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SOVRINTENDENZA  
TAL-PATRIMONJU KULTURALI  
SUPERINTENDENCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

# Annual Report

2021

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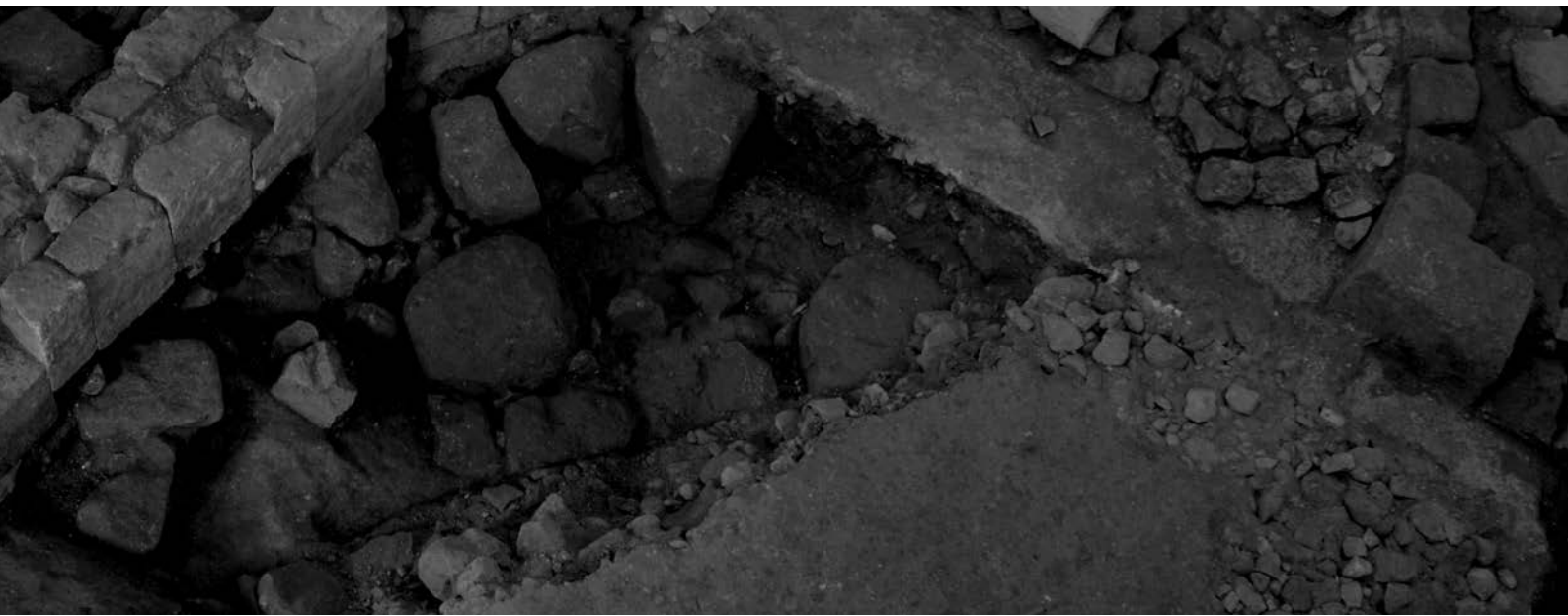
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# Foreward

## Overview of 2021



As the COVID-19 pandemic extended throughout the entire 2021, the cultural heritage sector was again hit by the nationwide closure and reduction of certain services. Numerous heritage entities again made good use of the pandemic to complete pending projects, and to implement technological advances with regards to digitisation of collection, virtual experiences, and inventory compilation. The Superintendence prevailed and overcame the challenges presented by the pandemic. Building upon the lessons learnt during the previous year, the entity continued to make the necessary technological advances in order to ensure uninterrupted operations, mainly through the implementation and use of digital platforms in communication. In early 2021, soft telephony was introduced within the entity to ensure optimum service to clients even in the instances that employees worked remotely, whilst new tailor-made software was constructed to facilitate and streamline operations.

The Superintendence held numerous discussions with ICT systems management companies to create a working portal to be used by both the staff and

clients. The idea behind the working portal is that any correspondence would be received through a digital platform, rather than through email, and thus would be recorded as part of the process. The procurement of such a software would be another large step towards the digitisation program that the entity embarked on in the previous year. The Geographic Information System (GIS), a project that the entity took on in the previous year, was finally completed for internal use by Superintendence officials. The GIS was used to digitise the national inventory, as well as record all new discoveries. It is the management's intention that in due course, the data available on the GIS related to the national inventory will also be made available to the public.

Recruitment was also given a huge boost during the year, with a total of ten new personnel joining the entity, filling positions within the operative sections of the Superintendence, as well as within administration and support services. The entity continued to invest in its employees by promoting and financing courses to employees to ensure continued professional development. An internal restructuring

exercise was implemented to assimilate the three operational units of 2020 into two units, in order to consolidate core functions and area of expertise within the Superintendence. This consolidation of functions saw the Superintendence take a stronger lead in its role. A noticeable change was the increased participation within the Environment and Planning Review Tribunals, both as appellant, and as consultant.

The year under review also marked amendments to the Cultural Heritage Act (CAP 445 of the Laws of Malta). Whilst the functions of the Superintendence remain unchanged, notable changes within the Act entail the establishment of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Technical Committee. Its functions are to ensure synergy between responsible bodies in the protection and management of Works Heritage Sites, and to advise the Minister and Government on matters related to these sites, with the Superintendent sitting on the same committee. The former Committee of Guarantee has been re-established as the National Council for Cultural Heritage, with its functions being to ensure collaboration of entities working within the cultural heritage field.

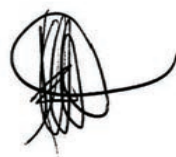
Another group of conservator-restorers attained their warrant during 2021, bringing the total number of warranted conservator-restorers in Malta up to 46, a much-needed boost to the upkeep of cultural heritage. Whilst the number of warranted conservators was achieved in just two years, with such a rich legacy in both movable and immovable cultural heritage, it is hoped that the coming years are just as successful.

2021 also marked Malta's ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), making it the latest convention related to cultural heritage to be ratified by the State. Whilst many of the convention's objectives are enshrined in the Cultural Heritage Act (CAP 445), the ratification is an important step in declaring the value placed on this resource by the State.

The year under review also saw numerous collaborations between the Superintendence and other heritage entities; Heritage Malta, University of Malta, and the Restoration Directorate, on numerous projects, including underwater and terrestrial archaeological excavations and surveys as well as conservation and restoration projects, bringing together expertise from different fields in cultural heritage to assist in the implementation of the projects.

The strain on cultural heritage keeps on growing due to increasing pressures from development, as well as the need of conservation and restoration of our deteriorating architectural legacy. For 2022, the Superintendence welcomes a good budget, and hopes that the requested human resources are engaged to allow the entity to fulfil its duties as the national regulator of cultural heritage.

*"The Superintendence held numerous discussions with ICT systems management companies to create a working portal to be used by both the staff and clients."*



**Kurt Farrugia**  
Superintendent of  
Cultural Heritage



**Elizabeth Vassallo**  
Director Support  
Services

# 1. Archaeology

## Introduction

During 2021, following a reorganisation within the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, the Heritage Data Management and Research Unit was renamed as the National Inventory, Archaeology and Research Unit. The re-naming was not simply an exercise done on paper, but was aimed at streamlining operational procedures, as well as to consolidate functions within the Superintendence. The unit has now also absorbed the archaeology monitoring team, the underwater archaeology team, and the movable heritage team.

The growth of functions was accompanied by an increase in staff which consisted of officers who were already carrying out duties within these teams, as well as with officers from other teams who have been re-assigned to new duties. All archaeology functions have been assimilated within the same unit, thus creating a better workflow in terms of monitoring, investigation, and post excavation work inclusive of conservation and restoration.

## Major Archaeological Investigations

Such synergy was particularly essential in view of this year's budget measure for the Superintendence, which was aimed at continuing to place the preservation of cultural heritage at the top of the government's agenda by investing further in the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, so as to further allow proper investigations of archaeological sites (BM290 - Il-preservedjoni tal-wirt storiku tibqa' fuq quddiem nett tal-aġenda tal-Gvern u dan se jsir billi nkomplu ninvestu fis-Sovrintendenza tal-Patrimonju Kulturali permezz ta' aktar skavar ta' siti arkeoloġiċi). In line with this budget measure, the Superintendence embarked on a number of archaeology investigations throughout the year. Though originally only 5 excavations were planned, a total of 11 were carried out so as to incorporate emergency excavations of sites discovered during development works; these also necessitated the intervention of the officers of the Superintendence. In other instances, there were also other discoveries made that had been investigated by archaeology monitors approved by the Superintendence and which were working under its direction. The Superintendence involved various stakeholders in managing the high volume of archaeological excavations. The excavations of the

remains of a Roman agricultural establishment, first identified in 2020, were carried out by the University of Malta as part of the annual field training that undergraduates studying archaeology undergo each summer. The investigation, fully supported by the site owner, provided important stratigraphic sequences and thus, another further season of excavation is being planned for 2022. A second site in Mellieħa, prehistoric in date (the full nature of which is still being researched), was initially investigated by the Superintendence; it was then delegated onto a team of freelance archaeologists engaged by the site owner. The Superintendence also collaborated with the Restoration Directorate on the investigation of the remains of a Medieval Chapel discovered during the ongoing restoration works of the Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy (Kappella tal-Madonna tal-Ħniena) in Qrendi.

The primary excavation carried out by the Superintendence was that of an Early Phoenician Tomb in Għajn Klieb, Rabat (Malta). This tomb was first discovered in 2001 during infrastructural works and it was found to be unripled. It contained a stone cut sarcophagus: a very rare feature in Maltese Archaeology. At the time, the Museums Department

had decided not to excavate the tomb, thus the tomb was re-sealed. In the ensuing 20 years, there was an increase in infrastructural requirements that were put in place to meet the demands of the growing residential communities in the surrounding areas. The Superintendence decided that the best way forward to ensure the long-term preservation of the tomb and its contents was to fully investigate the tomb. The logistical requirements, long term

preservation, and accessibility of the discovery to the general public led the Superintendence to involve Heritage Malta and the Department of Classics and Archaeology at the University of Malta in a collaborative project that will ensure that the best expertise available at a national level is utilised for this project, which given its importance, will then be followed up by a publication and a setting up of a permanent display.

**Table 1: Archaeological investigations carried out by the Superintendence in 2021**

Site	Locality
Catacombs	Hal Kirkop
Prehistoric remains	Mellieħa
Msida Bastion Cemetery and Historic Garden	Msida
Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy	Qrendi
Archaeological evaluation at <i>Taċ-Ċawla</i>	Rabat, Għawdex
Classical domestic context	Rabat, Malta
Medieval context	Rabat, Malta
Phoenician Tombs at <i>Għajn Klieb</i>	Rabat, Malta
Phoenician Tombs at <i>Għajn Qajjet</i>	Rabat, Malta
Post-Classical deposits	Rabat, Malta
<i>Mgarr ix-Xini</i>	Ta' Sannat
St John's Co-Cathedral	Valletta
Punic Tomb	Haż-Żabbar

In this section, a more detailed reporting of the sites investigated by the Superintendence is being provided.

**Catacombs in Hal Kirkop**

In 2021, during infrastructure works on a main residential road in Hal-Kirkop in the vicinity of previously recorded catacombs, the archaeology monitor surveilling the works under the direction of the Superintendence uncovered archaeological features including human remains. As a result, officers of the Superintendence, including an osteologist, investigated the site together with the archaeology monitor.

*Kirkop catacomb – general shot of truncated corridor with side burial chambers.*





*Kirkop catacomb – internal view of burial chamber showing lamp holes.*

The shaft that was encountered led to a catacomb with four rock-cut burial chambers with sealing slabs blocking the entrances. Most, if not all, seemed to have been moved post-burial to add additional deceased individuals, or during looting. Inside the burial chambers arcosolia (arched niches) had been carved, and three of these contained human remains of several individuals. In addition, one

metal object that could be a clasp for a shroud or bracelet was discovered. The catacomb and the remains are thought to be from the Late Roman or Byzantine Period. No pottery was found within, which is indicative of historic looting. Although the burial chambers did not have any inscriptions or engraved motifs, niches for candles or lamps had been cut into the rock, and rock-cut headrests on which human remains had been laid were also evident. The chambers were waterlogged, and the remains were mixed in most of the tombs. The site was documented, and the material extracted for analysis, whilst infrastructure works were

diverted to ensure the protection of the catacomb.

#### **Prehistoric remains in Mellieħa**

Between April and September 2021, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage directed the investigation of a prehistoric site identified along the Northern coastal area of Mellieħa. The investigation, which was carried out by archaeologists from



*Mellieħa prehistoric remains.*

the Superintendence together with freelance archaeologists, identified several archaeological deposits within the remains of a rock cavity. Human remains, as well as a substantial amount of animal remains (including deer bones), were uncovered inside the cavity, which was partially exposed. Together with these remains, archaeologists found extensive deposits with pottery shards and other evidence pointing to the use of the area during the Neolithic Period. The exact use of the site – domestic or otherwise – during the prehistoric period is yet to be determined. This site has the potential to provide important data for the prehistoric period through the scientific analysis of environmental samples collected from the site. The Superintendence is in discussion with the site owners to re-design the development to incorporate the remains and maintain their visibility for future generations.

#### **Msida Bastion Cemetery and Historic Garden – Analysing finds in a British period grave**

The Floriana bastions, located just outside of Valletta, once had four adjoining cemeteries and the only surviving one is the Msida Bastion Cemetery which has been managed by *Din L-Art Helwa* since 1988. The cemetery, which is open to the public, is

surrounded by beautiful gardens and is home to over 530 British Military personnel, civil servants, merchants, and their families. In use from the early 1800s to 1857, much of the original cemetery was vandalised and while most of the larger tombstones and monuments are in their original position, many are illegible or damaged, sections of which were thrown across the grounds or into other graves.

The Warden, staff and volunteers of this cemetery and historic garden have painstakingly worked on restoring the site by locating sections of tombstones, piecing them together and deciphering the text to connect tombstones, graves and individuals buried within, with the help of archival research. Some of the graves were filled with debris and broken sections of unrelated graves from across the cemetery. One of these graves was recently opened to clear debris, under the direction of Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

This particular grave was initially believed to have belonged to a 43-year-old male. Once the human remains were located, the Superintendence osteologist was called in to monitor the operation and analyse the skeletal material. Although



*Msida Bastion Cemetery – architectural fragments recovered from inside of grave.*

confirmation of the male human remains was made, other commingled and, in some cases also partially articulated skeletal material was found above the original burial. In fact, the grave held the remains of a minimum of four other individuals including that of a young individual who is believed to have been around 16 years of age, a female, and two other individuals, who were most likely males. The material was photographed for further analysis and returned to the grave. At the present time it is not known who these additional individuals could have been, or why they were placed in the same grave. Some of the remains may have

been disturbed from other graves when the area was vandalised or perhaps the individuals belonged to family members of the male originally buried within this site. *Din L-Art Helwa* will continue the restoration of this area and other sites under the direction of Superintendence to ensure the preservation of this historical cemetery and its tranquil gardens so that it can be enjoyed by the general public.

