

PROJECT DESCRIPTION REPORT

SAN MARKU FARM

December 2025



Tracking Number: 300175

Location: Farm/Land, Triq is-Salini/Triq ir-Ramla, Bahar ic-Caghaq, Naxxar

Proposal: To demolish existing farm and to construct an Agritourism complex including ancillary facilities, works to include rehabilitation of rubble walls and landscaping

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Details of the person wishing to carry out the development.....	3
1.2 A brief description of the project and its general objectives.....	3
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	4
2.1 The Site	4
2.2 Existing agricultural, commercial, and land uses	5
2.3 Existing Structures	7
2.4 Description of the proposed development and uses	10
2.5 Community initiatives	12
2.6 Summary of general objectives	13
3. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED WORKS	14
4. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY AND IMPACT ASSESMENT	20
5. MITIGATION PROPOSALS - SUMMARY	26

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Details of the person wishing to carry out the development

For this particular project, Mrs. Agnes Cardona is appointing an agricultural manager, Mr Kurt Gauci who will be running the operations of the Agritourism. His professional competencies include: sheep permit license, beekeeper license, poultry license. He is also registered as part-time farmer with jobs plus and has the agriculture related MCAST certificates and vrd documents.

1.2 A brief description of the project and its general objectives

Brief description

This Project Description Report outlines the *San Marku Farm* project proposal, providing justification for the development and outlining the potential impacts and benefits.

The proposal was granted a Lands Authority consent on the 31st of October 2024 to submit a Development Application.

The proposal: *'To demolish existing farm and to construct an Agritourism complex including ancillary facilities, works to include rehabilitation of rubble walls and landscaping works'* was submitted to the Planning Authority by Mrs. Agnes Cardona and it is currently being assigned the tracking number 300175. The project location is at Farm/Land, Triq is-Salini / Triq ir-Ramla, Bahar ic-Caghaq, Naxxar.

Objectives

The San Marku Farm complex is a vision to transform an unused land and farm into a multifunctional rural site that integrates productive agricultural operations with educational, experiential, and exclusive hospitality activities.

The objective of the project is to promote a model that combines productive farming with environmental regeneration, community participation, and experiential tourism. In parallel with its farming activities, San Marku Farm will undertake a nature regeneration program that includes the planting of indigenous tree species such as olive and carob trees. These initiatives aim to restore local biodiversity, enhance the ecological value of the area, and contribute to long-term landscape conservation.

A limited number of agritourism accommodation units will complement the farming and environmental components offering visitors an authentic rural experience.

The site will also provide opportunities for nature-based recreation, including animal petting, birdwatching in the surrounding habitats, thereby linking the agricultural, ecological, and tourism functions into a coherent and sustainable rural development model

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 The Site

The project site consists of an irregularly shaped parcel of land situated along the coastal road near Qalet Marku Bay in the locality of Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq, Naxxar. The land enjoys an extensive north-facing frontage of approximately 465 m along Triq is-Salini, offering unobstructed sea views, and a secondary frontage of roughly 48 m along Triq ir-Ramla.

Access to the site is directly from Triq is-Salini. The plot extends to a maximum depth of around 295 m and spans approximately 100 m at its widest point. The terrain gently rises to about 10 m above sea level. The total site area is 48.400 square meters of which approximately 48,200 of agricultural and natural land.

