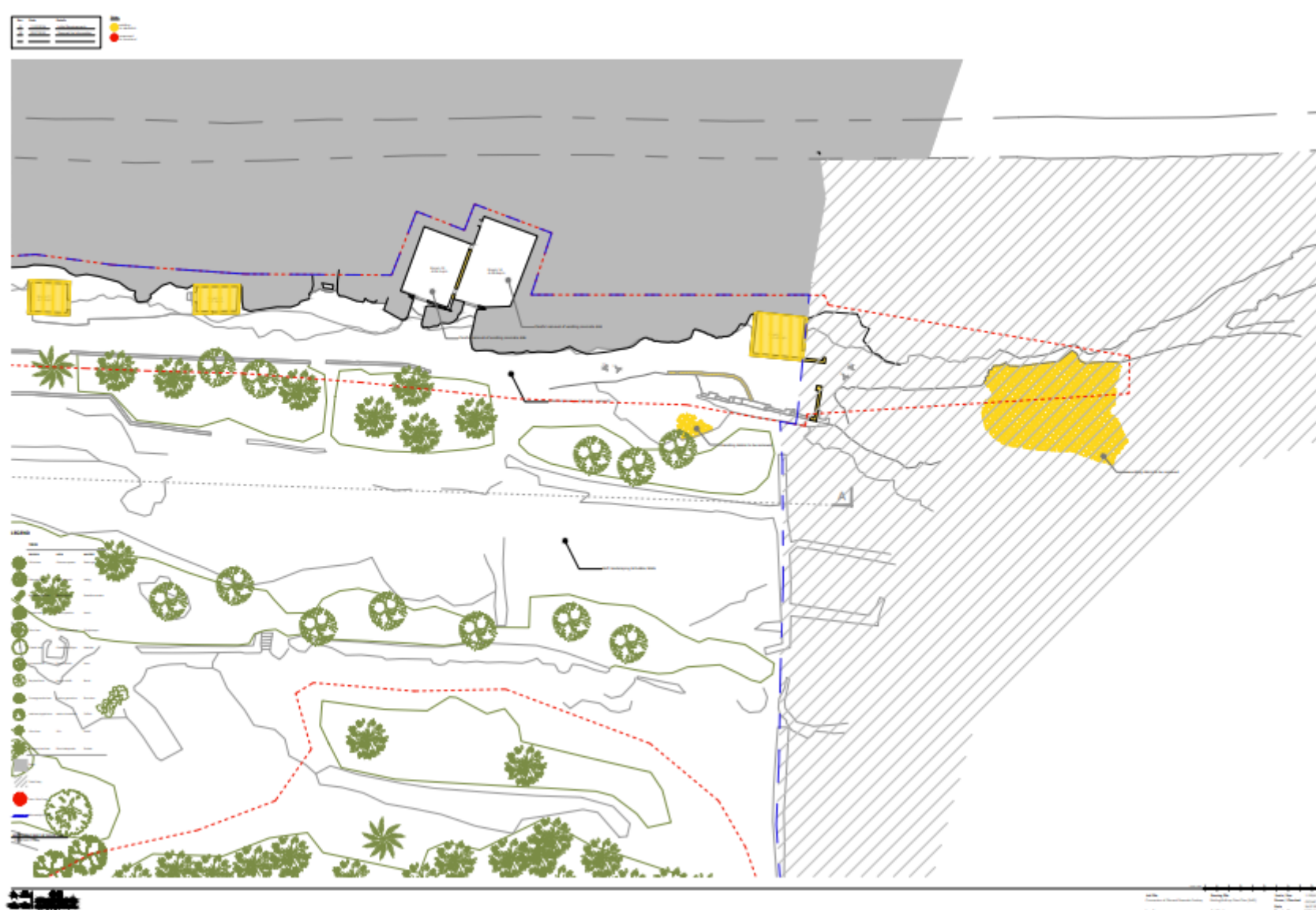


Figure 2: Existing Built-up (2of2) (Source: PA/07438/24/76c)