### **Excavation at the Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy, Qrendi**

In April 2021, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage directed an archaeological investigation within the Baroque chapel dedicated to the Our Lady of Mercy (*il-Kappella tal-Madonna Tal-Hniena*), in the area known as *Hal Lew* in Qrendi. The works were carried out in conjunction with the restoration project led by the Restoration Directorate. The removal of the existing floor tiles and the underlying preparation layers led to the uncovering of foundations and lower course walls, thus defining an older structure which had survived within the enclosed space of the new Baroque chapel. Focused investigations along the identified walls revealed the presence of a complex sequence of structures, defined by a rectangular space with the entrance at the west end of the feature and an apse-like space at the east



*Tal-Hniena Chapel – foundation remains of late medieval chapel clearly showing semi-circular apse at the right hand of the photo.*

end of the feature. These structural remains have been identified as the remains of a medieval chapel built along the east-west axis, with the altar having faced west. By comparing the architectural elements (such as the semi-circular apse and the evidence for internal arches and stone benches) to other known Maltese chapels, the Superintendence was able to date this older chapel to a Late Medieval Period (pre-1500s), which means that it can be likened to the *Hal Millieri* chapels. The preliminary understanding of the site indicated that the new Baroque chapel had in fact been built in a different orientation (not following any cardinal points) above an older and smaller chapel, with the foundations of the latter being completely enclosed within the internal space of the new chapel. The evidence gathered during this investigation showed that during the construction of the Baroque chapel in the mid-1600s, the builders surgically removed part of the stones from what survived of the older chapel and inserted them within the new foundations. This investigation also gathered important data on the potential use of the site, pre-dating the foundations of the Late Medieval chapel, as suggested by archaeological deposits underlying the Medieval foundations.

This discovery gives new important evidence to the

broader cultural landscape, which has so far been strongly defined by other religious landmarks in nearby places, including other similar later medieval chapels. In the coming months, the Superintendence will be embarking on the post-excitation phase of this investigation which will include the study of the evidence, such as the pottery sherds, which will aid in understanding the dating of the older chapel and the earlier use of the site before the chapel was built.



*Taċ-Ċawla – trial trenches showing the exposed bedrock.*

**Archaeological evaluation at Taċ-Ċawla, Rabat, Għawdex**

Between February and March 2021, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage carried out a preliminary archaeological investigation at *Triq in-Neolitici*, within the area of Taċ-Ċawla Prehistoric Site in Rabat, Għawdex. The investigation was required due to the potential high risk posed by the proposed road resurfacing, which would have affected the immediate area outside the identified site constraints and within its buffer zone. The aim of the investigation

was to identify any remaining archaeological deposits still surviving under the current road surface, in order to guide any mitigation measures that might have been necessary. The investigation revealed evidence of highly disturbed archaeological deposits, mostly within the immediate vicinity of the actual site. Therefore, the impact on any potential archaeology was further reduced by creating a buffer zone and protecting the area between the road and the archaeological site of Taċ-Ċawla.



*Classical domestic context, Rabat, Malta – structural remains consisting of Roman masonry, part of the cocciopesto flooring, and two pots still in situ.*

**A Classical domestic context in Rabat, Malta**

In January 2021, the Superintendence successfully concluded the extraction and retrieval of two artefacts, dating back to the Late Punic or Early Roman Period, from a multi-stratified site in Rabat, Malta. Late in 2020, during the monitoring of excavation works within a property in the Urban Conservation Area, the archaeologists appointed by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage carried out an extensive excavation through several archaeological deposits, yielding material dating from the Roman Period up to the Middle Ages.



Medieval context, Rabat, Malta – entrance to a reutilised catacomb.



Medieval context, Rabat, Malta – entrance to catacomb chamber filled with a medieval domestic dump.

Following the discovery of large ashlar blocks and a section of *cocciopesto* flooring (a type of Roman flooring made using lime base mortar and ceramic bits), the Superintendence field team further investigated the area. At a lower level, two ceramic items, dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, were found in their original context and extracted by a conservator from Superintendence. These artefacts will be further studied as they could be of significant evidence of a domestic use of the area during the transformation of the city from the Punic to the Roman period. The structural remains have been retained in situ and incorporated in the approved development and talks are under way to ensure their accessibility.

### A Medieval context from Rabat, Malta

Following the discovery of two catacombs towards the end of 2020 along *Triq Ghajn Qajjet*, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage carried out archaeological investigations of one of the catacombs. The main aim of this excavation was to identify the full extent of the catacombs since the excavation was located within the development footprint. This would then inform and guide the approved development so

as to safeguard the cultural heritage features from development. The second catacomb was noted to continue beneath the road and was thus not affected by the current development. The surrounding area (in which these catacombs were first discovered back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) is very well-known for its archaeological significance at a national level as evidenced by the Phoenician necropolis of *Għajn Klieb*. However, the recent excavations shed more light on the evolution of the site in the lesser-known Medieval period.

The investigation focused primarily on the understanding of a significant Medieval context, preserved inside the spaces of a former Late Roman and Byzantine catacomb. The original funerary space drastically changed its function during the 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> century AD, as there is evidence that points to the spaces being used as a domestic dump instead for burying the dead. The space of the catacomb will add another important piece to the



Medieval context, Rabat, Malta – internal view of catacomb after excavation showing arcosolium.

study of Malta's history in late antiquity including population patterns, the archaeological deposits identified inside, and the evidence gathered so far. These factors, together with the research from past discoveries of similar contexts in the area, suggest the presence of a large settlement during the Islamic and Norman ages. Connections of this settlement with the main settlement in Mdina and Rabat are yet to be defined.

The investigation allowed the collection of a substantial amount of data, including faunal remains, ceramics, metals, and glass artefacts, that yields important information on diet, economy, trade, and productivity during the Medieval period in Malta. The approved development was amended to safeguard the catacombs and permit future controlled access.

#### **Phoenician Tombs at *Għajn Klieb*, Rabat, Malta**

During the second half of 2021, the Superintendence carried out investigations in a field in the area known as *Għajn Klieb* in Rabat. This was prompted by the intense trenching in the area, and the high risk of encountering tombs, including a tomb which had been discovered about 20 years ago, but the exact location of which had been lost. The investigation resulted in the discovery of two tombs as well as another possible third tomb, of which only the shaft outline has been discovered and has been left unexcavated for the time being. This decision was taken since its location does not put it at immediate threat from development. In addition, it is an established procedure not to investigate all discovered archaeology but instead to try and retain a resource for future investigations, where technological and scientific advancement might potentially provide better investigative techniques.

One of the two confirmed tombs was only partially excavated. It consists of a large shaft hewn out of

the rock, leading to a side rectangular chamber which would have been used to lay the deceased individual/s and other remains including grave goods. The chamber seemed to have already been explored and emptied of its possible content, most probably in the early 1900s. The sealing slab which would have closed the chamber from the shaft, was found broken into and partly removed, possibly from the very same 1900s explorations. The excavation of this tomb will continue in the coming months so that it can be documented and published.

The other confirmed tomb consisted of a smaller rectangular shaft leading to a side rectangular chamber this being the tomb originally discovered in 2001. This time the chamber was found closed at the entrance with a large sealing slab still intact. After the shaft was excavated, the slab was lifted, and the chamber investigated. Inside the chamber, a large stone sarcophagus was found with a rectangular stone slab as a lid. On the floor of the tomb were



*Phoenician Tomb Għajn Klieb – showing sealing slab in situ.*

pottery vessels and animal bones. These were documented *in situ* and collected. The sarcophagus was also documented and then opened by carefully removing the lid. Inside, the archaeologists found the remains of 2 adult skeletons which were probably male and female. The deceased were buried in the sarcophagus with a few items on their body including



Phoenician Tomb Ghajn Klieb – sealing slab being lifted.



Phoenician Tomb Ghajn Klieb – opened tomb showing stone sarcophagus.



Phoenician Tomb Ghajn Klieb – artefacts and animal bone fragments inside tomb chamber.



Phoenician Tomb Ghajn Klieb – human remains inside sarcophagus.

jewellery consisting of simple metal bangles, rings and beads. Their garments may have also included some metal clasps as other pieces of metal were found with the skeletons.

After detailed documentation, all the bones and finds were collected. All the remains are being conserved and studied by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage in collaboration with Heritage Malta and the University of Malta. The sarcophagus was also extracted and is undergoing conservation and study. Arrangements have been made for the tomb to be preserved *in situ*.

### Phoenician Tomb in Ghajn Qajjet, Rabat, Malta

In December 2021, the Superintendence carried out the investigation of a tomb in Rabat, close to the *Ghajn Qajjet* area. The shaft of the tomb had been identified during development in a private plot under the surveillance of an archaeology monitor directed by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. The archaeologists identified the sealing slab closing the entrance to the chamber, which was still in its original place, after the last burial in ancient times had been made. Once the archaeologists carried out the necessary documentation, the slab was lifted and the chamber further recorded, together with its contents.

Like the shaft, the chamber is oval in shape, and has a water trench parallel to the entrance at the front of the chamber. Emergency conservation measures were required to extract the remains since the chamber was found flooded due to weather conditions at the time. These remains included 2 adult skeletons and 10 pottery vessels, including an urn, a trefoil jug, 4 bowls (including a skyphos and 2 kylikes), 2 lamps, and 2 plates. The objects reveal a date for this burial happening somewhere between 600-500 BC, thus during the Phoenician Period. The coming months will see the analysis of these remains. The tomb was preserved *in situ* with the collaboration of the developer through minor changes to the approved development plans.

### Post-Classical deposits in Rabat, Malta

In 2021, during archaeological monitoring works in Rabat, the archaeologists directed by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, uncovered large stone blocks in association with a complex archaeological stratigraphy. In order to define the chronology and function better, the Superintendence field team in December intervened on site to further investigate the feature. The excavation resulted in the uncovering of a section of foundations characterised by the reuse of older architectural material. The remains were likely to have been abandoned by the Late Roman Period and the Early Middle Ages, and then obliterated by a sequence of domestic dumps. The investigation revealed several archaeological deposits yielding significant cultural material and animal bones. This material could provide crucial information on dietary habits, social environment, and place functionality,



Phoenician Tomb Ġhajj Qajjet – opened tomb showing skeletal remains *in situ*.

as well as the geo-political transformations occurring in Rabat in the post-Classical period. The finds will be further studied, to shed further light on an area of Rabat poorly known from an archaeological perspective. The remains are being preserved *in situ* but will be re-buried.



Post-Classical deposits, Rabat, Malta – reutilised Classical masonry with associated deposits.

### The Mġarr ix-Xini project

Since 2005 the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has been part of an important project aimed at providing important insight on the significant Mġarr ix-Xini valley in Ta' Sannat, Gozo. Numerous interventions, including archaeological excavations and field-walking exercises, have resulted in the



*Mġarr ix-Xini – part of a palmenta utilised for the production of wine and oil.*

collection of a large amount of data showing the intense use of the valley, especially from an agricultural and productive perspective. Particularly, several wine and olive presses (featuring rock-cut troughs or tanks), commonly dated to the Classical Period, were identified, documented and studied. The Superintendence Archaeological Field Team contributed to the excavation and documentation of one of the rock-cut troughs in November 2021.

### **Investigations at St John's Co-Cathedral**

In 2021, development works connected to the new museum project at St John's Co-Cathedral continued under the surveillance of archaeology monitors directed by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. During the surveillance works, further areas containing human remains were uncovered as was the case in previous years, which continued building on the extent of the Knight's Period cemetery alongside the co-cathedral. The presence of human remains required the support of the osteologists and archaeologists from the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage at the site, for the recording, interpretation and extraction of the remains. In the coming months the Superintendence will be studying these remains further so that more light can be shed on who was buried in this cemetery.

At the end of 2021, the osteologists and archaeologists from the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage also

intervened to assist the archaeology monitors who were engaged by the St John's Co-Cathedral. This was done so as to investigate an area in the crypt for the preparation of a new burial space for the recently deceased ex-Grand Master; an area with a high possibility of containing human remains. During these works an old burial from the Knights' Period was noted and left untouched. The remains recovered from the space investigated are currently being studied by the Superintendence for future publication.

### **Punic tomb at Haż-Żabbar**

During trenching works for installation of new drainage systems in the outskirts of Haż-Żabbar, the archaeology monitor who was carrying out surveillance of these works under the direction of the Superintendence, discovered a shaft hewn out of the rock leading to a side chamber used for burials. Other archaeological features were unearthed in



*Punic Tomb, Haż-Żabbar – general view of tomb at the end of excavation.*



Punic Tomb, Haż-Żabbar – internal view of burial chamber showing artefacts still in situ.



Punic Tomb, Haż-Żabbar – view of entrance shaft showing sealing slab still in situ.

the vicinity, including agricultural trenches used in ancient times for cultivating crops. The archaeological investigation of the tomb was carried out by the Superintendence Archaeological Field Team in May 2021, together with the archaeology monitor.

## Underwater Projects

Increasing development along coastal areas of Malta and Gozo and offshore areas in Maltese territorial waters, particularly for necessary infrastructure such as the laying of pipelines, cables, ferry landings, and protective revetments along eroding shorelines, has called for the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage to

The investigation revealed that the sealing slab, which had closed the chamber after the last use of the tomb, was still in place. Once the archaeologists moved the sealing slab from the entrance to the burial chamber, it revealed the presence of different burials placed over several centuries. These included at least 2 urns used for placing cremated human remains in them. Beneath these, human bones from skeletons which had not been cremated were found. The bones mainly consisted of adult remains, but

there was also a skeleton of a young child laid on his/her back, and evidence of other younger children, all pointing to the Punic times. The archaeologists also discovered other remains including pottery vessels such as an amphora, jugs, plates and smaller vessels, and glass vessels. These burials reflect a burial ritual of that particular community which included placing containers connected to food and drink consumption in addition to ointments for the body, with the bodies of the deceased, perhaps to be used in the afterlife. Some of the objects date as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, whilst others are from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, indicating the tomb was probably used extensively across generations. The different types of burials, that is cremations and inhumations, indicate changing burial practices. The Superintendence is currently carrying out analysis on all the remains so that it can understand better the Punic Period community living in this area. The tomb was preserved *in situ* and services planned were redirected accordingly.

continue building its capacity in underwater projects.

The Superintendence continued with its objective to safeguard underwater cultural heritage that would otherwise have been disturbed. The Superintendence was thus involved in all stages of development; from

issuing permits for underwater surveys, monitoring and regulating underwater operations, investigating, rescue and research excavations, to collecting and storing data for future research and reference.

The permits which have been issued by the Superintendence to scientific entities and universities allow surveys of the seabed and our cultural heritage to be conducted utilising remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) or autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), which will provide valuable and crucial data necessary for the protection of cultural heritage.

