

**PC 0057/10:**

APPLICANT: MEPA

DRAWING NUMBERS: PC 57/10/1,2

PROPOSAL: To amend the zoning designation of the sites under consideration

LOCATION: Mriehel Industrial Area, Triq L-Imdina, Birkirkara

Approved by MEPA Board on the 1st September, 2011.

Endorsed by Minister on the 25th January, 2012

**Policies**

The proposal on drawings PC 57/10/1,2 was Approved, and Central Malta Local Plan policies CG14 (as amended by PC 62/07 and PC 7/08) and BK04 are amended as follows;

**Policy CG14**

**Commercial Areas**

**MEPA will permit the development of Commercial land uses within the designated Commercial Areas listed below and as indicated in the relevant Area Policy Maps.**

Location	Area Policy Map
Triq in-Naxxar and Triq Wied Hal-Balzan, Balzan	BZM1
Triq il-Wied ta' I-Imdina, Birkirkara (however the properties located above the level of Triq G. F. Agius De Soldanis are designated as Residential Priority Areas in accordance with Policy CG08)	BKM1
Triq in-Naxxar, Birkirkara	BKM1
Triq Dun Karm, Birkirkara	BKM1
Triq Salvu Psaila, Birkirkara	BKM1
Mriehel, Birkirkara	BKM2 (as amended by Map PC 57/10/2)

Blata l-Bajda, Hamrun	HAM1
Triq il-Kappilan Mifsud, Hamrun	HAM1
Triq il-Kbira, Hamrun; Commercial land uses at ground floor level only, with residential units on upper floors	HAM1
Triq in-Naxxar, Iklin	IKM1
Triq il-Kostituzzjoni, Mosta	MOM1
Triq l-Imdina, Qormi	QOM1
Triq is-Sebh, Qormi	QOM1
Triq tal-Bajjada and Triq il-Masgar, Qormi	QOM1
Triq Salvu Psaila and Triq il-Kappilan Mifsud, Santa Venera	SVM1
Triq il-Wied ta' l-Imsida, Santa Venera	SVM1
Triq il-Kbira, Santa Venera; Commercial land uses at ground floor level only, with residential units on upper floors	SVM1
Triq is-Sebh, Santa Venera	SVM1

The following is a list of acceptable land-uses (new uses, extensions to existing uses, and change of uses) within all frontages located within the designated Commercial Areas.

- i. Class 1 (Use Classes Order, 1994), dwelling units on upper floors. However dwelling units will not be allowed in the Commercial Areas designated in Mriehel (Birkirkara), in Triq is-Sebh (Qormi) and in Triq is-Sebh (Santa Venera). In addition, new residential development directly above warehousing will not be permitted in the Commercial Area designated at Triq tal-Bajjada (Qormi) and at Triq il-Masgar (Qormi). Dwelling units will be allowed at ground floor level in the Commercial Areas designated in Triq il-Kbira (Santa Venera) and in Triq il-Kbira (Hamrun).
- ii. Class 4, (Use Classes Order, 1994), small shops only provided that:
  - The small shops (of any nature) are not to exceed a total floor area of 50sqm each, and convenience shops are not to exceed a total floor area of 75sqm each;
  - They comply with all the provisions of paras. 1.4.16 to 1.4.18 of the Retail Planning Guidelines (2003); and
  - They comply with any relevant section of the DC 2005 (design, access, amenity, etc.).