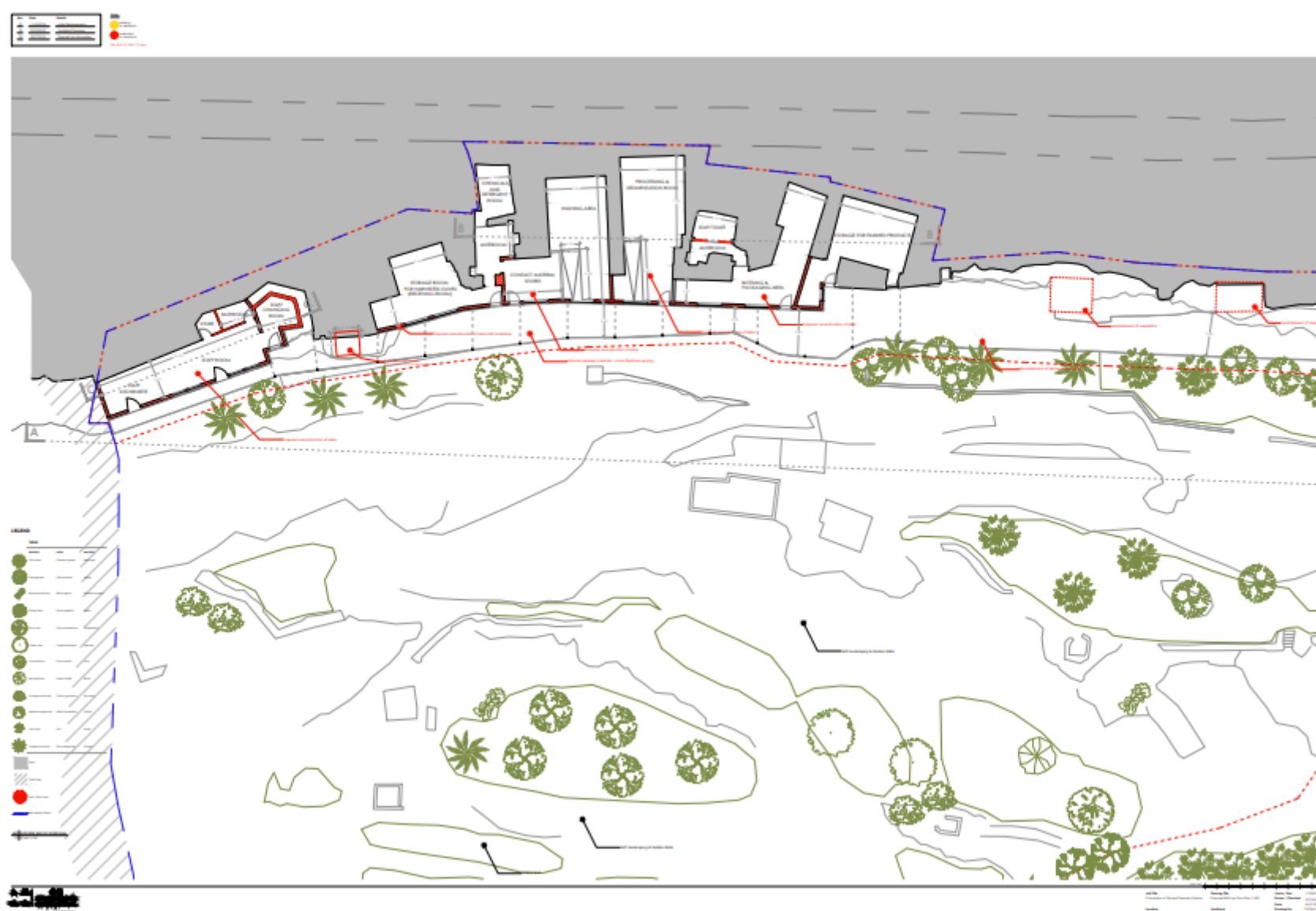


Figure 3: Proposed built-up (1of2) (Source: PA/07438/24/76d)