Yearly, the Superintendence provides “Declarations of Archaeological Zones at Sea” in the Government Gazette to safeguard various shipwrecks in Maltese territorial waters and is involved in underwater archaeological excavations in collaboration with the Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit (UCHU) at Heritage Malta and the University of Malta. These entities survey and document Phoenician and Roman

shipwreck sites at depths of over 110m around Malta and Gozo, and along with the Superintendence, ensure the protection of these unique cultural heritage sites by using the latest technology and to provide the public with virtual access.

Officers from the Superintendence are also involved in projects, committees, and stakeholder consultations including the Coastal Sage Project and Marine Spatial Planning Committee. These are designed to protect cultural heritage along the coast or offshore that is at risk due to planning, environmental factors such as global warming and rising sea levels, or anthropogenic activities such as offshore spoil grounds.

Superintendence certified divers carried out underwater investigations and excavations in 2021 in areas around Malta and Gozo, which included Valletta, Paola, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, *Għallis*, and Mellieħa (*Għadira*) Bay. One of the site operations included the Marsaskala Water Polo Pitch area.

#### **Marsaskala Water Polo Pitch area**

The proposed development of a new water polo pitch to be situated within Marsaskala Bay includes an area that is known to be archaeologically sensitive. Previous finds of submerged vessels as well as amphorae in the bay are indicative of its uses as a commercial port and protective harbour during the Phoenician, Punic, Roman, and Byzantine periods as well as the Medieval and British periods.

In the past, the area around the coastline in Marsaskala Bay extended further inland, providing protection to vessels utilising the harbour. The surrounding alluvial plain receives sediment deposits from valleys above including *Wied il-Għajn*, *Wied iz-Ziju* and *Wied ta' Mazza*. As a result, cultural material that might be buried in these valleys is carried down with sediment and is then buried on the seabed. Dredging activities in 1993 led to the discovery of a substantial amount of cultural material. The subsequent rescue excavations highlighted the archaeological potential of the bay and the need for future protection and conservation.



*Superintendence officer during underwater survey.*

The Superintendence recognised that the proposed development would require constant monitoring as the seabed disturbance could risk uncovering cultural heritage. Considering this, an underwater investigation and excavation was warranted to understand the degree of cultural heritage below the seabed that would guide plans, amendments or rerouting of services. The excavations took place over a three-week period with the assistance of dive teams from the Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit at Heritage Malta. Grids were created, underwater trenches were excavated, and photogrammetric documentation surveys were taken to create 3D models and Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) to document the site.

Teams excavated to a depth of just over 5 meters below

the seabed in grids spaced over 2500 square meters. The finds included large amphorae fragments, lids, and handles, cooking pots, numerous pottery sherds, encrusted nails, metal objects, animal bone (some of which was worked), and wood fragments. One of the most interesting pieces, the first of its kind found in Malta, was a game board made of stone with grid markings on both sides, called a *Ludus latruncolorum* or *Latrones* - Latin for 'game of mercenaries' - a Roman game of strategy played on a board (similar to checkers). The area covered by this proposed development is a small section of the bay, however the underwater excavations yielded sufficient finds to show the archaeological importance of the area and as a result, plans will need to be amended to ensure its continued protection.

## Archaeological Monitoring and Discoveries

The Superintendence continued to maintain an important role in the managing of the archaeology resource through constant archaeology surveillance (commonly referred to as archaeology monitoring) of those developments that fall within areas of known archaeological sensitivity. Archaeology surveillance is carried out by professionals, having qualifications in archaeology, and who are approved by and work under the direction of the Superintendence. During 2021, the Superintendence issued **319** Terms of Reference for developments to be carried out under archaeology surveillance and carried out

**134** inspections in relation to ongoing surveillance. During 2021, archaeology surveillance yielded a total of **144** new discoveries. The archaeologists present on site did not limit themselves to identifying the newly discovered archaeology features, but also carried out investigations and records as directed by the Superintendence. On conclusion of investigations, various mitigation measures were adopted by the Superintendence to ensure the preservation of such features. By the end of 2021, **229** certifications for the successful completion of archaeological surveillance cases were issued by the Superintendence.

**Table 2: Breakdown of the 144 discoveries made in 2021 by category**

Category	Number of Sites
Agricultural	47
Agricultural/Domestic	1
Agricultural/Water Storage/Management	3
Agricultural/Funerary	3
Agricultural/Industrial	4
Agricultural Industrial/Water Storage/Management	3
Agricultural/Water Storage/Management/Funerary	1
Agricultural/Structural	1
Domestic	3
Domestic/Water Management/Industrial	1

Category	Number of Sites
Domestic/Industrial	1
Domestic/Sanitary	1
Funerary	9
Funerary/Domestic	1
Industrial	6
Industrial/Agricultural/Funerary	1
Industrial/Funerary	1
Military	4
Military/Water Storage/Management	2
No features	9
Pottery Scatter	6
Pottery Scatter/Industrial	1
Structural Remains	7
Structural Remains/Domestic	1
Transport/Water Management/Structural	1
Unclassified	5
Underwater	2
Water Storage/Management	14
Water Storage/Management/Archival Material	1
Water Storage/Management/Funerary	1
Water Storage/Management/Domestic	1
Water Storage/Management/Domestic/Structural	1
Water Storage/Management/Industrial/Structural	1

The following is an overview of the more salient archaeological discoveries made during 2021.

**Table 3: Significant archaeological discoveries made in 2021**

Site	Locality
Classic Period Remains in Triq Sir Temi Zammit	Żebbiegħ, Mgarr, Malta
WWII Shelter in Triq Roger Debattista c/w Triq il-Frangiskani	Msida
Rock-cut features in Sir David Bruce Hospital	Mtarfa
Silo pits in Triq San Oswald	Mtarfa
Agricultural landscape	Magħtab, Naxxar
Catacomb in Triq Sammat	Paola
Remains in Gozo Middle School, Triq Fortunato Mizzi	Rabat, Ghawdex
Fuklar in Triq Sant' Orsla	Valletta
Megaliths at Ta' Maġġi, Triq San Leonardu	Żabbar

**Classical Period Remains, on a site at Triq Sir Temi Zammit, Żebbiegħ, Mgarr, Malta**

The development site falls within the Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) of Mgarr and

Żebbiegħ with archaeological discoveries including structural remains, water management systems, and quarrying recorded in the immediate vicinity of the site. The sensitivity of Mgarr and the Żebbiegħ area

has been known since the early 1900s with more discoveries being unearthed during the past century and more. The AAI was primarily designated in view of the presence of two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the prehistoric remains of *Ta' Hagra*t and *Skorba*, but also provides protection to a varied repertoire of archaeological remains.

The site was investigated as part of an archaeological evaluation during the processing of a planning application. The soil cover on site was very shallow with only a few centimetres of topsoil resting on the bedrock surface, and no archaeological stratigraphy was present within this topsoil deposit. Upon completion of soil and removal of material, a total of 7 features were discovered on site. The features on site consisted of agricultural trenches, a circular pit, shallow quarrying remains with traces of plastering which may be interpreted as foundation cuts or a threading floor, a tomb, and the remains of an anchor block. The archaeological material yielded from within the archaeological features, suggests that there were 2 distinct phases on site: a Punic phase and a Roman phase, during which an oil production facility was established on site. Currently discussions are under way to identify the best way to preserve these features.

### Site at, Triq Roger Debattista c/w, Triq il-Frangiskani, Msida

The Superintendence was alerted by the architect of the project after an opening was identified



*Żebbiegħ, Mgarr – counter weight forming part of a Roman period oil pressing mechanism.*

during material removal works. Upon inspection by Superintendence officials, it was discovered that the entrance led to a small World War II shelter that was

partially backfilled. The shelter comprised of a corridor leading to a second entrance on the opposite part of the street. It is highly likely that this shelter was of private use as it is not marked in the official survey of shelters available at the Public Works Department. A series of religious sculptures hewn in the rock-face were identified. These works are similar to those found in other wartime shelters in the Msida/Pietà area thus it is possible that they are also the creation of artist Fredu Azzopardi (1880-1949). The



*Msida WWII Shelter – religious relief showing the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*



*Msida WWII Shelter – religious relief showing Our Lady of Sorrows.*



*Triq San Oswald, Mtarfa – Opening of silo pit.*

shelter will be conserved in its entirety under the proposed development.

#### **Rock-cut features,**

##### **Sir David Bruce Hospital, Mtarfa**

Investigations were carried out within the grounds of the former hospital to identify the best place to locate sports facilities, which will adjoin a private school. A number of rock-cut features were identified in the area formerly occupied by a football ground. The features consisted of two alignments of rock-cut pits, perpendicular to each other, which meet at a right angle as if to designate a corner of a rectangular space. These pits were originally circular in shape, but most have been re-cut to a rectangular shape. Within the cleared space of the football ground, two rock-cut features parallel to each other were identified. One of the features consists of rock-cut steps leading to a rock-cut chamber, within which two stone benches have been installed in a more recent period. The roof of this chamber and corridor is no longer extant. A second space consisted of a long rectangular corridor with steps at either end.

At the bottom of one of the steps was a rock-cut recess in the floor of the corridor. This feature closely resembles a similar corridor feature recorded in a separate site in Mtarfa. The nature of the rock-cut features within this site is yet to be determined in that no cultural material has been discovered. The sports facilities will be designed to incorporate these features.

#### **Silo Pits, Triq San Oswald, Mtarfa**

The site covered by a development permit is in close proximity to a site mentioned by A.A. Caruana in 1882. In 1882, Caruana stated that the Temple of Proserpina was found, and that the site yielded mosaics and other Classical ruins. Other discoveries of tombs and silos were also recorded in the area. Following the issue of a permit to extend an existing building for social use, the site was investigated as part of archaeological monitoring works due to the proposed development. The silo was stripped of the overlying soil, which was very shallow and disturbed. Within the first few days of works, circular cuts measuring circa 40 – 60cm in diameter were uncovered. A total of 9 circular features and a rectangular feature were discovered. Upon the investigation of the circular features, 7 resulted to be silos, possibly dating to the Bronze Age period as determined from the nature of the material culture recovered. The rectangular feature was investigated,



*Triq San Oswald, Mtarfa – Rectangular rock-cut feature of undetermined use.*

and this consisted of a long corridor with two high steps at one end, at the bottom of which was a small rectangular recess in the floor of the corridor. At the western end of the corridor a small chamber in the side of the corridor was located. The function of these feature is unknown due to the lack of cultural material inside. Interestingly it resembles a similar feature also discovered in Mtarfa. Discussions are currently underway to amend the approved design to preserve these features.

**Agricultural Landscape at Magħtab, Naxxar**

The site lies outside the Development Zone of Naxxar within the Magħtab area and 264m from a buffer zone of known dolmens which were granted a Grade A degree of protection by the Planning Authority. The application is proposing the construction of a Waste-to-Energy facility just East off the main landfill. The area is archaeologically sensitive with numerous archaeological features discovered in adjacent areas. To enable a better assessment of the proposal, the Superintendence conducted an archaeological evaluation of the site proposed for development to identify any further cultural heritage assets. The Superintendence commenced the evaluation by conducting fieldwalking and trial trenches, 19 in all. The results of which indicated the presence of an ancient agricultural landscape mainly characterised by agricultural trenches. Some Classical Period pottery was also recovered but this was mostly mixed with more modern fill/material. Subsequently, full soil stripping of the site ensued and resulted in the discovery of a total of 1,100 rock-cut features consisting of numerous alignments of agricultural trenches, post-holes, quarrying activity,



*Magħtab – agricultural trenches.*

and tree pits. The Superintendence concluded that whilst these features constitute an important record of past archaeological practices, the benefits of the proposed development far outweighs their importance and thus will only be preserved by record.

**Catacomb in Triq Sammat, Paola**

The site proposed for development is located within the Urban Conservation Area of Paola and the Area of Archaeological Importance of the *Hal Saflieni* Hypogeum, a Class A scheduled site and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Initial documentation proposed excavation in rock for a reservoir. Given the location of the property within an area of high archaeological importance, the Superintendence was not in favour of rock-cutting in this area. Subsequently, both the project’s architect and the developer



*Triq Sammat, Paola – general view of catacomb complex.*



Gozo Middle School - Triq Fortunato Mizzi, Rabat, Għawdex – aerial view showing archaeological features on site.

complied with the Superintendence's proposal and revised all drawings accordingly. The revised drawings no longer proposed any rock-cutting interventions and the removal of fill was found to be acceptable, subject to the condition of archaeological monitoring. Archaeological monitoring at this site uncovered three features: a well, a rectangular cut of unknown typology, and a richly decorated catacomb complex dating to the Late Roman Period. The catacomb was quite substantial, consisting of a total of 3 corridors with rock-cut steps leading to 10 burial chambers. All burial chambers consist of rock-cut *arcosolia* with double headrests and niches for lamps. Of particular

notice was a window tomb located in the sides of one of the corridors. The entrance of this window tomb consisted of an arched niche flanked by two columns on opposite sides, possibly in Doric style, engraved with concave curves and a cross. A *loculi* tomb, adorned with two carved bird motifs above the uppermost edge of its cut was also present, adjacent to the above-mentioned window tomb. Bird motifs are a symbol of Christian iconography. Other decorative motifs and/or features throughout the three

corridors of the catacomb complex included engraved circular volutes, unfinished and/or eroded columns, and rock-cut niches for lamps. The Superintendence, the project's architect, and the developer are currently collaborating in designing a technical solution that will integrate the catacombs within the approved development.

#### Remains at, Gozo College Middle School, Triq Fortunato Mizzi, Rabat, Għawdex

Archaeological investigations continued in preparation for the extension of the Middle School at Rabat, Għawdex. Extensive ancient quarry remains,



Gozo Middle School - Triq Fortunato Mizzi, Rabat, Għawdex – possible prehistoric feature.

large vaulted cisterns, a cluster of intact amphorae, and the ruins of an early modern farmhouse were discovered in 2020 within this site and the continued works in 2021 have yielded further archaeological discoveries.

The ancient quarry continued to be exposed, and the ruins of an Early Modern farmhouse partly overlying this quarry is also in the process of being exposed and documented. An interesting find is what is being interpreted as a prehistoric rock-cut space. The form of this feature is very similar to prehistoric tombs excavated in the 1950s by Evans in Xemxija, as well as to part of the chambers within the Ħal Saflieni Hypogeum in Tarxien. Unfortunately, no archaeological material was discovered within this feature except for a single piece of obsidian (volcanic glass used during the Prehistoric Period to create cutting tools) since the feature was partially truncated in antiquity during the creation of the ancient quarry as well as by the construction of the school. These features were protected and will be integrated within the school project. However, a small part that continues beneath the existing school will require further investigation.

#### **Site at Triq Sant' Orsla, Valletta**

Monitoring works in a townhouse in Valletta brought to light a traditional Maltese oven, commonly known as *fuklar*. The house had been in disuse for some time, preserving a number of the traditional local features, including two different layers of flagstone flooring, a bell-shaped well with connecting rock-cut channels, and another well or cesspit which is still undergoing investigation. The oven itself had traces of various layers of plaster, and remnants of Sicilian Majolica tiles were also identified along the wall above the oven. Construction works in the adjoining property covered by the same development permit



*Triq Sant' Orsla, Valletta – remains of a traditional cooking area.*

also uncovered a heavily truncated bell-shaped well which was cut in previous works. The *fuklar* is an important record of the social history of the more recent historic period and following discussion with developer, this will be retained and restored.