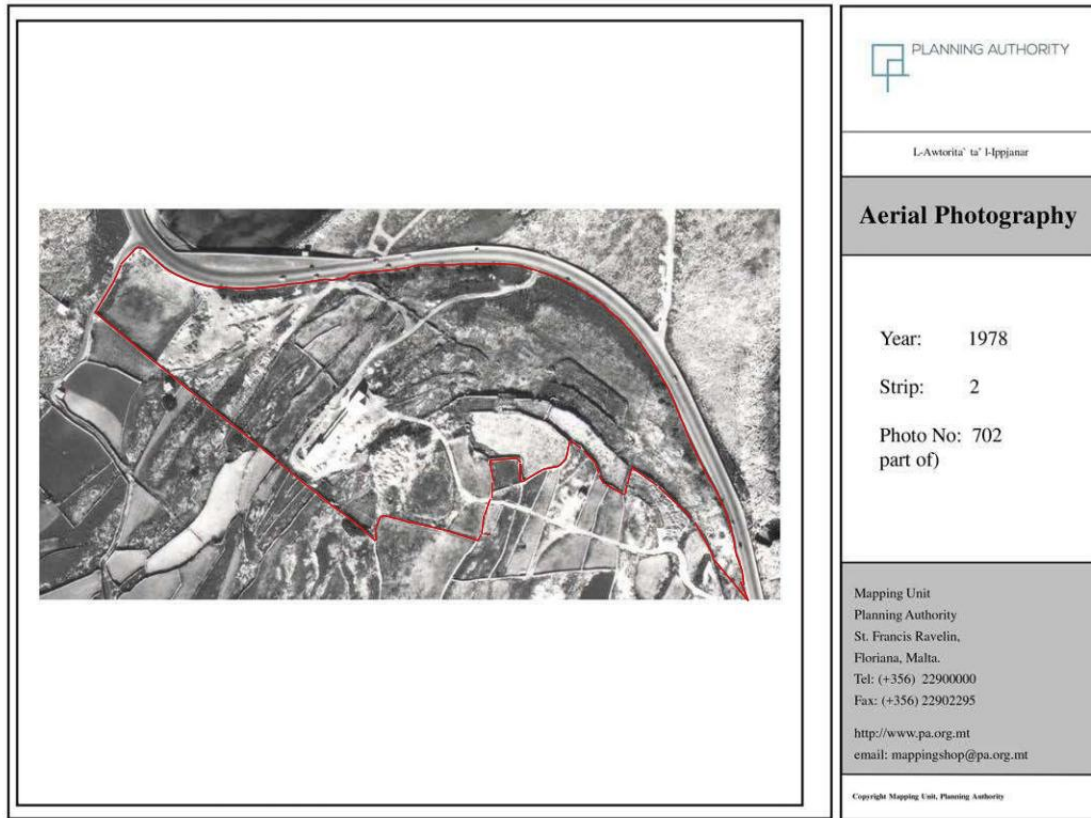
The holding lies roughly 270m outside the Development Zone and is predominantly surrounded by agricultural land. To the south-east, across the road, is the existing water/amusement park. The centre of Naxxar is located approximately 3 km away.

2.2 Existing agricultural, commercial, and land uses

The site is currently occupied by the remains of a former pig and poultry broiler farm, together with its ancillary structures. The construction and the access roads are clearly identifiable in the 1978 aerial imagery included below. The operation of the facility was originally established in 1988 through a lease agreement between the farmers and the Government.

The surrounding landscape comprises a mix of cultivated agricultural plots and natural garigue, as confirmed in the MapServer layers. Certain ecological and landscape features of interest are present within the site, and parts of the land were historically used for crop cultivation.

The site is located in proximity to the historic St Mark's Tower and D'Orbeau Battery, enhancing its recreational, cultural, and environmental value. Set within a predominantly rural, agricultural, and historic context—and benefiting from extensive sea and countryside views—the location offers a tranquil environment well-suited for the development of a rural holiday facility.



Picture 1: Aerial Photo 1978



Picture 2 and 3: Views from the upper part of the site

2.3 Existing Structures

The existing farm building occupies a central position on the site and consists of two separate, north-west-facing structures. Both are constructed in Maltese franka limestone and each measures approximately 70m in length and 9m in width. Additionally there are stables and other structures adjoining the main buildings, giving a total built footprint of around 1452 m².

The complex is accessed via a paved access road. The front portion of the building is arranged over two storeys, while the rear section—originally used as a piggery—comprises a single storey. Roof construction varies between cast in-situ reinforced concrete slabs and pre-stressed concrete beams with bricks.

In addition to the main farm complex, several small agricultural storage structures are dispersed throughout the surrounding fields, some of which are partially dilapidated. Existing rubble walls are present across the site and are to be retained and restored. A photographic survey, cross-referenced to the site plan, has been uploaded to the e-apps portal. A selection of general site photographs is provided below.



Picture 4: Google earth view



Picture 5:Google earth view



Picture 6:Access road



Picture 7:Facades facing the entrance



Picture 8:Back Elevation showing stables



Picture 9:Front Elevation



Picture 10: External area of pig farm



Picture 11 and 12:Indoor spaces

2.4 Description of the proposed development and uses

2.41 The Farm

Located on a site previously used for agricultural purposes, the project seeks to reactivate the land through the development of modern infrastructure suitable for contemporary, sustainable livestock operations. The design and operation of the farm will prioritize animal welfare, efficient resource use, and minimal environmental impact.

The approximately 48,000 m² site will remain largely undeveloped, landscaping, and farmland. This is an essential prerequisite for offering an authentic agritourism experience and respecting the rural environment. The built-up area within the project site is approximately 3% of the total area of the site, as it is presently framed by the farm.

