



BirdLife Malta's objection to PA/00064/25 for the proposed rehabilitation of an open industrial facility into warehousing, commercial uses, residential care home and clinical services, with ancillary car-parking spaces and external landscaped parks and piazzas, Naxxar

21st February 2025

BirdLife Malta objects to planning application PA/00064/25, which proposes the transformation of a quarry into a commercial zone, a residential care facility, and clinical services, along with associated parking spaces, landscaped parks, and public piazzas.

The site in question falls within a designated Strategic Open Gap (SOG) governed by policy CG25 of the local plan. This policy explicitly prohibits urban development in such areas, allowing only essential small-scale utility infrastructure under strict conditions. Therefore, the proposed project directly contradicts this established planning policy, which is designed to prevent urban sprawl and safeguard open spaces for ecological, agricultural, and recreational purposes. If approved, this development would eliminate the last remaining unbuilt stretch of land in the area, permanently altering the landscape and the character of Naxxar. This green buffer is crucial in a locality already suffering from overdevelopment.

Additionally, the project includes an extensive provision for 665 car parking spaces, signaling a significant increase in traffic flow. This raises concerns on increased vehicular congestion, higher levels of noise pollution, and continued air quality deterioration for residents. Local residents are already burdened by inadequate traffic infrastructure, which has not been properly planned despite the establishment of several commercial entities in the vicinity. As a result, the road infrastructure of the area experiences persistent traffic congestion, noise pollution, and deteriorating air quality, severely impacting the overall quality of life in the area.

According to Policy CG25, permitted uses within an SOG should focus on enhancing natural landscapes, rehabilitating abandoned land through habitat restoration and rural afforestation, improving the presentation of ecologically significant sites, and supporting agricultural activities. The policy also encourages the creation of country paths, cycling routes, and informal recreational spaces for public enjoyment. Introducing a large-scale elderly care home and commercial facilities within this zone would go against these objectives and could lead to more development in protected green areas.

Although the site has already been subjected to previous development, this does not justify further urban expansion. On the contrary, it presents an opportunity for ecological restoration. Other disused quarries in Malta have been successfully transformed into green spaces through afforestation projects. A similar approach here would enhance both the environmental and recreational value of the area.

BirdLife Malta calls for a sustainable alternative that aligns with local policies. Rather than pursuing urban development, the site should be rehabilitated to conserve its natural landscape, promote biodiversity, and improve public access to green spaces.