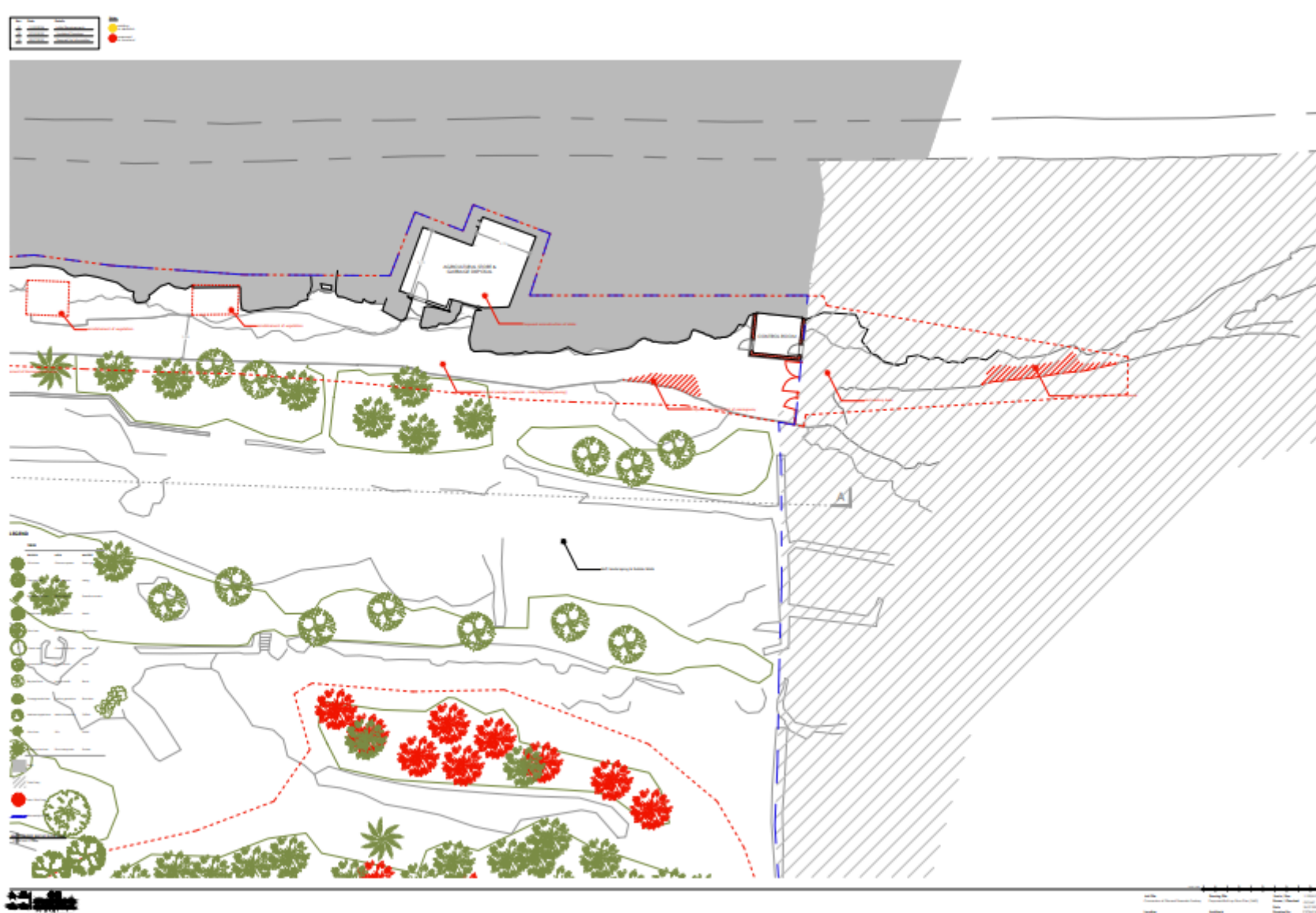


Figure 4: Proposed built-up (2of2) (Source: PA/07438/24/76e)



Figure 5: Proposed block plan (Source: PA/07438/24/76i)

2. Site context

The site is in an area known as Rdum tal-Ifhar, off Triq Panoramika in Dingli, West to Dingli. Access to the site is through a public vehicular side road branching off from Triq Panoramika. There is currently a right of way through the site, serving as access to the rural land to the north. The applicant intends to retain this right of way, which runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

The former fireworks factory, including its ancillary facilities, is all nestled within the cliff face overlooking a stretch of terraced agricultural land that spans approximately 9,000m² that are part arable, part not.

The surrounding land uses are rural and dominated by agriculture and natural areas. Tree Protection Area known as Ta' Baldu / L-Inħawi ta' Wied Ħażrun (limiti tar-Rabat) (G.N. 473 of 2011) is located circa 388m to the North East of the site. The site also lies within as an Area of High Landscape Value (Diversi Rdumijiet) and a Level 2 Area of Ecological Importance known as Irdumijiet Ta' Madwar il-Kosta miċ-Ċirkewwa sa Bengħisa (GN 400 of 1996).

The site is also located within the terrestrial Special Area of Conservation (SAC) MT0000024 known as Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla taċ-Ċirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa; and terrestrial Special Protection Area (SPA) MT0000032 known as Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ras il-Pellegrin sax-Xaqqa. The site also lies in close proximity to the Marine Special Area of Conservation: MT0000101 known as Żona fil-Baħar bejn Rdum Majjiesa u Għar Lapsi and Marine Special Protection Area: MT0000111 known as Żona fil-Baħar tal-Lbiċ designated under Government Notice No. 1379 of 2016, in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2016 (S.L. 549.44).

Natural and cultural heritage designations in the vicinity include: (i) structural remains (FHVL153) located 30m to the north of the site, (ii) a Statue of St Paul located approximately 630m to the east of the site; and (iii) Simblija medieval settlement located 630m North of the site.

The site is located on top of Upper Coralline Limestone and Blue Clay, resulting in the site being partly located on the Malta Mean Sea Level Aquifer and on the edge of the Rabat-Dingli perched aquifer.

3. Case history

There are no previously planning applications / enforcement notices / DNOs on site.

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: Sections 12.4.2.1 (Manufacturing of vegetable or animal oils and fats) and 12.4.2.2 (Packing or canning of animal or vegetable products). Therefore, the proposal was also screened in terms of the EIA Regulations.