The project will serve as a platform for showcasing both locally produced and innovative agricultural products, highlighting practices and technologies that support the transition toward sustainable farming. Its rural and coastal setting provides an ideal environment for the development and promotion of agri-based products and initiatives related to sustainable food production and rural entrepreneurship.

The farm will primarily host sheep, goats, chickens, and horses, each accommodated in dedicated areas designed for their upkeep and daily activities. The animals will also have access to outdoor spaces where they can be grazed under supervision.

The proposal also includes the introduction of several commercial components, such as a greengrocer, a butcher, and a cheese shop, together with ancillary facilities including cold stores for agricultural produce. In addition, facilities for olive harvesting and olive oil production are proposed. These commercial areas will be located adjacent to the farm so as to integrate all commercial aspects of the project in a coherent layout.

In addition, the project intends to promote:

- a. Cultivation of vegetables and seasonal crops (organic)
- b. Plantation of Olive trees for Oil Harvesting and Oil Production
- c. Plantation of fruit trees
- d. Beekeeping and production of honey

2.4.2 Agritourism Accommodation

The accommodation component of the San Marku Farm project is conceived as a small-scale, comfort-oriented facility integrated within an operational Maltese farming environment. The design aims to provide visitors with an immersive rural experience that combines proximity to active agricultural practices with the privacy and comfort expected in modern agritourism settings.

The development will comprise ten guest rooms, each equipped with private sanitary facilities. Shared amenities will include a rooftop pool and lounge area designed to complement the surrounding landscape and provide a space for relaxation within a natural setting. Extensive landscaping will be carried out around the proposed development to ensure that long distance views are conserved.

The architectural design and material palette will reflect the rural character of the area, using sustainable construction methods and finishes that harmonize with the existing environment.

The proposal includes the construction of tourism accommodation to form part of the farm will allow visitors to participate in the day to day running of the farm and participate in the harvesting of the fruits and vegetables grown in the estate as well as the caring of the animals.

In addition, the site's proximity to Qalet Marku provides an additional recreational and environmental asset, offering guests convenient pedestrian access to the coastal area while maintaining a strong connection to the rural landscape.

2.5 Community initiatives

Within the farm, designated zones will be reserved for community-oriented initiatives such as sustainable tree-planting, small-scale vegetable gardens, and educational workshops that promote awareness of sustainable agriculture and ecological restoration.

Guests and visitors will have the opportunity to observe, and where appropriate, participate in day-to-day farming operations under the supervision of the farm's operators. This participatory model is designed to foster a deeper understanding of sustainable farming practices and strengthen the cultural and educational dimension of the project.

In the longer term, San Marku Farm aims to establish a distinctive and sustainable identity rooted in responsible land management, environmental stewardship, and local rural heritage—contributing to Malta's broader objectives for agritourism development and rural regeneration.

In particular, visitors will be able to take advantage of a range of agritourism initiatives, including:

- Hands-on farming experience, both in agriculture and dairy farming, such as picking fruit, planting, beekeeping, milking sheep and rearing poultry.
- Participation in the traditional production of foodstuffs such as jam and cheese.
- Educational talks about farming, healthy living and the benefits of agriculture, aimed at both young people and the older generation.

- Culinary experiences where guests can enjoy an unforgettable experience
- Cook with the ingredients picked from the farm/local markets and learn how to cook traditional recipes.
- Relax and walk - visitors are welcome to relax on the farm, pet animals and enjoy walks in the stunning scenery of the area.
- Animal assisted therapy.
- Special events, such as family parties, themed events to promote local produce.
- Day events in Food tasting, Organic Food preservation and other related sessions.

2.6 Summary of general objectives

- To provide unique accommodation by creating a familiar, upmarket ambience combined with a personal touch.
- To create synergies with the other establishments owned by the same shareholders (mainly from the agricultural sector), thus enhancing the range of services and experiences that can be offered to guests;
- Offer high quality accommodation that is competitive and comparable with other accommodation in the same category to guarantee guests value for money;
- Develop the agritourism sector through specific investments in this segment aimed at developing a specific niche product;
- Increase the profitability of farming activity through the diversification of uses;
- Boosting the number of full-time employees in agriculture;
- Reversing the ever-increasing trend of land abandonment and the decline of agricultural activities in the Maltese Islands;

- Diversify traditional farming activities from pure primary production to secondary production (processing) and even tertiary production (services), as is the case in this application;
- The proposal ensures that the land remains under one ownership to avoid further fragmentation of agricultural land, which is one of the priority problems of the Maltese agricultural sector;
- Natural regeneration as a public common added value that can be enjoyed by the community;
- The site is perfectly located for the intended use. It offers impressive close-distance sea views and is in the middle of a network of roads leading to St'Pauls Bay and St'Julians.

3. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED WORKS

- **Masterplan description**

The Masterplan has been conceived to organise the available land around the proposed agricultural and tourism-related uses. Its central objective is to integrate all activities within a holistic framework that restores the natural habitat while providing a public amenity where visitors can enjoy the landscape and experience the farming environment.

The main entrance to the agritourism complex will be retained in its current location, with circulation improved through the introduction of a dedicated entry point (existing access) and a separate exit point. A lay-by will also be constructed within the site along the main coastal road to enhance safety and ensure that traffic flow remains

uninterrupted. A vehicular gate and a dedicated pedestrian entrance will be formed just off the main road access.

Approximately 13,000 m² of existing Garigue will be safeguarded and made accessible to the public by means of designated paths and controlled entry points. This area will be delineated from the remainder of the site to ensure its exclusive use as a public natural space.

The upper fields will be transformed into an olive grove containing around 100 olive trees, while all existing native trees within the area will be preserved.

The lower fields, accessed through a gate onto Triq ir-Ramla, will be developed as a fruit orchard, primarily consisting of citrus trees. Further upslope, as the terrain gently rises, fields will be allocated for crop cultivation and organic vegetable production, bordered by almond trees. A beaten-earth path will run across these agricultural areas and may also be used for supervised horse movement. The car park will be paved with grass-cretes to allow permeability and allow grass to grow.

The area between the vegetable plots and the building presents a steeper change in level. This zone will be planted with additional native trees and shrubs to soften and visually screen the proposed structures. The enhanced planting scheme will recreate the character of a Mediterranean woodland, offering shaded walking routes and a natural buffer around the agritourism complex.

In summary, the works on the land will primarily entail:

- Planting of new trees.
- Restoration and extension of existing rubble stone walls.
- Creation of a safe vehicular access with separate entry and exit points to ensure that traffic flow along the coastal road is not compromised, including the provision of a lay-by.
- Formation of a beaten-earth pathway linking the various areas of the site.
- Installation of gates and access points along the site boundary.



- **Dwelling description**

The proposed agritourism development will replace the existing dwelling, occupying approximately the same footprint and location. The complex is composed of two linear blocks constructed in Maltese limestone, designed to blend seamlessly with the surrounding rural landscape. The north-west-facing block will accommodate the guest facilities, while the rear block will house the animal quarters and associated operational areas.

A basement level is proposed beneath the building footprint to serve as ancillary space both for the farm and for the accommodation and restaurant. The kitchen will be located in the basement together with a store, both accessible through a lift and stairs. A water reservoir and pump room will be constructed to collect runoff from roofs and hard surfaces, providing a sustainable source of water for irrigation and general washing. Finally a store will be located underneath the farm served by lift and stairs and a machine room will be built underneath the vehicle garage.

The ground floor will be dedicated to farming activities and operational functions, including commercial spaces for the sale of vegetables, cheese, and other on-site products. A multipurpose hall will also be provided to host events, workshops, and educational activities.

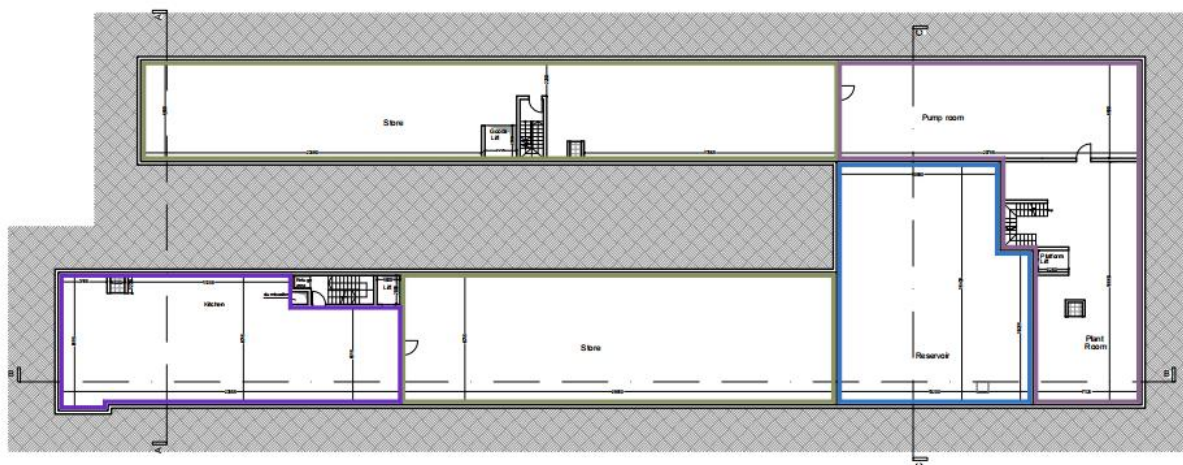
Between the front and rear blocks, a semi-open space—covered only by walkways—will allow visitors to view the animals and, in certain cases, interact with them under supervision.