#### **Megaliths at, Ta' Maġġi, Triq San Leonardu, Ħaż-Żabbar**

A significant rediscovery was made this year during development driven works. The existing record stated that prehistoric remains within the *Ta' Maġġi* Area (previously *il-Ħarrieq*) in Ħaż-Żabbar, were destroyed during the development of the industrial estate. Upon site inspection following the receipt of a report, the Superintendence noted that the structural remains consisting of standing megaliths on site were in the same alignments as those recorded as in the 1960s and preserved in the Superintendent's archives, and none of these had been removed. An archaeological investigation was carried out within the site covered by a development permit, however, unfortunately, as the site had already held a building prior to this

intervention, no archaeological deposits were discovered, and archaeological material was scarce. The megalithic remains were historically incorporated into a rubble wall and currently fall under two different ownerships. The boundary wall designating ownership was lowered to have a continuous flow of the remains, improving legibility. The Superintendence provided the developer with a way forward to integrate the remains within the approved development.



*Megaliths at Ta' Maġġi, Haż-Żabbar – part of a megalithic wall constructed in header and stretcher technique.*

## 2. National Inventory Processes

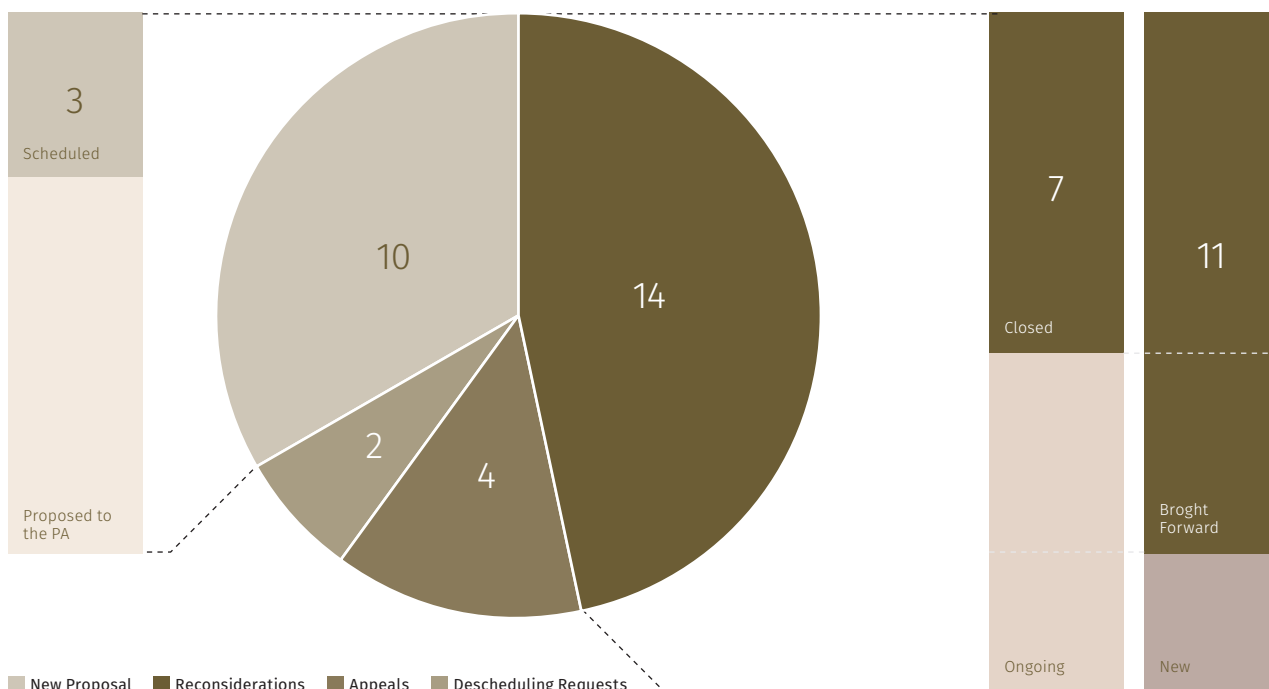
### Statutory Protection

The duties of the Superintendence when it comes to statutory protection extend beyond solely putting forward proposals for the consideration of the Planning Authority Executive Council. During 2021, the Superintendence’s efforts extended to preparing the necessary groundwork for the revision of the basis for the National Inventory. This was done while taking into consideration the new National Policy for Cultural Heritage, whilst also improving procedures and public engagement processes and with the amalgamation of GIS software and platforms that had been introduced in the preceding year. The Superintendence has also continued its

work on scheduling matters, primarily in following through on reconsideration requests submitted on scheduling matters approved in previous years, as well as commending new entries for scheduling.

During 2021, the Superintendence worked on a total of 30 scheduling cases, some of which still require further engagement in 2022. The 30 cases can be split between New Proposals (10), Reconsideration Requests (14), Requests from the Public to Revisit Existing Scheduling (2) and Appeals against the Planning Authority’s decision to schedule, submitted with the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal (4).

**Figure 1: Scheduling Cases SCH was involved in during 2021**



\*The number of New Proposals does not include any properties scheduled through a reconsideration process

The 10 new properties that the Superintendence has commended for scheduling to the Executive Council of the Planning Authority result from 6 different exercises:

- 5 of these commendations were the result of public engagement;
- 1 was proposed by the property owner;
- 2 by local NGOs;
- 2 by members of the public.

Out of the 10 properties, the Planning Authority has accepted 3 proposals, deferred the decision on 4, issued an Emergency Conservation Order in order to further analyse the commendation on another and is yet to call upon the Superintendence to present the remaining 2. At this stage, the properties were all inspected externally for documentation purposes. The following is a full list of the above properties.

**Table 4: Properties scheduled in 2021**

Exercise #	Property	Grade	Date of Presentation	Publication
1	Nru. 24, Dar il-Bebbux, Nru. 25, Dar ta' Massi & Old Trafford, Triq Santa Marija c/w Triq San Karlu, Għaxaq	2	9 <sup>th</sup> March and again on the 30 <sup>th</sup> of March	GN 478/21 dated 9 <sup>th</sup> April
1	Barumbara Tonda & Remnants of Cotter's Foundation's Agricultural Estate, Triq Santa Marija c/w Triq iċ-Ċavi, Mqabba	1*	9 <sup>th</sup> March and again on the 30 <sup>th</sup> of March	GN 478/21 dated 9 <sup>th</sup> April
2	Villa Castro, Triq Castro c/w Trejjet Ignazio Micallef, Naxxar	2	20 <sup>th</sup> July	GN 1043/21 dated 30 <sup>th</sup> July

\* The Barumbara and remnants of the estate were proposed to the council at Grade 2, and were elevated during the discussions held in the first council meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Table 5: Deferred decisions**

Exercise #	Property Location	Grade	Date of Presentation
5	Żejtun	1	5 <sup>th</sup> October
5	Mosta	1	5 <sup>th</sup> October
5	Mosta	1	5 <sup>th</sup> October
5	Żebbuġ	1	5 <sup>th</sup> October

**Table 6: Emergency Conservation Orders issued in 2021**

Exercise #	Property	Grade	Date of Presentation	Publication
6	Palazzina Vincenti, Triq il-Kbira & Triq Ġorġ Borg Olivier, 186-187, Triq il-Kbira & Wesgħet Gużi Tanti, & 6, Triq Ġorġ Borg Olivier, St Julian's	2	14 <sup>th</sup> December	GN 1620/21 dated 17 <sup>th</sup> December

**Table 7: Properties proposed for scheduling in 2021 but not yet called upon**

Exercise #	Property Location	Grade	Date proposal was submitted
3	Gżira	2	17 <sup>th</sup> August
4	Żejtun	2	17 <sup>th</sup> August

In addition to the properties which were commended to the Planning Authority, the Superintendence engaged with at least 52 other properties with the aim of proposing their scheduling in the first quarter of 2022. A substantial number of these properties derives from engagement with the general public and NGOs, however, these properties still require full engagement to assess the individual merits through research and inspection. All proposals, whether originating from within the entity or externally are being recorded on a GIS project, which the Superintendence introduced during the year of review. This project is one of many GIS based improvements introduced this year, to ease the work of SCH officers. In addition, the Superintendence received 2 requests to revise existing scheduling which require further engagement.

In accordance with the Development Planning Act, the owner of a property that is scheduled can submit a request to the Planning Authority to reconsider the scheduling. In 2020 over 40 properties were scheduled, and a number of reconsiderations were expected to be submitted. In effect, 10 requests for reconsiderations were received. Of these requests, 7 have been closed, 2 were suspended by the owner and another had to be deferred due to lack of adequate representation from the owners. In two of the closed cases, the owner or his/her representative asked the Executive Council of the Planning Authority to

carry out an inspection of the property in question, for which the Superintendence was to be present. In one particular case in Hal Tarxien, a request for reconsideration on the amended buffer zone of *Villa Barbaro* was submitted which resulted in another extension of the buffer zone. This case is being led by the Planning Authority and the Superintendence is retaining a consultative role; primarily since this case has been going on for close to ten years. An 11<sup>th</sup> request, which was brought forward to this year, was received in the late weeks of 2020. This left the Superintendence no choice but to engage with the request in 2021. The entity presented this case to the Executive Council of the Planning Authority in July, and it was inspected conjointly in September but a final decision is yet to be reached. In addition, 3 new requests for reconsideration were submitted to the Planning Authority in 2021: 2 related to the 2021 amendment of the buffer zone around *Villa Barbaro* and are currently being dealt with by the Planning Authority for the reasons already explained above; the other request necessitating the Authority to reconsider both the extent and the grade given to a newly scheduled property. The latter was presented to the Executive Council of the Planning Authority in July, and was conjointly inspected upon a request from the owner in September. The Superintendence is waiting to be called upon for a final decision. These reconsideration requests can be summed up as follows:

**Table 8: Reconsiderations received**

Year of Scheduling	Property	Grade	Decision	Publication
2019	Sliema	2	Scheduling Confirmed	N/A
2019	Sliema	3	Scheduling Confirmed	N/A
2019	Sliema	3	Scheduling Confirmed	N/A
2019	Gżira	2	Scheduling Confirmed	N/A
2019	Hal Lija	2	Suspended by Owner	N/A
2019	Naxxar	2	Suspended by Owner	N/A
2019	Manikata	2	Suspended by Owner	N/A
2020	Villa Testaferrata Bonici, Triq John Borg, Żejtun	2 & Buffer Zone	Change in extent	GN 1048/21 of the 30th July
2020	Buffer Zone around Villa Barbaro, Triq iż-Żejtun, Tarxien	N/A	Outline Extended and Restrictions Modified	GN 1173/21 of the 3rd September

Year of Scheduling	Property	Grade	Decision	Publication
2020	Pietà	1		Unpublished
2020	Pietà	1, 2 & 3	Not yet reached	N/A
2021	Mqabba	1	Not yet reached	N/A
2021	Hal Tarxien	Buffer Zone	To be called upon by PA	N/A
2021	Hal Tarxien	Buffer Zone	To be called upon by PA	N/A

The Superintendence was also called upon as witness in 2021 for an appeal case being heard in front of the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal that had been ongoing since 2020. This is one of 6 appeals from a scheduling decision that was lodged that same year. In addition, 3 new appeal

cases were lodged against the Planning Authority's decisions relating to scheduling that had been taken during 2021, for which the Superintendence retains a consultative role and relevant officers are listed as witnesses to the case.

## GIS (Geographic Information Systems)

In 2020 the Superintendence embarked on a major project to convert data in a variety of formats into a number of georeferenced data sets to be uploaded onto a GIS interface, which had been secured through the acquisition of the necessary software by the end of 2020. This initial pilot project was further invested upon during 2021 through additional data input, data harmonisation, and training.

### Spatial Data: Georeferencing and data cleansing

In July 2021 the process of transforming archaeological sites into spatial data using a GIS system was continued. This started with a review of all existing data in order to quantify how many sites discovered during archaeological monitoring from previous years were still to be georeferenced. The number of new sites discovered during 2021 also need to be accounted for. Several registers were created to sort through all the existing data and to create a standard for data capture.

Following the creation of these registers and quantification of all existing data, sites which were geo-referenced and included in the GIS system in previous years began to be reviewed for the process of data cleansing. This is an essential step that allows the data to be used for query and statistical purposes. The process of data cleansing is ongoing; so is the continuation of georeferencing, with over

100 new sites added to the register by the end of 2021. Sites will continue to be uploaded on the GIS system in order to assist the different units of the Superintendence in their work.

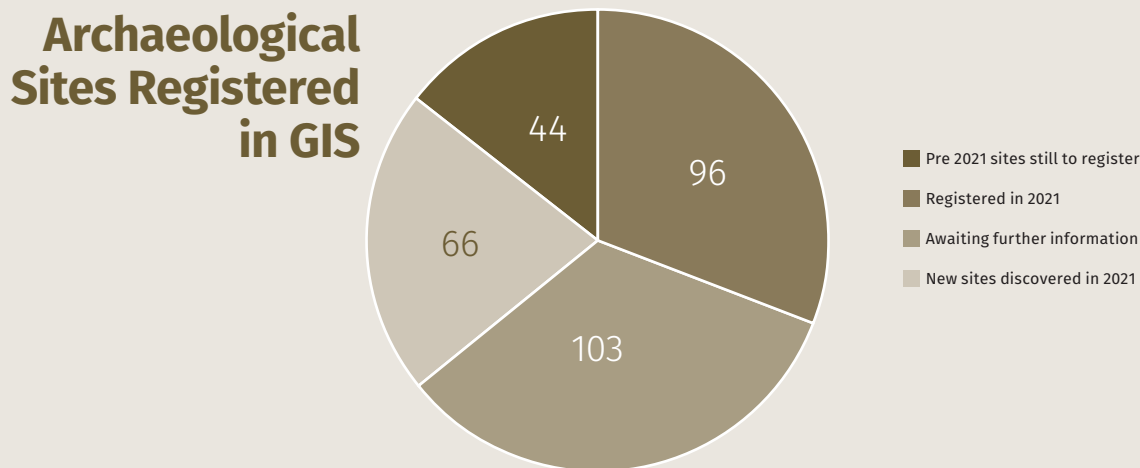
In an ongoing collaboration with the Planning Authority related to the collection of underwater sites, existing data was reviewed and a list of 108 underwater and coastal sites was compiled. This data will be shared with the Planning Authority as part of a project dedicated to the plotting of existing marine sites.

### Training in GIS

Staff of the Superintendence were provided with basic training on how to use the GIS platform on which the spatial data is being uploaded. This ensures that in the fulfilment of all the different roles, all staff of the Superintendence can adequately make use of the available features and also to fully understand the data being displayed. With a proper understanding of the capabilities of the GIS software, staff from different units were then asked to identify how this software may be applied to their specific roles and duties. This has allowed for the planning of new projects that will be started in the coming year; these projects will go beyond the area of archaeology to include data related to all functions of the Superintendence. A data capture

tool was made available to all officers processing applications whereby any properties identified as meriting statutory protection can be submitted through an apposite form which then populates a GIS layer directly.

