



BirdLife Malta objection to boutique tourism accommodation/premium guesthouse in the San Ġorġ village core of Qormi (PA/00472/25)

21st May 2025

BirdLife Malta objects to the proposed development of a boutique tourism accommodation/premium guesthouse in the San Ġorġ village core of Qormi. While we hold no objection to the restoration of the existing palazzo structure and change in use of this historic building, we are concerned with the extent of proposed development which encroaches into the historic garden.

The proposed works will lead to the loss of a substantial proportion of this urban green space resulting in the uprooting of several trees including protected olive trees. Furthermore, the operational phase of this project is expected to bring increased traffic, congestion, and urban density, negatively affecting the quality of life for Qormi residents and contributing to long-term environmental degradation in a heavily urbanised area.

In addition to residents' valid concerns over the development's non-compliance with the Urban Conservation Area policy, BirdLife Malta would like to draw attention to its conflict with the newly enacted EU Nature Restoration Law (NRL), as of August 2024. As per Article 8 of the NRL, Malta is legally obligated to "ensure that there is no net loss in the total national area of urban green space and of urban tree canopy cover in urban ecosystem areas...compared to 2024".

Given this binding obligation, the Planning Authority is responsible to ensure that proposals such as this, which clearly result in the reduction of urban green space, are refused on the grounds that they conflict with the NRL. We therefore urge that the proposed boutique hotel be limited strictly to the footprint of the existing palazzo, without any encroachment onto the garden or removal of existing trees.