The first floor of the front block will accommodate ten generously sized guest rooms, each with an en-suite bathroom. One of the rooms will be fully accessible. All rooms will enjoy private balconies facing north-west, offering unobstructed views towards the sea. A breakfast area and a bar, complete with a preparation zone, will further support the accommodation facilities on this level.

The rooftop of the front block will feature a landscaped garden, an entertainment area, and a rooftop bar. A pool will complement the facilities, providing a relaxing environment from which guests can enjoy panoramic views over the bay. The roofs of the rear block will be equipped with solar PV panels for on-site energy production, in addition to space allocated for building services.

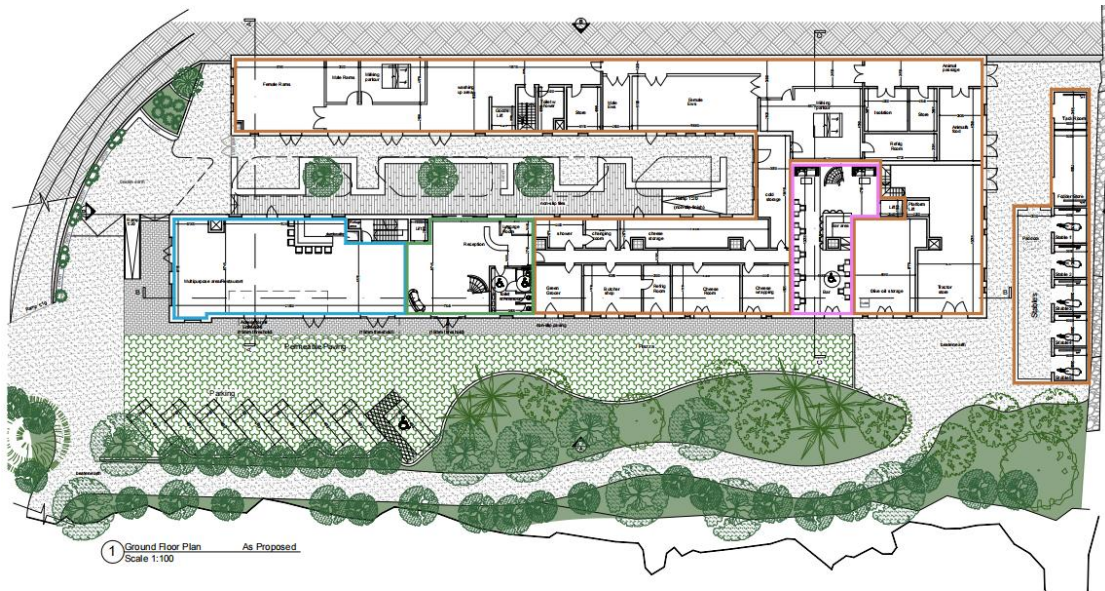
The building will incorporate advanced energy-saving systems and passive environmental strategies to ensure optimal indoor comfort. Bioclimatic measures include double masonry walls with insulated cavities, roof insulation, and a double-height internal space intended to enhance natural ventilation by drawing cooler ground-floor air upwards to dissipate heat.

Drawings highlighting the areas of use are here below attached.