Further advanced training in GIS is planned for staff of the National Inventory, Archaeology and Research Unit to ensure that all features of the software can be fully utilised and planned projects related to spatial data can be carried out effectively.



**Figure 2: Number of archaeological sites registered in GIS (not included 2,292 from previous year)**

#### Field data capture Surveys

In the fulfilment of its duties related to the preservation of built heritage, in 2021 the Superintendence carried out a survey of existing properties within a number of streets that fall within the Development Zone of Balzan. The area under study contained mainly post-war buildings, constructed during the mid-twentieth century and late twentieth century. The GIS platform was essential in the carrying out of this survey as it provided the adequate software for the data capture and plotting of sites straight from the field. The fulcrum of the study centered around an interest in modernist buildings, namely properties built during the 1950s and 1960s. The study included 495 total records, with each property categorised according to its merits. Data was collated using ArcGIS, which allowed instant on-site cataloguing and documentation of all sites, with geolocation also enabled.

Modernist architecture is a broad term used to describe an architectural expression ranging from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the burgeoning 21<sup>st</sup> century. The parameters created to assess these buildings were based on international and local architectural research dating to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Numerous typologies, building methodologies or aesthetic choices were then designated as salient examples of this style. These characteristics were then interpreted into a glossary of terms that were then assigned to the appropriate buildings.

Another parameter introduced was the level of scheduling one may ascribe to a particular property. The merits were calculated following the official scheduling grades pertaining to the built fabric and also included a Grade 2\* scheduling for buildings that are superior to Grade 2 properties but do not merit the full protection afforded by Grade 1 scheduling. This system of scheduling, whilst only a hypothetical exercise, allowed for a seamless translation of the data garnered by this research into tangible and justifiable explanation for purporting importance onto these buildings. Out of the total 495 buildings, 5 were identified as meriting Grade 1 scheduling; 38 were identified as meriting Grade 2\* scheduling; 134 were identified as meriting Grade 2 scheduling; 172 were identified as meriting Grade 3 scheduling, and finally, with 146 identified as not meriting scheduling of any sort. The Superintendence intends to follow up this initial exercise by continuing further research

into this area and to extend its scope of study.

Following the announcement by the Government in 2021 of a regeneration project for several areas in Marsa, a field survey has also been planned in this area in order to identify existing properties

with varying degrees of cultural heritage value. The survey has been planned with the use of the available GIS software. The results of this survey will allow the Superintendence to make informed recommendations on the treatment of the buildings that fall within the area proposed for regeneration.

## Inventory of movables

An important aspect with regards to the Inventory embarked upon during 2021 is the extension to include movable cultural heritage items. The Superintendence is taking stock of those artefacts within its repository to identify the items that merit inclusion in the National Inventory. The Superintendence has a repository that includes cultural material discovered

in the last 30 years, all of which are obtained from secure contexts. As part of the inventorying process, each item is given a unique number, photographed, and a number of attributes intended to properly and aptly describe each item is filled in. To date a total of 652 individual artefacts were inventoried, which when grouped by decade provide the following results:

**Table 9: Number of artefacts inventoried by decade**

Period	Number of Artefacts
1991 to 2000	44
2001 to 2010	26
2011 to 2020	525
2021 to 2022	57

So far, the inventory has been limited to the Valletta repository, the process of which is almost complete, whilst the inventorying at the off-site repository is still to be undertaken. The following is a grouping of the artefacts inventoried so far:

**Table 10: Most common artefacts inventoried so far**

Category	Type
Most occurring artefacts overall	Trefoil Jug, Bead, Coin, Smoking Pipe, Oil Lamp
Main category overall	Archaeological Finds
Most occurring material	Ceramic, Metal
Most occurring feature	Vessel, Jewellery

The remit of the National Inventory is far and wide-reaching as defined in the Cultural Heritage Act, and the aspect of movable cultural heritage had so far remained untapped. Apart from the above exercise, it is also being extended to include stolen goods which are being returned to the Superintendence by the Malta Police Force on the termination of the associated

criminal procedure presented in 2014. Among these is an assemblage of numerous paleontological artefacts returned to the State following the conclusion of another criminal procedure. This assemblage has been handed over to Heritage Malta to form part of its reserve collection which is open to researchers and students.

### 3. Movable Heritage Control

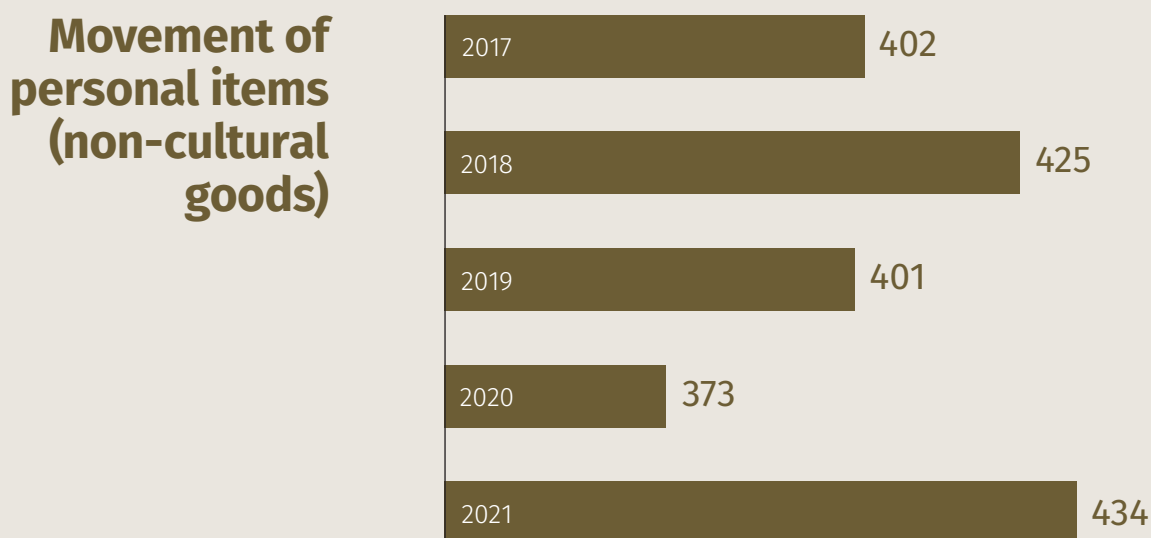
The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage regulates the import and export of cultural items moving between Malta and EU Member States, as well as from, or to non-EU countries. These cases are referred to the Superintendence by the Customs Department, shipping companies, or Malta Post.

#### Certification for the Movement of Items (personal items excluding cultural heritage objects)

In keeping with long-standing practice, the Superintendence also reviews the export and movement of “personal items” to ensure that no cultural heritage items are included. In 2020, the Superintendence introduced processing fees for applications pertaining to the permanent export of non-cultural personal effects; standard processing fee being €35 and €60 in case of express service.

Throughout 2021, the Superintendence reviewed **434** cases of export and movement, in which cases the exporter had declared that no item of cultural heritage value was being exported. The number of cases marked an increase from previous years, with 61 more cases than in 2020 (373), 33 more cases than in 2019 (401 cases), 9 cases more than those processed in 2018 (425 cases) and 32 cases more than those processed in 2017 (402 cases).

**Figure 3: Statistics showing movement of personal items for period 2017-2021**



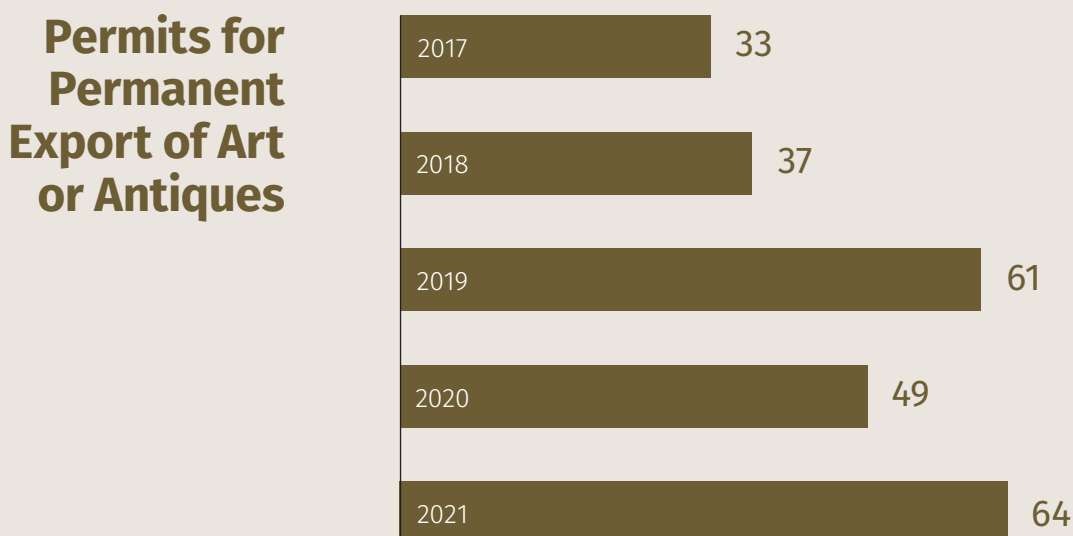
## Export of Cultural Heritage items leaving the National Territory

As stated in the law, the export of cultural heritage items from Malta requires permission from the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. In 2021, the Superintendence issued a total of 64 permits for the export of cultural heritage items. Of these 64 permits, 38 cases were for the export of cultural heritage items (a total of 84 cultural heritage items) and 26 cases were for the export of contemporary or

decorative art (a total of 48 modern cultural items). None of these cases required inspecting, since adequate information for assessment had been made available to the Superintendence.

The 64 permissions granted in 2021 marked a significant increase over permissions as issued in 2020 (49 cases) and in 2019 (61 cases).

**Figure 4: Statistics showing permits for permanent export of cultural heritage items for period 2017-2021**



## Temporary Movement of Cultural Items

The Superintendence also reviews and regulates applications for the temporary export of cultural items out of the Maltese territory for purposes of restoration, exhibition, study or for other cultural

purposes. Nine permits involving the temporary movement/ export of a total of 134 cultural heritage items were issued in 2021, marking a significant increase on the 0 permits issued in 2020.

## Inspection and Certification of Cultural Items Imported from Outside the European Union

As stated in the law, the Superintendence is also called upon by Customs to inspect and certify cultural heritage items that are imported from outside the European Union. This process is initiated by the importer in order to comply with procedures put in

place by the Customs Department. 5% of the value of the item in question is collected as per L.N.4 of 1968, as amended by L.N.104 of 1981 and L.N.407 of 2007. The ad valorem fee of 5% of the cultural items' value as accepted by the Superintendence may be waived

when the nature of import involves educational, restoration and/or public exhibition purposes.

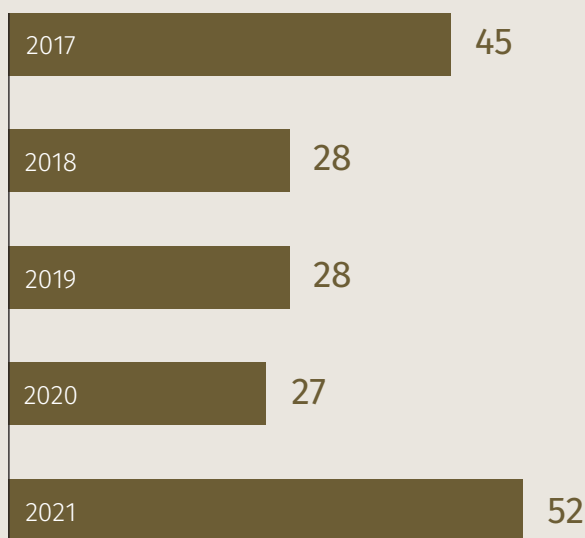
Items inspected in 2021 included numismatics, silverware, ceramics, paintings, archaeological artefacts, and World War II memorabilia. In the course of 2021, the Superintendence inspected and certified the import of 52 cases of cultural heritage items. These 52 cases mark a significant increase on the 27 cases inspected in 2020 and the 25 cases inspected in 2019. This activity generated a revenue of €20,377.7, which marked a considerable increase when compared to the €4,640.60 collected for import inspections in 2020 and a slight decrease when compared to the €23,228.50 collected for import

inspections in 2019. These unpredictable spikes in revenue are indicative of the exceptional import of prestigious and costly items in the course of a given year rather than the amount.

The Customs Department may choose to release cultural items without prior consent of the Superintendence when items of cultural value are imported from within or from outside the EU. Several such instances occurred in 2021. In these instances, imported cultural items that originated from outside the EU (including numismatics and decorative pieces) were initially registered with the Superintendence but consequently cleared by the Customs Department.

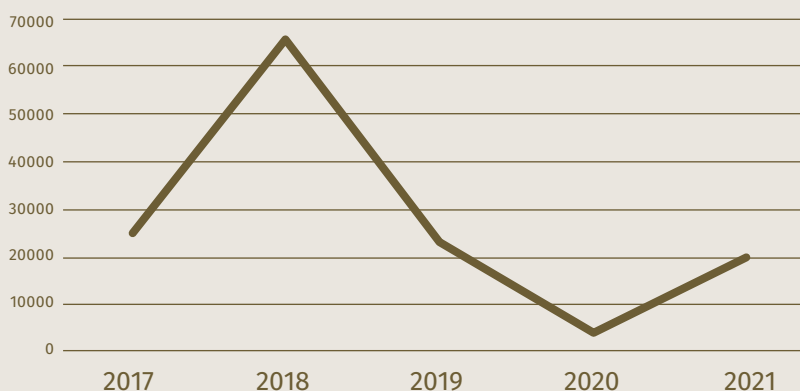
**Figure 5: Statistics showing certification of imported cultural heritage items for period 2017-2021**

### Certification of Imported Art or Antiques



**Figure 6: Revenue generated from import inspections**

### Generated Revenue



## Temporary import for educational, restoration and/or public exhibition purposes

In 2021, 3 cases involved the inspection of cultural heritage effects which were temporarily imported for restoration purposes. The *ad valorem* fee and other

expenses as previously described were waived as the nature of the temporary imports was for restoration purposes in line with the provisions of L.N. 35.03.

## Liaison with national and international agencies in enforcing movement of cultural items

In 2021, the Superintendence attended Expert Group meetings and Project Groups presently organised remotely by DG TAXUD<sup>1</sup> and the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council between all Member States, on customs issues related to cultural items and governing EU policy. During these meetings, Member States discussed pressing issues, including the return of cultural objects under directive 2014/60/EU, the preparation for the implementation of the Import Regulation 880/2019, and the foreseen introduction of an EU-wide registration system.

The Superintendence retained access to the EU's Commission International Market Information System known as the IMI portal, which allows for direct and bilateral exchanges between Member States. The system is used when an authority or regulatory entity has reason to believe that a return of a cultural item

is possible through this administrative procedure. The contacted authority must be able to identify the item concerned via the notification.