- iii. **Supermarkets, provided that they comply with all the relevant provisions of Policy CG17.**
- iv. **Showrooms provided that they comply with the relevant provisions of MEPA's Retail Planning Guidelines (2003).**
- v. **Class 5 (Use Classes Order, 1994) offices on upper floors only.**
- vi. **Class 6 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) Sale of hot and cold food and drink for consumption on or off the premises.**
- vii. **Class 11 (Use Classes Order, 1994), business and light industry are allowed provided that:**
  - **The gross floor area of the premises does not exceed 50 sqm (including storage of materials and/or finished products). Class 11 uses on the sites located in the designated Commercial Area at Mriehel (Birkirkara) as indicated in Map BKM2 (as amended by Map PC 57/10/2), and at Triq is-Sebh (Qormi) as indicated in Map QOM1 will not be limited by the 50 sqm threshold;**
  - **For sites located at Triq is-Sebh, Qormi the necessary clearances from ADT are obtained; and**
  - **MEPA is to be fully satisfied that the development does not create unnecessary impact which is not desirable to the neighbouring properties.**
- viii. **Class 17 (Use Classes Order, 1994) storage facilities only provided that the gross floor area does not exceed 75 sqm. However, Storage and Distribution facilities of any size will be considered in the designated part of the Commercial Areas at Mriehel (Birkirkara), at Triq tal-Bajjada (Qormi), at Triq il-Masgar (Qormi) and at Triq is-Sebh (Qormi) provided that for sites located at Triq is-Sebh (Qormi) the necessary clearances from ADT are obtained. In addition, the development of warehouses directly beneath residential units will not be permitted in the designated Commercial Areas.**
- ix. **Taxi Business or for the hire of motor vehicles.**
- x. **The Sale of fuel for motor vehicles. However the sale of motor fuel will not be permitted in the Commercial Areas designated at Triq tal-Bajjada (Qormi) and at Triq il-Masgar (Qormi).**
- xi. **The sale or display of motor vehicles.**

- xii. **The cleaning of clothes in venues where articles are brought by the public.**

**In granting permission for the above-listed uses, MEPA is to be satisfied that the design of the commercial development shall enhance the existing streetscapes. With regard to advertisements on buildings, these are either to be integrated with the design of the building fabric, or are to be placed in specific locations earmarked as advertising space within the Commercial Area.**

**In addition to the uses listed above, for those sites located within Areas A and B in Mriehel as indicated in Area Policy Map BKM2 (as amended in PC 57/10) the uses stipulated in policy CG 15 may also be considered as acceptable. Land-uses falling outside those stipulated in policies CG14 and CG 15 will not be considered favourably within Areas A and B, unless there are overriding reasons to locate such uses within these areas. Development within these designated areas in Mriehel should conform to the following criteria;**

- 1. Development should generally respect the predominant height of nearby buildings and would not in general be allowed to exceed a height of 14 m;**
- 2. Development that overlies the route of the underground sewerage gallery is to be to the satisfaction of MEPA and the Water Services Corporation;**
- 3. For sites exceeding 25,000 sq. m where comprehensive development is contemplated the development of compatible Class 8 (a) (Use Classes Order, 1994) Child Care, Class 9 (Use Classes Order, 1994) Assembly and Leisure, Large Scale Retail Outlets and Conference Facilities may be considered by MEPA; and**
- 4. In cases where comprehensive development of sites having an area exceeding 25,000 sq. m is contemplated, MEPA may consider a building that is higher than 14m provided that:**
  - a. The development follows best practice in terms of environmentally sustainable design, neighbour compatibility, construction, and operational management;**
  - b. The architectural design of the building is of exceptionally high quality;**
  - c. The development satisfactorily addresses short and long distance visual impacts;**
  - d. The development incorporates a significant and well designed public open space; and**
  - e. The project will not constitute over-development.**

Showrooms are defined as premises primarily used to display goods for sale where little direct (over the counter) retail sale is intended. Showrooms normally

display a specialist range of bulky, non-food goods, such as: white goods; furniture; motor vehicles; household items, hardware and bathroom fittings. This type of retailing is expanding rapidly along certain arterial routes in the plan area, but these may create an undesirable form of urbanisation if not strictly controlled. So as to ensure that the plan's objectives towards sustainable transport patterns are not compromised, the plan designates limited commercial areas in specific locations. Office development, and in a number of cases residential development on the upper floors of showrooms, are considered to be compatible uses and are therefore normally permitted by MEPA. Other limited compatible uses are also considered as acceptable in these designated areas. In addition, Light Industry and Storage and Distribution Facilities with no size threshold are considered by MEPA in the designated Commercial Area at Mriehel and at Triq is-Sebh in Qormi since these areas were previously zoned in the TPS (1988) for industry. However given the existing traffic situation at Triq is-Sebh, further development of industrial and warehousing uses in this street are subject to clearances from the ADT. The use of land within Sites A and B in Mriehel for commercial and financial activities, apart from the already permitted industrial uses, will ensure a more efficient use of land in terms of employment generation. This more efficient use of land that is designated for employment generating uses follows two of the three goals of the Structure Plan.