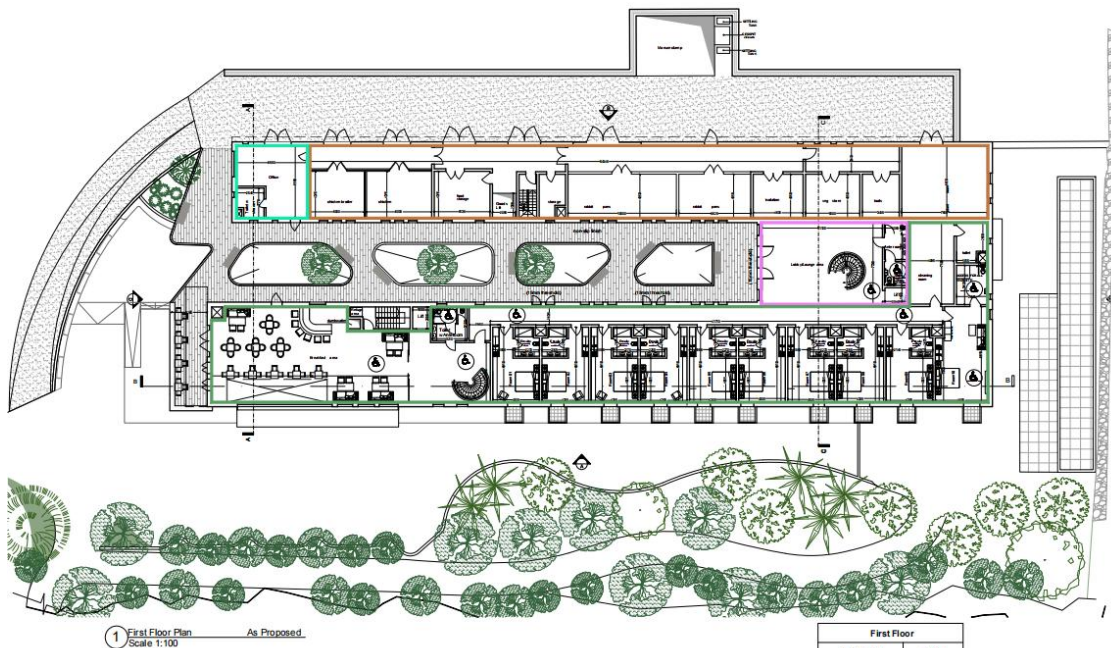


1 Basement Floor Plan As Proposed
Scale 1:100

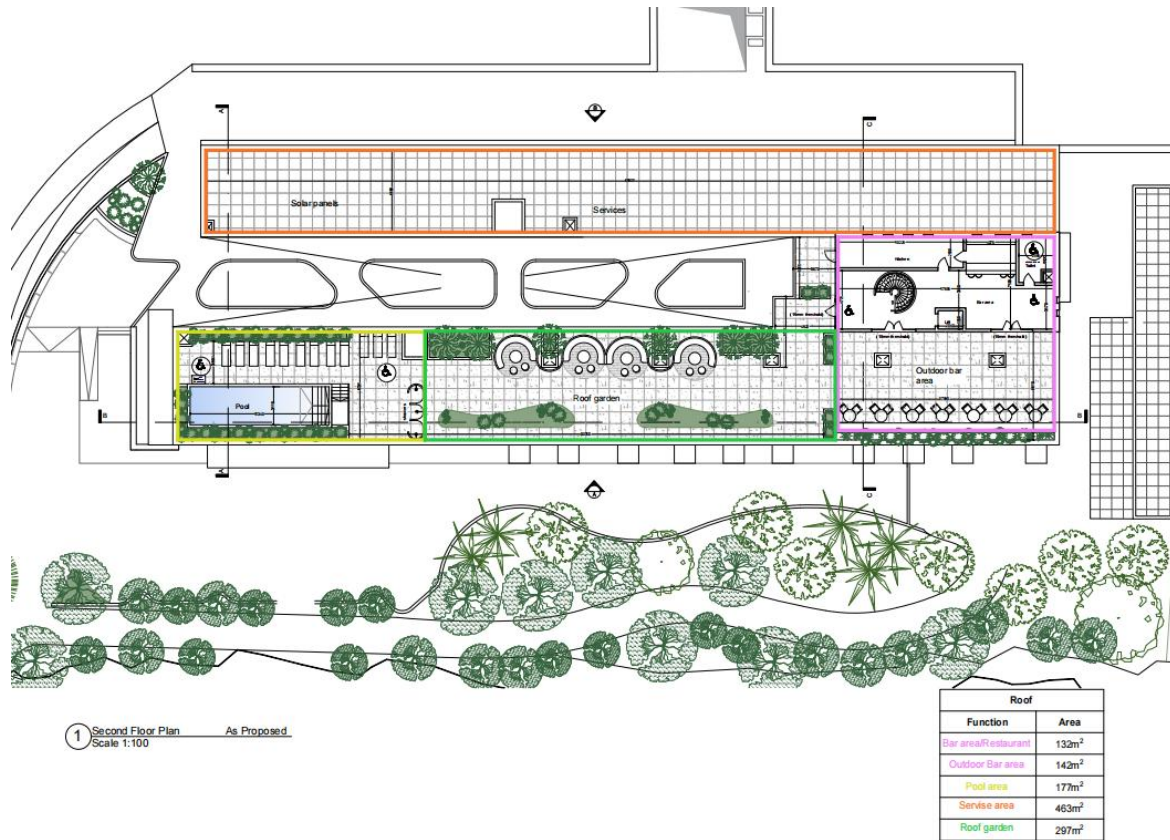
Ground Floor	
Function	Area
Store	890m ²
Servises	579m ²
Kitchen	190m ²
Reservoir	630m ³