Superintendence officials involved in the monitoring of moveable cultural property attended workshops and meetings that also featured further discussion on organised crime and counterterrorism, addressing the issue of illicit trade in cultural goods. These included the UNESCO/ICOM Workshop "Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property", and *Protection du patrimoine culturel – Missions et engagement de l'Alliance internationale pour la protection du patrimoine dans les zones en conflit (ALIPH)*.

<sup>1</sup> Directorate-General Taxation and Customs Union



## 4. Heritage Advice on Building Development

### Development Consultations: Land-Use and Development Applications

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage continued fulfilling its role as a designated statutory external consultee to the Planning Authority on land use and development planning applications. The Superintendence is consulted on all full development planning applications received by the Planning Authority, as well as on minor amendment applications, summary planning applications, development notification orders,

dangerous structures, regularisation applications and planning control applications which may have an impact on cultural heritage. The Superintendence is also consulted on roadworks permit applications by Transport Malta and by the Environment and Resources Authority on reports of cultural heritage surveys as part of the Environment Impact Assessments. A classification by type and quantities of development applications is found in Table 11.

### Administrative Changes

Four new personnel recruited in 2021 joined the Heritage Planning Consultation Unit. Two of the new personnel are a replacement for members of staff who were transferred to other units and the other two were recruited to augment the unit's capabilities to respond to its tasks more efficiently. The overall staff complement within the unit was thus increased. It now consists of 1 unit head (with responsibility also for the Built Heritage Restoration Inspectorate), 1 senior cultural heritage executive, 10 executive officers and 1 administrative assistant

(shared with the BHRI). The new recruits underwent induction training that included lectures, workshops and job-shadowing. The unit is divided into two teams, one responsible for applications within the Urban Conservation Area (UCA) and the other for applications within the development scheme and Outside Development Zone (ODZ). Both teams hold weekly meetings regularly with senior officials to discuss collegially challenging applications that provide an optimum environment for sharing experiences and knowledge.

### Overview of Development Application Trends

In 2021, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage received a total of 10,685 consultation requests from the Planning Authority on development planning applications, of which the most significant included: 6,662 first consultations (including Summary applications), 2,662 re-consultations, and 686 minor amendment consultations (see Table 11). This amount excludes other types of development

applications, such as Development Notification Orders, Planning Control Applications, Dangerous Structures, Regularisations, and others. This marks a slight increase on the previous year when 10,516 development planning applications were received.

Of the 6,662 first consultations, 2,781 applications were responded to at filtering stage, which amount

to circa 42% of the total new consultations received, a small increase in the percentage of applications filtered during 2020 (39%). Another increase was registered in the number of re-consultations carried out by the Planning Authority (from 2,312 in 2020 to 2,662 in 2021 - excluding e-mail communications) which indicates the increased engagement in the assessment of cases which impact on cultural heritage.

The road works permit applications received in 2021 decreased significantly from 2,420 in 2020 to 1,759 in 2021. Other applications, such as Development Notification Orders, Planning Control applications, Regularisation applications, and Dangerous Structures have increased considerably. In addition, 2021 saw a significant increase in consultations regarding Environment Impact Assessments received from the Environment and Resources Authority – from 7 in 2020 down to 22 in 2021.

**Table 11: Number of the different types of development-related consultation requests received in 2021**

Type of consultation received	2020	2021
<b>Consultation by e-Apps (Planning Authority online system)</b>		
Planning Directorate Consultation	6,393	6,662 (inclusive of Summary)
Planning Directorate Re-Consultation	2,312	2662
Planning Directorate Consultation Following Material Change	423	438
Consultation Following Republishing	7	1
Consultation Following Deferral to Consultees	116	121
Minor Amendment Consultation	562	686
Consultation (External/pre 2016 cases)	13	10
Screening Consultation (Major Projects)	75	69
Summary – Post recommendation request	58	36
Summary	550	Data not collected separately
<b>*Consultation by e-mail (difficult to keep exact track of quantities, as e-mails are sent to multiple officers and generic e-mails, often in copy of each other)</b>		
Post Decision Consultation	7	3
DNO - Development Notification Order	40	96
DS - Dangerous Structures	19	9
PC - Planning Control	17	46
RG – Regularisation	1	-
RFC - Request for SCH Clearance (FDA post 2nd consultation)	Data not collected	741
Appeals Consultation	3	-
EIA - Environment Impact Assessment	7	22
PDS - Project Description Statement	-	1
SEA - Strategic Environment Assessment	-	-
Heritage Impact Assessments (UNESCO World Heritage Sites)	-	-
Development Briefs	1	-
Other - Generic Requests	1	-
<b>Consultation through Transport Malta electronic online system and through e-mail</b>		
RWP - Road Work Permit	2420	1759

## Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (CHAC)

The Superintendence refers to the CHAC for discussions relating to complex development-related cases. The CHAC is an internal committee within the Superintendence which makes recommendations to the Superintendence on development-related issues and scheduling/de-scheduling requests. During 2021, the CHAC held 47 meetings, made 232 recommendations on development applications

and de/scheduling request proposals. The planning applications referred to the CHAC by the Superintendence were mainly projects which have a major impact on cultural heritage: major projects, some of which relate to; impact on scheduled buildings, demolition, extensive alterations and additions, adverse visual impact, and development applications impacting on World Heritage Sites.

## Environmental and Planning Review Tribunal (Planning Appeals)

As a statutory consultee in the planning process the Superintendence regularly receives notification that an appeal has been lodged to the Environmental and Planning Review Tribunal (EPRT). The Superintendence has the right to participate as an interested entity in these third party appeals in line with the provisions of Article 21 of Cap 551 and has

thus exercised this right in 25 cases during 2021. The Tribunal also requested the Superintendent’s attendance as witness in a number of other cases. The Superintendence has lodged appeals with the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal (EPRT) against 2 decisions of the Planning Authority affecting cultural heritage property

## Major Projects and Best Practice Cases (Planning Consultations).

Major projects and cultural heritage sensitive development applications are a critical part of the consultations that the Planning Authority refer to the Superintendence. Such projects usually involve many more interactions with extra time, thought and resources needed. These projects normally include

site inspections, research, assessments, and various meetings with stakeholders and the architect/applicant. Below is a list of the main major projects the Superintendence engaged with during the past year (see Table 12 below).

**Table 12: Main major projects the Superintendence engaged with in 2021**

PA number	Site	Comments
PA/00137/21	<b>Playing Field, Triq Mario Galea Testaferrata, Mdina</b>	This project for the refurbishment of the playing field immediately outside the fortifications of Mdina saw considerable engagement from the Superintendence. With the site being located immediately outside the Grade 1 fortified city of Mdina and in an Area of High Landscape Value, the priority was to ensure that the proposal is sensitive to the surroundings and does not create a negative impact on views of the historic city. Detailed drawings and visuals of the project were requested and following discussion and assessment the Superintendence favourably considered the project and imposed archaeological monitoring conditions for the safeguard of any archaeological remains which may be located on site.

PA number	Site	Comments
PA/00747/21	<b>Junior Ranks Club (Ex-Raffles Discotheque), Triq Dun Ġużepp Farrugia, Triq Arnhem, Pembroke</b>	The project, which involves the restoration and change of use of the historic military Junior Ranks Club, saw significant engagement from the Superintendence during consultation stages. Dating back to the early 1900s, the former British Armed Forces Junior Ranks Club was converted into the Raffles discotheque in the 1980s; later being abandoned and damaged by a fire. Following archival research and the acquirement of historical plans, the Superintendence worked in tandem with the project's architects to conceive an acceptable design that respects the property's original layout, as well as safeguarding the surviving historic built fabric. At the time of writing, this project is still being processed by the Planning Authority.
PA/01560/21	<b>300, Collis Williams, Triq ir-Repubblika, Valletta</b>	The property is of considerable architectural value with an imposing barrel vault entrance. The Superintendence and the CHAC expressed concern at the initial proposal especially at the roof level. Revised drawings adequately mitigated the adverse impacts and were deemed acceptable by the Superintendence. The historic fabric and façade were also proposed for restoration and subject to an approved method statement and an appropriate bank guarantee. Works have since then been concluded satisfactorily.
PA/03826/21	<b>Road Junction, Triq l-Imghallem c/w, Triq ta' Wara s-Sur, Rabat, Ġhawdex</b>	The application initially sought to demolish a vernacular building of evident antiquity and historical value which formed part of a cluster of vernacular buildings. The demolition was proposed to facilitate road widening and the upgrading of a junction. The façade of the building proposed for demolition included a niche of the Sacred Heart of the Madonna, dating to 1860 and is included in the National Inventory of the Cultural Property of the Maltese Islands. Following intervention by the Superintendence, the proposal was revised to retain the existing building bar for a more recent addition to the rear. Works are subject to archaeological and built heritage monitoring.
PA/02291/20	<b>Palazzo Mater Boni Consilii and Casa Ellul 54 (and 48, 50, 52), 58 and 36, Triq il-Kbira, Triq Rokku Buhagiar, Il-Qrendi</b>	Palazzo Mater Boni Consilii and Casa Ellul both have a high cultural heritage value as they exemplify different strains of Baroque architecture. Casa Ellul is typical of the vernacular and simplified strain, while Palazzo Mater Boni Consilii celebrates the High Baroque idiom. This palazzo is characterised by a <i>muxrabija</i> , a curved timber balcony, polychromed surfaces, sculpture, a grand staircase, and enfilade rooms throughout. The two vaulted entrance halls are decorated by a series of religious scenes with elaborate scroll motifs and <i>trompe l'oeil</i> marbling effect framing the central scenes. The Superintendence engaged extensively with this application to ensure the restoration of the two painted vaults and the preservation of a particularly characteristic old garden wall that dominates the property's garden and that still retain vestiges of the original layout. This wall is uniquely decorated with a sequence of traditional tethering holes for animals ( <i>mrabat</i> ) on both facades of the wall. Initially, this wall was proposed for demolition. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage intervened to ensure its preservation whilst permitting minor alterations to allow visual permeability and access to the land beyond this wall.
PA/01522/20	<b>Mtarfa International School, Triq Dar il-Kaptan, Mtarfa</b>	The Superintendence began engaging with this proposal prior to the submission of the 2020 application, with discussions and inspections held between the Superintendence and the project's architects. Review of the application continued well into the first half of 2021, with the Superintendence eventually finding the development acceptable in principle but treating specific aspects of the application as reserved matters. This conclusion was thought to be the ideal way forward considering the complexity of the project and its interaction with various examples of cultural heritage, most prominently including archaeological, architectural, military, historical, and industrial heritage.

PA number	Site	Comments
PA/00331/21	<b>Mtarfa Day Centre, Triq San Oswald, Mtarfa</b>	This application was proposed following a geological survey carried out in lieu of approved permit PA 02153/15 which resulted in a necessity to apply for a reconfiguration of the proposed plans. The main issues concerned impact on the original historical fabric of the building that dates back to the British period, and the visual impacts of the proposed development as seen from Mdina. Following revised drawings in line with the Superintendence's direction, the proposal was deemed acceptable subject to restoration and archaeological monitoring conditions.
PA/04629/21	<b>St Nicholas Parish Church Parvis, Triq il-Parroċċa, Triq San Nikola, Siġġiewi</b>	The project to replace the existing deteriorated Church Parvis was successfully carried out in conjunction with all the parties involved, coordinated by the Superintendence. The aim was to reach the best balance between functional requirements and cultural heritage safeguard by advising the best practices and the ideal design and materials for the proposal.
PA/08853/20	<b>143, Triq il-Karmnu, Żurrieq</b>	The building in question is a very good example of a traditional courtyard house likely dating back to the Late Medieval/Early Knights' period in Malta. The building retains architectural and vernacular features, which include a central courtyard, two mill rooms one of which consists of pointed arches, kileb, outdoor staircase, loggia, and timber beams, amongst other features. Revised drawings were submitted to address concerns raised by the Superintendence and any interventions on the historic fabric were limited to the opening of doorways to provide better access. Sensitive additions to the first floor were approved by the Superintendence after it was ascertained that these would not adversely impact the historic mill room and the legibility of the traditional courtyard house. The proposal ensures the rehabilitation of this historic building through sensitive adaptive contemporary use whilst ensuring the preservation of its characteristic features.



Palazzo Mater Boni Consilii, Qrendi – inside. Detail of ceiling painted scheme inside one of the vaulted entrance halls.



Palazzo Mater Boni Consilii, Qrendi – main façade. Elaborate portal and curved timber balcony.



Palazzo Mater Boni Consilii, Qrendi - garden wall, decorated with a sequence of mrabat.



David Bruce Royal Navy Hospital, Mtarfa.



Vernacular building at the road junction between Triq l-Imghallem and Triq ta' Wara s-Sur, Rabat, Ghawdex saved from its proposed demolition after pressure from the Superintendence.





*Vernacular Courtyard House, Triq il-Karmnu, Żurrieq - detail of internal lodge and courtyard.*



*Vernacular Courtyard House, Triq il-Karmnu, Żurrieq - detail of one of the mill rooms.*



*Vernacular Courtyard House, Triq il-Karmnu, Żurrieq – main facade.*



*Vernacular Courtyard House, Triq il-Karmnu, Żurrieq - entrance hall characterised by kileb and xorok.*



*Vernacular Courtyard House, Triq il-Karmnu, Żurrieq - detail of fenestration.*

## 5. Built Heritage Monitoring

### Built Heritage Restoration Inspectorate

In line with the Cultural Heritage Act, the Superintendence continued its role in surveillance and monitoring of conservation and restoration of built heritage. In 2021, the Built Heritage Restoration Inspectorate (previously the Building Restoration Inspectorate) consisted of 6 professional officers, all specialised and conversant in built heritage and cultural heritage conservation practices, and an administrative assistant and who is supervised by a senior manager. The Built Heritage Restoration Inspectorate (BHRI) is set to be further augmented in 2022.

Several officers within the BHRI have also assumed responsibilities outside the team's remit. This includes providing registrar services to the *Bord Tal-Warrant Tar-Restawraturi*, participating in the European Standards for Conservation and Restoration (CEN Standards), participating in the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science (E-RIHS), and operating the first-aid conservation lab for archaeological artefacts instituted at the Superintendence. Indeed, these extra responsibilities required the expansion in the complement of the team to maintain and improve the momentum and efficiency achieved during the past years.

The BHRI is no longer part of the Superintendence's Heritage Monitoring and Restoration Unit because

of organisational changes carried out earlier in the year. The BHRI is now a stand-alone team that is integrated in terms of management, administration, and operations with the Heritage Planning Consultations Unit.

#### **The main business functions of the BRI are to:**

- provide professional assistance related to restoration practices of built heritage to the Superintendence;
- assess and review Restoration and Works Method Statements (RMSs / WMSs) during the consultation stages of the planning development application process;
- formulate and communicate to the Planning Authority the development permit conditions (including Bank Guarantees) to ensure that the built heritage is safeguarded during development;
- monitor restoration works. This includes the monitoring of trial patches before cleaning works begin and also the periodical monitoring to ensure works are in line with the approved methodology;
- provide professional assistance to architects during restoration – for instance when changes to the approved methodology and plans is required.
- ensure the documentation of updates on progress of restoration projects.