## **Policy BK04**

## **Mriehel Industrial Area**

**Mriehel Industrial Area is designated as an industrial, warehousing, and commercial zone as indicated in Area Policy Map BKM2 (as amended in PC 57/10). MEPA may permit the development of land in the Mriehel Industrial Area in accordance with the designations indicated in the Area Policy Map BKM2 (as amended in PC 57/10) for the following land uses;**

- 1. MIP Estate and adjoining sites (Area A in PC 57/10); for the development of Industrial Uses as specified in Policy CG15 and Commercial Uses as specified in Policy CG14 (as amended in PC 57/10);**
- 2. SME Park; for the development of Industrial Uses as specified in Policy CG15;**
- 3. Commercial Areas; for the development of land uses as specified in Policy CG14 (as amended in PC 57/10);**
- 4. Industrial and Commercial Area (Area B in PC 57/10); for the development of land uses as specified in Policies CG14 (as amended in PC 57/10) and CG15;**
- 5. Mixed Use Areas without Residential Units; for the development of land uses as specified in Policy QO04 (as amended by PC 62/07 and PC 7/08);**

- 6. MIP Estate Low Impact Industrial and Commercial Areas (Area A in PC 57/10); for the development of Industrial Uses as specified in Policy CG15 and Commercial Uses as specified in Policy CG14 (as amended in PC 57/10), provided that these do not create unnecessary impact which is not desirable to the neighbouring properties; and**
- 7. A site for the provision of Waste Management Civic Amenity facilities and for an Electricity Substation.**

Mriehel Industrial Area is an important and strategically located industrial zone catering particularly for the industrial needs of the Central localities and those within close vicinity to the Inner Harbour Area. Mriehel is partly in private ownership and partly managed by the MIP, and has some parcels of Government and ex-Church land. The industrial zone is approximately 454,400 sqm. in area, including internal roads and public spaces, and is situated between Mriehel Bypass and Triq l-Imdina.

The developed areas contain a wide range of uses including factories, retail, showrooms, offices, warehousing and small and medium sized industries. Mriehel has, as do most private industrial areas, problems of land fragmentation with parcels of land belonging to different owners as well as a number of derelict sites lacking landscaping and infrastructure. Dumping of waste including industrial waste and fly-tipping of rubbish are evident all over the estate, but especially in the still undeveloped spaces.

The area was designated in the Structure Plan (Policy IND 2) for the development of manufacturing industry. However data for Mriehel indicates that between 1993-1997, only 34% of permits were granted wholly or in part for industrial developments, whilst 45% were for warehousing and retail warehousing projects and 21% were for retail and office developments (SPU Data, May 2000). Substantial areas (approximately 66% of all permits between 1993-1997) have therefore been taken over by non-industrial uses.

The existing problems experienced at Mriehel are likely to intensify if the remaining land within these areas is developed solely in accordance with the TPS (1988). Furthermore tenants may be discouraged from locating at Mriehel if current problems persist. However, it is still possible to further develop this industrial area in an organised manner. Therefore the aim of this policy is to clearly define the development requirements of all proposals on remaining undeveloped industrial sites through appropriate zoning, including the development of commercial uses where appropriate. Areas designated as mixed use areas are intended to act as buffer areas between existing residential areas and the Industrial zones of Mriehel. In addition where the MIP Estate directly adjoins a residential area, new industrial

and commercial activities at this interface may only be considered by MEPA provided that these do not create unnecessary impact which is not desirable to the neighbouring properties.

As part of the Government Waste Management Strategy, a site at Mriehel has been designated for a Civic Amenity Site to serve a number of central localities that are at present not catered for. In addition this Amenity Site will also serve the existing Industrial Area thereby resolving problems of waste management in the area.