Ground Floor	
Function	Area
Farm	890m ²
Bar area/restaurant	181m ²
Commercial	176m ²
Accommodation	97m ²



First Floor	
Function	Area
Farm	417m ²
Bar area/restaurant	284m ²
Accommodation	666m ²
Office	43m ²



4. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY AND IMPACT ASSESMENT

Buildings to be Demolished

The existing farm dwelling will be demolished to allow for the construction of the proposed agritourism complex, which will occupy approximately the same footprint and location. Demolition works will be carried out in compliance with all relevant health, safety, and environmental regulations.

Planting of trees and shrubs

New trees and shrubs will be planted across the site to screen the proposed development and reduce visual impacts from long-distance views. Olive trees will be

established in the upper fields, while citrus and other fruit trees will be planted in the lower fields. Native vegetation will be preserved wherever possible, and additional planting will recreate Mediterranean woodland in designated areas to enhance biodiversity and provide shaded walking areas for visitors.

Raw Materials, Energy Use, and Waste Generation

Approximately 1400 m² of rock will be excavated to accommodate the basement and underground water reservoirs. Recycled stones will be used for external walls wherever possible, and construction will rely on traditional building methods to minimize environmental impacts.

During operation, electricity will be supplied by Enemalta and supplemented by on-site renewable energy systems, including photovoltaic panels installed on the roofs of the rear block. Other energy sources include:

- Diesel-powered generators for emergency backup
- Bulk LPG storage to supply the food and beverage outlet

All fuels stored on site will comply with L.N. 53 of 2010. All systems within the residential and production areas will primarily operate using electricity.

Construction and operational waste will be collected, separated, and stored on site in designated areas. Waste will then be disposed of at approved facilities, recycled, or converted to compost. Sewerage waste will be directed to the existing WSC sewer network or treated on site for irrigation purposes. Grease interceptors will be installed for all food preparation areas to ensure compliance with effluent regulations.

As follow it is explained the proposed method of storage or handling of materials and wastes during the project implementation together with the machinery needed during both the construction and the operational phases. Moreover access arrangements and

general parking requirements on and off the site, during both construction and operation are also detailed here below.

Construction Methods, Machinery, and Access

Construction will primarily utilize light machinery and standard equipment due to the predominantly traditional construction methods. Excavation machinery will be used only where necessary for the basement and reservoirs.

Machinery to be employed:

- Excavator (x1)
- Drum cutter
- Front and back loaders
- Dumpers
- Mobile crane
- Concrete mixer

During all stages of development, stockpiles and construction materials will be stored in designated areas, and any waste will be removed promptly to approved disposal sites. Agricultural soil removed during construction will be reused for the formation of olive groves, citrus plantation and other landscaping areas.

It is envisaged that apart from any excavation works (some of which will be required for leveling) very limited construction waste will be generated on site.

Access to the site will be maintained throughout construction, with clear entry and exit points, and parking will be managed on-site to avoid disruption to the coastal road.

During operation, all waste generated by the development shall be collected, separated and stored within specific areas where such waste is in turn collected by waste collecting vehicles and which is in turn disposed within approved landfills, collected for recycling, or converted for use as compost.

Sewerage waste shall be directed to the existing WSC sewerage network existing in the area or treated for generation of water to be used for irrigation. All food preparation outlets shall be furnished with a grease interceptor unit/ or a central grease interceptor in order to control the effluent being discharged. The kitchen effluent shall conform to all local guidelines.

Project Phasing

The project is planned to be implemented in two distinct phases:

Phase 1 – Farming and Infrastructure Works

This initial phase will include the demolition of the existing farm dwelling, followed by the construction of the new farm premises and all required operational facilities. Concurrently, the restoration and extension of rubble walls, formation of pathways, tree planting, and associated landscaping works will be undertaken. Upon completion of this phase, the farm will become fully operational, with all agricultural areas established and functional.

Phase 2 – Accommodation Facility

The development of the accommodation component will commence only after Phase 1 is fully completed and the farm operations are well established. This ensures that the rural tourism element is integrated within a fully functioning agricultural setting, maintaining the project's agritourism objectives and safeguarding the rural character of the site.