## Review of Restoration Method Statements/Works Method Statements

The Built Heritage Restoration Inspectorate saw a decrease in the number of Restoration and Work Method Statements (RMSs and WMSs) but noted that the number was still above the average for the last four years. In 2021 the combined number of RMSs and WMSs assessed declined by 17%: 1,327 compared to the 1,601 processed in the previous year. The decrease in the number of assessed RMSs probably reflects the reduced number of *Irrestawra Darek* scheme applications for the restoration of Scheduled Grade 1 and Grade 2 buildings and within Urban Conservation Areas, which is financed and administered by the Planning Authority.

A slight decrease over the previous years was noted in the number of inspections carried out in connection with the monitoring of restoration and rehabilitation works within heritage buildings, as well as development applications monitored. However, the number of inspections carried out is by far well over the average for the last four years. During 2021, notwithstanding the limitations resulting from the pandemic, the Building Restoration Inspectorate

conducted 1,819 inspections to monitor restoration and rehabilitation works within heritage buildings (including major projects); a decrease of 13% when compared to the previous year (2,102 inspections). The Building Restoration Inspectorate handled 35 cases in support of the Enforcement Directorate of the Planning Authority.

The Superintendence processed 384 cases of recommendations to the Planning Authority for the release or withholding of restoration compliance bank guarantees and *Irrestawra Darek* grants associated with restoration works. This is an increase of 70% on the previous year when 226 requests for the release of bank guarantees and *Irrestawra Darek* grants were processed. This increase in the number of clearances of bank guarantees and *Irrestawra Darek* grants processed by the Superintendence was already foreseen in the 2020 Annual Report. The increase is the direct result of the substantial increase in RMSs and WMSs processed in 2020 and the improved efficiency and complement of the specialised officers at the Superintendence.

**Table 13: Statistics covering 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 in relation to built heritage restoration**

	2018	2019	2020	2021
1 <b>Review of Restoration and Works Method Statement (RMSs + WMSs)</b>	1209	1323	1601	1327
2 <b>Built heritage monitoring site inspections</b>	883	1091	2102	1819
3 <b>Release of Bank Guarantee and Irrestawra Darek Grants</b>	99	335	226	384

## Surveillance and Enforcement

As part of its regulatory function and in keeping with its role at law, the Superintendence is also responsible to carry out surveillance to ensure the protection of the cultural heritage which may come about:

- by officials of the Superintendence during the implementation of their duties;
- further to accidental archaeological discoveries made during works carried out that may impact on the cultural heritage;

- In response to third party reports from the public or police informing of damage (or threat of damage to the cultural heritage).

Any of the above situations necessitate a site inspection and may require direct enforcement by the Superintendence. Where necessary, the Superintendence issues a ‘Conservation and Protection Order’ or a ‘notification to stop works’.

Subsequent imposition of conditions or measures to safeguard the cultural heritage may follow. Depending on the nature and circumstances of the infringement, the Superintendence may liaise with the Enforcement Directorate of the Planning Authority, or request police action.

No full-time officer was dedicated to this function in 2021 although plans are currently underway to strengthen this role. Notwithstanding, in 2021 the Superintendence implemented its surveillance function on at least 13 occasions involving the built heritage. These cases were intervened upon by the

Superintendence's restoration monitoring teams. One (1) Conservation and Protection Order (for the emergency repair of the scheduled Wignacourt Aqueduct Water Tower at Santa Venera) was issued and was concluded satisfactorily. Six (6) Suspension Notices of works (excluding routine suspensions during monitoring) were issued in line with the provisions of the Cultural Heritage Act. Most of these cases have been concluded satisfactorily except for a few cases where the remedial measures are still ongoing. Several emergencies and infringements were avoided by early detection by the Superintendence's vigilance, thus pre-empting damage.

## European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) on Restoration and Conservation

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage continued participating in the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) for restoration and conservation under the aegis of the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCA) in 2021. The Superintendence is collaborating with the University of Malta (UoM), Restoration Directorate, Planning Authority and Heritage Malta in the drafting and compiling of European Standards for restoration and conservation. Together with the other entities, the Superintendence provides its expertise to this international endeavour to achieve a holistic, comprehensive and unified regulatory framework, and common terminology for cultural

heritage conservation across the European Union.

The Superintendence collaborated on the following standards for conservation of cultural heritage:

- Investigation and monitoring of archaeological deposits for preservation in situ;
- Specifications for the management of movable cultural heritage collections;
- Finishes of built heritage — investigation and documentation;
- Procedures for the analytical evaluation and selection of cleaning methods for porous inorganic materials used in cultural heritage.

## Register to the *Bord tal-Warrants tar-Restawraturi*

The Building Restoration Inspectorate acts as Registry to the *Bord tal-Warrant tar-Restawraturi* (henceforth the *Bord*). Following the processing of applications by the Registry on behalf of the *Bord*, 21 applicants were granted the warrant to practice the profession of Conservator-Restorer in 2021. As Registry, the Building Restoration Inspectorate handles most administration support duties to the *Bord* including:

- Handling all communication with applicants;
- Handling general queries from applicants/non-applicants;
- Preparing information material for publication;
- Assisting the *Bord* in its functions, including interviews with applicants;
- Attending *Bord* meetings;
- Organisation and presentation of all data.
- Vetting of applications.

## Major Projects (Restoration Monitoring)

The following major restoration cases are a selection that were monitored by the Building Restoration Inspectorate during 2021.

**Table 14: A selection of major restoration cases that were monitored by the Built Heritage Monitoring Inspectorate during 2021**

Site	Locality
Mount Carmel Hospital	Attard
Parish Church of the Annunciation	Attard
Church of St. Paul	Attard
San Anton Gardens and Presidential Palace	Attard
Vittoriosa land front (Stepped Wing Bastion)	Birgu
Collegiate Church of St Lawrence	Birgu
Church and Convent of the Annunciation	Birgu
Basilica of St Helen	Birkirkara
Parish Church of the Assumption	Birkirkara
The Farsons Brewery	Birkirkara
Santa Margherita Lines	Bormla
St John Almonier Bastion	Bormla
Collegiate Church of the Immaculate Conception	Bormla
Cemetery of the Souls in Purgatory	Bormla
Cottonera Lines (St John's Bastion, Piazza Bassa, curtain wall and gate)	Fgura
Parish Church of St Publius	Furjana
Church of the Holy Cross (Capuchins)	Furjana
Virgin of Lourdes Church	Furjana
Grand Master De Vilhena (Lion) Fountain	Furjana
The Mall and its monuments	Furjana
Palazzo Manresa, Piazza San Calcedonio	Furjana
Floriana Lines (Ritirata, St Barbara Arch, Lower St James Bastion and St Philips Garden)	Furjana
Sir Walter Congreve Memorial – Scouts Island HQ	Furjana
Church of the Sacred Heart	Fontana
Parish Church of the Virgin of Loreto	Għajnsielem
Chapel of Santa Marija Assunta ( <i>ta' Żellieqa</i> )	Hal Għargħur
Parish Church of St Bartholomew	Hal Għargħur
Ta' Ġordan Lighthouse	Għasri
Church of Christ the Saviour	Għasri
Church of St Catherine	Gudja
Church of the Virgin of Loreto	Gudja
Fort Manoel (bastions, ditch, counterscarp, glacis and outer works) and Lazzaretto	Gżira
Tas-Samra Church	Hamrun/Sta Venera
St Cajetan Church	Hamrun/Sta Venera

Site	Locality
Adelaide Cini Institute	Hamrun/Sta Venera
Fort Ricasoli (St Domenic demi-bastion and counterguard)	Kalkara
Kalkara Military Cemeteries	Kalkara
Parish Church of the Transfiguration	Hal Lija
Belvedere, Vjal it-Trasfigurazzjoni	Hal Lija
Senglea landfront fortifications (St Michael Bastion and curtain wall, Main Gate, Clocktower and Belevedere) and Guardiola	Isla
Boiler Wharf, Malta Drydocks	Isla
Basilica of the Nativity of the Virgin	Isla
Church of Porto Salvo	Isla
Church of St Paul	Marsalforn, (Żebbuġ, Għawdex)
St Thomas Tower	Marsascala
Parish Church of the Virgin of Pompeii	Marsaxlokk
Chapel of St Nicholas	Mdina
Basilica of the Assumption (Rotunda)	Mosta
Parish Church of the Assumption	Mqabba
Xlendi Tower	Munxar
Ta' Għaqba Windmill	Naxxar
Għallis Watchtower	Naxxar
Collegiate Church of the Nativity of the Virgin	Naxxar
Monumental Cemetery of Santa Maria Addolorata	Paola
Parish Church of St Joseph	Qala
Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy	Qrendi
Parish Church of the Assumption	Qrendi
Basilica of St George	Rabat, Għawdex
Cathedral Church of the Assumption	Rabat, Għawdex
Church of St Augustine	Rabat, Għawdex
Cittadella Ravelin	Rabat, Għawdex
Parish Church of St Lawrence	San Lawrenz
Church of Santa Margherita	San Pawl il-Baħar
Parish Church of St Gregory	Tas-Sliema
St. John's Co Cathedral	Valletta
St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral	Valletta
Jesuits Church	Valletta
St. Roque Church	Valletta
St. Augustine Church and Convent	Valletta
St Francis Church and Convent	Valletta
St. Mary of Jesus Church and Convent (Ta' Ġiežu)	Valletta
Virgin of Mount Carmel Convent	Valletta
Grand Masters' Palace	Valletta
Sacra Infermeria	Valletta
Main Guard (Cancelleria)	Valletta

Site	Locality
Auberge de Castille	Valletta
Auberge d'Aragon	Valletta
Palazzo Zondadari	Valletta
Manoel Theatre	Valletta
Priory of Navarre	Valletta
De Rohan Fountains	Valletta
Casa Causi / Palazzo Gomerino	Valletta
Palazzo Theuma Castelletti	Valletta
56, Triq San Ġwann	Valletta
4, Triq San Pawl	Valletta
Grand Harbour Breakwater	Valletta
Tal-Blata works and Steps	Valletta
Lascaris Tunnel, Lascaris Bastion	Valletta
Church of Jesus of Nazareth	Xagħra
Church of the Virgin of Mercy	Xewkija
Church of the Assumption	Iż-Żebbuġ, Ghawdex
Parish Church of St Catherine	Żejtun
Church of the Transfiguration	Żejtun
Ta' Wardija Tower	Żurrieq
Parish Church of St Catherine	Żurrieq
Various niches around Malta and Gozo	



*Munxar Tower – Restoration works during 2021.*



*Munxar Tower – External restoration works.*



*Fort Ricasoli – restoration and construction works of counterguard and casemated redoubt.*



*Fort Ricasoli – completed reconstruction works of counterguard and casemated redoubt.*



*Senglea Land Front – Restoration works during 2020/2021.*



*Senglea Land Front – Completed restoration works.*



Ta' Ġordan Lighthouse during restoration works.



Ta' Ġordan Lighthouse - restored facades.



Piazza Bassa at St John's Bastion (Cottonera Lines) in Fgura - completed restoration works.



Piazza Bassa at St John's Bastion (Cottonera Lines) in Fgura - restoration works.

## Best Practice Cases (Restoration Monitoring)

The Superintendence would like to highlight the following examples of best practice restoration.



*Torre Belvedere, Lija – completed restoration works.*

### **Belvedere Tower, Ħal Lija**

Torre Belvedere was designed by the architect Giuseppe Bonavia and built in 1857 as a folly within the gardens of Villa Gourgion - a 17<sup>th</sup> century villa belonging to the Marquis Depiro. This landmark building, today located in Vjal it-Trasfigurazzjoni in Ħal Lija, is a Grade 1 scheduled monument as per Government Notice 36 of 1996. The tower has been recently restored under the surveillance of the Built Heritage Restoration Inspectorate. The restoration works were aimed towards minimum intervention and utmost care to preserve the original and characteristic time-gained patina and materials of the building. This methodology has seen the least possible amount of stone replacement

*Property in Triq il-Kbira San Ġużepp c/w Triq il-Ferrovija, Hamrun - before restoration works.*



**BEFORE**

and the retention of the sound mortar joints. Cleaning was focused on the removal of the black crust formation due to car pollution. The tower's details and monumentality can now be better appreciated due to this timely intervention.

### **Triq il-Kbira San Ġużepp c/w Triq il-Ferrovija, Il-Ħamrun**

The ongoing restoration works of this site, covered by PA 1061/19, saw the removal of the thick black crust formation from the facade and also the discovery of fragments of old signage pertaining to the historic Malta railway. The importance of this elevation was identified at the

very beginning when at application stage, the Superintendence insisted that the restoration of the upper part of the façade was to be carried out by a professional conservator.

The professional conservation, which was carried out with the gracious support of the Ħamrun Local Council, and the monitoring and guidance of the



Property in Triq Il-Kbira San Ġużepp c/w Triq il-Ferrovija, Hamrun - completed restoration showing partial recovery of historic signage.

Superintendence, achieved impeccable results that should be considered as an example for future projects.

The discovery of part of the historic railway signage incidentally came at the same time as the restoration works that are being carried out just a few meters away at the old railway station in Hamrun. The old railway station location at Triq il-Ferrovija is currently the premises of the First Hamrun Scouts Group.

The discovered signage, in fact, indicated the “way to the railway station”. However, only part of the word station was discovered in a state that could be restored back. Most of the original sign was obliterated due to the installation of a balcony and the opening of two small windows. Nevertheless, the now partially restored signage forms a tangible part of the historic railway heritage. The Superintendence

is further proposing to the stakeholders to better valorise this heritage by installing an explanatory panel showing historical photographs to better illustrate the context.

**Triq Ġuże Howard c/w Triq Ġorġ Borg Olivier, Sliema**

This private dwelling in Sliema is one of a series of houses in the same street, designed by renowned architect Francesco Zammit at the turn of the 20th Century. This house, together with its neighbouring dwellings, is a recognised Grade 2 scheduled monument as per Government Notice No. 43 of 2018. This house has distinct balconies which are a clear example of Zammit’s knowledge and experimentations in reaction to the architectural styles of his contemporaries. This dwelling was restored under the guidance of the Built Heritage Restoration Inspectorate. The restoration aimed at minimum intervention possible to properly safeguard the characteristics of this building. This methodology succeeded at preserving time-gained patina and the original fixtures. The beauty and elegance of Zammit’s work can now be better appreciated and is now a testament of sensible restoration practice.



Townhouse in Triq Ġuże Howard c/w Triq Ġorġ Borg Olivier, Sliema - completed restoration works.

**Palazzo Gourgion, Mdina**

Palazzo Gourgion is situated at the north-western corner of St Paul's Square in Mdina, with its main entrance overlooking the same square. This grand house was built in 1728 and is a Grade 1 scheduled monument of architectural, historic and cultural value as per Government Notice No. 348 of 2001. The Superintendence has monitored all restoration and conservation interventions carried out - including the cleaning and removal of black crust, replacement of deteriorated masonry blocks and sculptural elements, re-pointing of open joints, plastic repair and restoration of apertures. It was important to ensure that sound original pointing and the façades' distinctive patina were retained. These works contributed to the enhancement of the architectural and sculptural elements and rendered the elevations more homogenous.