4.2 Appropriate Assessment Screening

(citations refer to S.L. 549.44, except where otherwise specified):

In view of the location of the proposal within a terrestrial SAC and a terrestrial SPA, and in close proximity of a Marine SAC and Marine SPA designated under Government Notice No. 1379 of 2016, in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2016 (S.L. 549.44), as outlined in Section 2 above, the proposal has been screened in terms of Regulation 19 of S.L. 549.44.

5. Documents used for screening

- a. Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 17/07/2025 (PA/07438/24/68b)
- b. Works Method Statement, referred to ERA on 17/07/2025 (PA/07438/24/68a)

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

6. Screening in terms of the EIA Regulation

General considerations

- 6.1 The proposal involves the conversion of an existing disused fireworks factory into an olive oil production facility including ancillary stores, agricultural stores and a small retail shop. The proposed works and interventions as described in section 1 above, will not extend beyond the site of the existing fireworks factory.
- 6.2 The adjoining land will be used for the cultivation of olive trees, most of which are already present on site. The proposal also entails the planting of 15 new olive trees.
- 6.3 The development will be centred around the design and height of the existing fireworks factory. In this regard, the proposed use of natural resources, such as limestone, crazy flagstone paving, natural timber apertures and structure and on noting the photomontages, the proposal is not expected to have a significant effect in terms of the visual amenity and the landscape character of the surrounding area, including the designated Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV).
- 6.4 The site lies on Upper Coralline Limestone and Blue Clay. Hydrologically, the site overlaps the Malta Mean Sea Level Aquifer and borders the Rabat-Dingli perched aquifer—the largest of its kind in Malta—formed by water retained in the limestone above the Blue Clay. The site is located outside the 300 m Groundwater Safeguard Protection Zone buffer.
- 6.5 Noting that the proposed works envisage minimal excavations, no significant impacts are expected from a geology and hydrology point of view.

Construction-phase effects

- 6.6 The site includes cliffs and extensive rocky areas, which are important habitats. While the proposed conversion entails some construction works, these will be limited to the existing built footprint. Thus no significant impacts are envisaged.
- 6.7 The clearing of debris and the excavation of the underground cesspit are expected to generate minimal and temporary dust, noise and waste. No significant impacts are envisaged as long as the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L.552.09) and the Waste Regulations (S.L.549.63) are adhered to.
- 6.8 All construction works are to be carried out utilising the existing steel structure that acts as a platform lift/winch which was previously used for the un/loading of explosive/materials to and from the firework factory. Once all construction work is finalised, the existing steel structure is to be dismantled and taken off-site to an authorised metal scrappage yard, as indicated in the PDS.
- 6.9 In view of the sensitive context and location, construction works related to the un/loading area and the passage way, are to be carried out in line with a Works Method Statement as approved

by the Environment and Resource Authority. The applicant is to engage a competent environmental monitor. The monitor shall design and implement a Works Method Statement programme, oversee on-site monitoring and alter authorities in case of environmental and/or geological discoveries/damages. Nonetheless, proper adherence to the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations is to take effect to minimise any effects at source.

Operational effects

- 6.10 Due to the limited scale of the proposed development, traffic generation to and from the site, is not expected to be significant from an air quality and noise perspective. Equipment/machinery are to be enclosed and should be kept within the built structure.
- 6.11 With regards to lighting, no external lighting is to be installed on site.
- 6.12 Any operational waste generation is to be handled in accordance with the Waste Regulations (S.L.549.63)

7. Screening in terms of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, S.L.549.44

- 7.1 The cliffs and extensive rocky area are designated as terrestrial and marine SPAs within the Natura 2000 framework and offer an ideal habitat for sea-bird populations including *Calonectris diomedea*, *Puffinus yelkouan* and *Hydrobates pelagicus*.
- 7.2 The terrestrial area is also protected through a SAC, habitat for protected species including *Crepis pusilla* (flowering plant), *Larus cachinnans* (avian), *Myotis blythii* and *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (bats). The marine SAC is habitat for the *Gibbula nivosa* (marine snail).
- 7.3 Effective mitigation during works is required to eliminate any noise and light effects on avian and bat species. Regarding the *Crepis pusilla*, works will be limited to the existing built footprint, thus no significant impact is expected. With regards to the *Gibbula nivosa*, no impacts are envisaged given the nature and location of the proposal.
- 7.4 The proposed excavation, construction and operations are not expected to have any significant impacts on the integrity of the habitats, species and the Natura 2000 site as a whole.

III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

It is being concluded that the environmental impacts of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant. No further assessment in terms of Regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations and Regulation 19 of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations are required. ERA does not object to the proposal from an environmental point of view, subject to the conditions in Annex II.

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.