List of the major environmental impacts

A list of possible environmental impacts likely to be generated by the project are detailed here in after, including reference to cumulative impacts and the proposals for mitigating the negative effects of the development.

Environmental impacts can be both negative as well as positive and their assessment is important so as to better define the effects that a proposal may have on its receiving environment.

A preliminary list of potential environmental impacts can be identified. The list identifies only those impacts that may be significant. The potential impacts are considered to be:

- **Impacts on the geo-environment from the excavation of the project site.** The project envisages the excavation for basement/ underground water reservoirs. The excavation will take up a finite resource, and while the possibility of reusing the excavated rock will only be known once the necessary geo-technical investigations are conducted. Based on the results of the geological investigation, Applicant will assess ways of utilizing this resource as efficiently as possible.
- **Storm-water management during construction and operation.** No impact to ground water is envisaged during construction of the proposed development in view of the scale of the project and in view that the site is proposed in a rural setting with natural water flow course.
- **Impacts from the generation of construction waste, in relation primarily to excavation waste**

As outlined prior, excavation waste being generated is very limited and the possibility of re-use will be investigated.

- **Impacts from emissions to air, from construction activities and operations**

The potential dust impacts from the excavation and construction will be short- to medium-term and temporary. Dust will be generated during demolition, excavation, and construction, and to a lesser extent, building finishes. Impacts would depend on the amounts of dust generated, the success of mitigation measures in controlling the

dust, and the amounts of dust entrained from the site. Measures for mitigating the impact from construction traffic will also be addressed in the Construction Management Plan.

- **Noise and vibration impacts**, from construction and operational activities Noise and vibration impacts from demolition, excavation and construction will be short and temporary. Though there aren't neighbouring residential properties, the high sensitivity of the existing adjacent uses requires strict operational measures to mitigate impacts during construction. Operational phase impacts will mostly be related to the use of equipment (e.g. chillers, pumps, boilers, air conditioners, etc) and transport.
- **Landscape and visual amenity impacts.** The proposal is for the development of agritourism complex. The former is to be incorporated in a part of the site where vegetation is considerable and the natural contours will allow the hiding of the development in the natural context. The complex including the farm and accommodation facilities will form of a contained cluster taking the same footprint of the existing farm, so there will not be any added volumetric that can cause negative visual impacts. The the proposed new trees will limit the building's visibility and will improve the current situation regarding long distance views impact point of view.
- **Impacts on the neighbouring special area of conservation.** The proposal has a very small footprint and will be masked off with landscaping and vegetation. No Impact on areas of conservation are envisaged.
- **Impacts on Cultural heritage features.** The proposal is not envisaged to effect cultural heritage features however recommendations by the SCH will be adhered to to ensure that no features are disturbed.

5. MITIGATION PROPOSALS - SUMMARY

Preliminary potential mitigation measures associated with the identified impacts include:

During Construction:

- Minimizing excavations to the bare minimum required for the development proposed;
- Maximize the re-utilization of excavate rock and minimizing disposal to landfill;
- Compliance with all relevant waste management regulations and the adoption of best practice in relation to both construction and operational waste management;
- Ensuring the adoption of best practice environmental measures throughout construction through the implementation of a Construction Management Plan;
- Setup mitigation measures for the control of surface water flows from the site, especially during construction. No silt-laden water will be allowed to flow out of the site and into the neighbouring fields. Measures will need to be adopted for strict control of such waters.
- Careful attention to measures in the CMP for mitigating noise, vibration and impacts on air quality from the construction works, and implementation of appropriate operational monitoring regimes throughout the construction phase to mitigate impacts;
- Where possible, recycle construction materials and excavated rock;
- Careful consideration of the height, massing and visual appearance of the development, in order to ensure that the visual amenity is optimized, including having regard to the long distance views in all directions;

- Survey the trees, shrubs and other vegetation present on site to determine their nature and the possibility of retaining any of these and/or transplanting to other locations within the site;
- Identify, mark, and eradicate any alien and invasive species growing on the development site in line with ERA's guidelines on the subject;
- Derelict areas within the site on the holding to be identified and rehabilitated as part of the Development;
- Monitoring of excavation works by an archaeologist under the guidance of the SCH to ensure that any buried or uncharted cultural heritage features are appropriately recorded;

During Operation:

- Operational phase discharges will all be directed to sewer or collected in reservoirs.
- Promotion of sustainable modes of transport to service the Concern;
- Storm-water falling on site will be collected and stored in a reservoir.

Yours sincerely,

Perit Mark Camilleri