

Timeline of Simar Nature Reserve's history with nature protection and development

Year	Events relating to nature protection and development
1980s	Simar area is mostly a dump site at the interface where Pwales Valley and Xemxija beach
	would have naturally had a saline marshland.
1990s	Plans for area to become a theme park, reverted to allow a nature reserve.
1991	Simar is declared a nature reserve and protected by law.
1992	Area is cleared of debris, works on site are initiated to create a network of pools, canals
	and islands. Hundreds of trees are planted, pathways and hides are created, transforming
	the area into the current Simar Nature Reserve.
1996	Simar is declared a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention
2004	As Malta becomes an EU state, Simar Nature Reserve and its surrounding areas become
	part of Malta's Natura 2000 network as a result of its habitat and refuge to birds.
2006	Rationalisation exercise sees area abutting nature reserve with 2-storey evenly-built
	houses be given the possibility to extend to a total of 4 storeys. Development zone is
	extended in various areas in nearby Xemxija.
2006	Northwest Local Plan is issued proposing an expansion of the reserve.
2014	MEPA issues management plan for Simar Natura 2000 site, which defines development as
	exerting pressure on the ecology of the site management. Plan also envisages an
	expansion of the reserve, in line with a Northwest Local Plan policy.
2015	New policies are issued which relax regulations on storeys, and regulate overall building
	height rather than total storeys. As a result, a wave of new developments is initiated
	across the islands with more storeys crammed into a permitted height increased in 2006.
2016	BirdLife Malta raises issue publicly requesting ERA and PA to designate a buffer area to
	Simar Nature Reserve to safeguard it from development.
2017	Planning application (PA 9759/17) located just across the reserve is filed to turn two-storey
	dwelling into a six-storey apartment block. BirdLife Malta appeals to ERA and PA chairmen
	to intervene.
2018	Planning application filed in 2017 is approved by Planning Authority. Only measure
	imposed is a consideration to minimise dust and noise pollution. ERA's input does not
	feature in planning application process.
2022	PA3295/22 is filed proposing to construct 19 apartments up to 8 levels.
2023	PA 9759/17 expires, but is refiled as PA 2217/23. Planning Authority approves once more
	planning application. ERA's input once again does not feature in the process.
2023	PA3295/22 is approved by Planning Authority. ERA limits its input to requesting a
	consideration of light pollution, but does not object given the area is impacted anyway.