

Development Pressures within Protected Archaeological Buffer Zones

Din I-Art Helwa calls on the Malta Environment and Planning Authority to exercise the highest level of prudence when considering planning applications within the designated buffer zones of archaeological sites of international importance in Malta and Gozo.

Din I-Art Helwa is concerned about 2 applications for new development presently under consideration by Mepa, that fall within scheduled archaeological areas.

Application PA 7946/05 proposes erecting a house and swimming pool within the buffer zone of the Brochtorff Circle in Xaghra, Gozo. The majority of this site also lies Outside the Development Zone (ODZ).

In another application, PA 306/06 proposes to build a block of flats in Mgarr, within the protected buffer zone of the Ta' Hagraat temple and on a site which lies Outside the Development Zone. Ta' Hagraat temple is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The construction of new buildings or swimming pools within these buffer zones would conflict with Malta's responsibilities under the 1972 World Heritage Convention. A 100m buffer zone must be maintained around the periphery of Class A archaeological sites, in which no new development is to be permitted, said the NGO.

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