**Breakwater, Grand Harbour**

Remedial works on the Grand Harbour and Ricasoli breakwater arms were carried out due to damage that resulted from a strong north-easterly gale in 2019. Strong waves dislodged masonry blockwork that subsequently tipped over into the sea. The works included locating and retrieving the submerged dislodged blockwork, a difficult logistical operation because of the exposure of the area to inclement weather. All the blockwork was cleaned and refitted into their respective lacunae within the breakwater arms. The blocks were repointed appropriately to ensure that the masonry was anchored better and to limit similar accidents in the future.



*Grand Harbour Breakwater – Valletta side after restoration.*

## Restoration Projects carried out by the Superintendence

### Hal Resqun Catacomb, Luqa

Following last year's successful conservation intervention on a Roman period *cocciopesto* floor discovered during archaeological investigation of a site in Rabat (Malta), which works were concluded in early 2021, the Superintendence undertook the cleaning and consolidation of a catacomb at *Hal Resqun* in Luqa. These conservation works were carried out under the expertise of Perit Dr. Hermann Bonnici – in preparation for the subsequent safeguarding interventions required to ensure the physical integrity of the site during the excavation of the projected nearby tunnel at *Vjal l-Avjazzjoni* by Infrastructure Malta.

The catacomb was first cleaned with the utmost care from the considerable amount of mud that had gathered at the bottom and along the walls after decades of regular rainwater flooding. The cleaning has brought out the detail of the reliefs much further, as well as exposed previously barely distinguishable decorative and tool marking details. Subsequently, the major fissures were consolidated by injecting hydraulic lime which provided further protection against potential rock strata slippage. The catacomb was 3D-scanned again. A remote-operated vibration monitoring sensor was installed along with a series of crack gauges to provide real-time readings of the structural behaviour of the site during the ensuing works. A high-density polystyrene superstructure was also installed at the end of these consolidation works to fully support the catacomb in a three-dimensional manner.

### Tal-*Hniena* Chapel, Qrendi

The Superintendence carried out the restoration and conservation of the wall paintings at *Tal-*Hniena** chapel in the outskirts of Qrendi. This project saw the direct collaboration between the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage and the Restoration Directorate. The chapel is a 17<sup>th</sup> century Baroque construction of great elegance – having a front porch with pillars and statues, with the inside dominated by a sculpted reredos with angels and clouds, and with a lunette at the top having the Virgin Lady's crown radiating rays and stars.



*Officer from the Superintendence carrying out cleaning and consolidation works at Hal Resqun catacomb.*

An archaeological investigation of the chapel carried out by the Superintendence, which was also reported by foreign specialised publications, indicated the presence of earlier structures. The project proceeded with the restoration works of the chapel proper. During the cleaning works of the reredos, the Restoration Directorate had noticed the presence of polychromatic paints underneath the uniform whitewash which had covered the walls for decades. It was decided by the Restoration Directorate and the Superintendence that the

existing white paint be removed to liberate the decoration underneath, which could be seen in fragments. The Superintendence carried out the cleaning, consolidation and sensitive restoration of the underlying wall paintings, as well as the plastic repair of missing decoration in lime-based mortar.

The results grant the public the possibility of visually reconstructing the original unity of the decoration, leading to better valorisation and experience of the place.

## 6. Guardianship of Museums and Sites

### Guardianship Deeds of Heritage Buildings and Archaeological Sites

The last time the Superintendence concluded a new guardianship deed was in 2016. On that occasion, a total of 6 government-owned historical properties were entrusted in guardianship to the cultural heritage NGO *Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna*. In 2021, no new deeds or renewals were concluded. By end 2021 the total number of active guardianship deeds remained at 19. A list of active guardianship deeds may be viewed in Table 16 below.

In 2021, the Superintendence received 4 new requests for government-owned historical properties to be transferred in guardianship and began the process to renew 2 guardianship deeds for a further term.

The 4 historical properties requested in guardianship in 2021 were the following:

- *Dar tal-Barunessa (id-Dar tas-Soru)* located in l/o *Haż-Żabbar*
- *Torri San Luċjan* located in Marsaxlokk
- *Razzett tax-Xitan* located in Mellieħa
- *Il-Palazz l-Aħmar/Wied Musa Battery* located in Mellieħa

During 2021, 6 government-owned historical properties were requested from the Lands Authority to be transferred to the Superintendence, and for guardianship deeds to be concluded. These were in addition to the 40 requests already made in 2020; feedback for which is still pending from the Lands Authority.

Despite several reminders the Superintendence only received 1 response from the Lands Authority in 2021 – a *refusal*. The Lands Authority declined a request for St Nicholas Chapel (located in Kalkara). Having consulted with its Disposal Committee, the Lands Authority notified the Superintendent that for the time being the Lands Authority is still in discussions with the committee regarding the allocation of Fort Ricasoli in the entirety. The proposal was therefore considered premature since it would have entailed the piecemeal allocation of a site within the fort confines.

By the end of 2021, the Superintendence was still awaiting feedback from the Lands Authority on a total of 45 requests. A comprehensive list is presented in Table 15 below. Most properties are scheduled buildings requested in order to ensure their protection. Some properties are in imminent danger of collapse and further damage unless immediate precautionary measures are implemented. Such is the case of the Medieval Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sancir in Rabat (Malta) whose request has been pending consideration by the Lands Authority since August 2020. Unless the property is urgently and professionally restored, this scheduled building will continue to sustain damages caused primarily by rainwater ingress finding its way into the structure. The property will sustain further damage, increased costs for repairs and eventually the collapse of parts of the structure, resulting in the potential loss of an important national cultural heritage asset.

**Table 15: List of requests made to the Lands Authority for which feedback is still pending**

Name of Entity	Application type	Name of Cultural Property
1 <i>Din l-Art Helwa</i>	New request	Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir
2 <i>Din l-Art Helwa</i>	New request	Australian Bungalow
3 Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	Renewal & additions	Saluting Battery & Lascaris War HQ Complex, Valletta
4 Heritage Malta	New request	Tarxien Temples Complex
5 Heritage Malta	New request	Fort Delimara - Fort and Ditches
6 Heritage Malta	New request	Roman Baths
7 Heritage Malta	New request	Auberge de Provence (National Museum of Archaeology)
8 Heritage Malta	New request	Għar Dalam
9 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Tas-Silġ</i> Archaeological Complex
10 Heritage Malta	New request	Vilhena Palace (National Museum of Natural History)
11 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Ta' Haġrat</i> Temples
12 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Ta' Skorba</i> Temples
13 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Hal-Saflieni</i> Hypogaeum
14 Heritage Malta	New request	Kordin III Temples
15 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Haġar Qim</i> Temples
16 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Mnajdra</i> Temples
17 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Domus Romana</i>
18 Heritage Malta	New request	St Paul's Catacombs
19 Heritage Malta	New request	St Augustine's Catacombs
20 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Abbatija tad-Dejr</i> Catacombs
21 Heritage Malta	New request	Palace State Rooms (Grandmaster's Palace)
22 Heritage Malta	New request	Palace Armoury (Grandmaster's Palace)
23 Heritage Malta	New request	Vendome Bastion (War Museum)
24 Heritage Malta	New request	Inquisitor's Palace
25 Heritage Malta	New request	Fort St Angelo
26 Heritage Malta	New request	Ex-Naval Bakery (Malta Maritime Museum)
27 Heritage Malta	New request	Gozo Museum of Archaeology
28 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Ġgantija</i> Temples Complex
29 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Gran Castello</i> Historic House
30 Heritage Malta	New request	Old Prison
31 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Haġra ta' Sansuna</i>

Name of Entity	Application type	Name of Cultural Property
32 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Ta' Kola</i> Windmill
33 Heritage Malta	New request	Old Armoury, Nature Museum and offices
34 Heritage Malta	New request	Fougasse
35 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Madonna del Pilar</i> Chapel
36 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Borg in-Nadur</i> Temples
37 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Ta' Bistra</i> Catacombs
38 Heritage Malta	New request	Auberge d'Italie (MUZA)
39 Ramblers Association of Malta	New request	<i>Il-Mitħna l-Qadima</i> / Jesus of Nazareth Windmill
40 Gabriel Caruana Foundation	New request	<i>Ta' Ganu</i> Windmill / <i>Il-Mithna tal-Maħlut</i>
41 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Torri tal-Kaptan</i>
42 Din l-Art Helwa	New request	<i>Qbajjar Battery</i> / <i>It-Torri tal-Qolla l-Bajda</i>
43 Heritage Malta	New request	<i>Torri San Luċjan</i>
44 Din l-Art Helwa	New request	<i>Razzett tax-Xitan</i>
45 Din l-Art Helwa	New request	<i>Il-Palazz l-Aħmar</i> / Wied Musa Battery

## Status of Guardianship Deeds

Table 16 below shows the status of the signed Guardianship Deeds up till the end of 2021.

**Table 16: List of signed guardianship deeds as at end 2021**

Name of Cultural Property	Locality	Name of Guardian	Year of Signature
1 Qalet Marku Tower	Naxxar	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
2 Għallis Tower	Naxxar	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
3 Red Tower / Santa Agatha Tower)	Mellieħa	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
4 Wignacourt Tower	San Pawl il-Baħar	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
5 Mamo Tower	Marsaskala	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
6 Santa Maria Tower	Għajnsielem	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
7 Dwejra Tower	San Lawrenz	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
8 Santa Maria Battery	Għajnsielem	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
9 Msida Bastion Cemetery	Floriana	Din l-Art Helwa	2003 / Renewed 2013
10 Lascaris War Headquarters Complex	Valetta	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2009 / renewal in progress

Name of Cultural Property	Locality	Name of Guardian	Year of Signature
11 Couvre Porte Barracks at Vittoriosa (10 rooms at lower level) and underlying WWII shelter	Vittoriosa	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2011 / renewal in progress
12 Our Lady of Victory Church	Valletta	Din l-Art Helwa	2011 / renewal in progress
13 Wied Iż-Żurrieq Tower	Qrendi	Din l-Art Helwa	2013
14 Fort Rinella	Kalkara	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
15 Madliena Tower and adjacent structures, Room off Mediterranean Street and Bridge and Weir	Pembroke	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
16 Tower at Triq il-Wiesgħa	Xagħjra	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
17 Three World War II Pill Boxes: Reserve Post R15 (Naxxar), AB1 Beach post (Mellieħa) and RAO beach post (Kalkara)	Naxxar Mellieħa Kalkara	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
18 Notre Dame Gate	Vittoriosa	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
19 St Thomas Tower	Marsaskala	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016

## Changes to Legal Articles: ‘Right of First Refusal’ in Favour of State Agency

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, the Cultural Heritage Act (CAP 445) was amended by Act XLI of 2021, which introduced a new article to the principal Act concerning guardianship deeds (Art. 64). The addition consists of the introduction of a ‘right of first refusal’ in favour of Heritage Malta – the State Agency responsible for the care and management of historical sites and museums on behalf of the Government of Malta.

Whenever a request is made for a vacant government-owned historical property (immovable property) or one which is available to the Superintendence or the National Council for Cultural Heritage (formerly known as the Committee of Guarantee), Heritage Malta shall have the ‘right of first refusal’ when it comes to the allocation of the immovable property having cultural or historical importance.

The introduction of this article generated a need to review and update the procedure adopted by the Superintendence when allocating guardianship deeds. The revisions now require that any requests

received by the Superintendence will first need to be forwarded to Heritage Malta for their consideration. Heritage Malta will be given 30 calendar days to react to this request and inform the Superintendence whether Heritage Malta already has plans for the historical property. A non-response within the stipulated period will be construed that Heritage Malta does not have an interest in the cultural property. Consequently, the guardianship deed request by the NGO/Local Council will be re-activated.

This article also has implications on another state entity – the Lands Authority – that should not dispose of vacant Government property (defined by law as “immovable property belonging to the Government of Malta which is of cultural or historical importance”) prior to ensuring that the ‘right of first refusal’ of the State Agency has been respected.

On the other hand, the ultimate responsibility to decide whether an immovable property is of “cultural or historical importance” rests with the

Superintendence. Consequently, the introduction of this new article obliges increased synergy between the Superintendence and the Lands Authority to determine which vacant government-owned properties fall within the category of “cultural

and historical importance”. This increased inter-institutional collaboration is welcomed as it augurs well for the better identification and safeguarding of our national cultural heritage assets.

## 7. Other SCH Responsibilities

### Advice to Government and Entities

The Superintendence also provided valuable policy guidance to Government and public entities in the cultural heritage sector, replied to Parliamentary Questions and provided feedback to investigations by the Ombudsman.

### The Draft National Cultural Policy

During 2021, the Superintendence once again provided extensive feedback to the drafting team of the draft National Cultural Policy document. The Superintendence noted with appreciation that comments and suggestions provided during the initial consultation process have been taken very much on board by the drafting team.

The Superintendence drew attention of the drafting team to the fact that the general thrust of the draft policy document was overwhelmingly towards the visual and performative arts, design, and creative industries. The Superintendence stressed the need for cultural heritage to be better integrated with the general philosophy of the policy and the other sectors addressed by this document, as well as with other stakeholders working in the field of cultural heritage.

Apart from providing specific comments to the text, as well as measures proposed in the draft policy, the Superintendence also commented on issues which had not been addressed by the draft policy document, but which were considered important for the future direction of cultural heritage in Malta.

The Superintendence proposed specific measures recommending restoration projects on historic buildings on the shore of the Grand Harbour. The rationale is that these projects should be undertaken within a wider rehabilitation project and plan for the Grand Harbour area, which earmarks the current and planned uses and the increase of public access.

This would help in putting the Grand Harbour and its towns on the tentative World Heritage Sites (WHS) list.

Another recommendation is focused on research in archaeology, history and art-history within the framework of national cultural heritage research agenda. This recommendation was made in close collaboration with Heritage Malta and the University of Malta as main partners.

The Superintendence also stressed the crucial role that other government entities and authorities play in the management and preservation of the national cultural heritage. More importantly, the Superintendence stressed the importance of acknowledging these entities within the national cultural policy and ensuring their commitment towards the identified measures. These entities include the Planning Authority, the Lands Authority, and the Restoration Directorate. The Superintendence made recommendations on how this could be achieved.

The Superintendence also recommended the inclusion of measures addressing cultural heritage in private hands through the introduction of schemes in the form of financial grants to incentivise private individuals to professionally restore their collections and register their artefacts/collections with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage as part of the National Inventory. Collections loaned to the state may be restored by the government as a way of

incentivising loans.

Another proposal was aimed towards the recognition of the Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (CHAC) in the Cultural Heritage Act, and – crucially – for its composition and function to be clearly delineated. The members of the CHAC should be recognised specialists in various aspects of cultural heritage so as to be in the position of affording technical advice to the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

The Superintendence also suggested the introduction of legal, technical and administrative capabilities to carry out enforcement and issue administrative fines wherever there are breaches to the provisions of the Cultural Heritage Act.

A further recommendation was made to address the need to involve both state agencies such as the Environment and Resources Authority, the Planning Authority and the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as farmers and fishermen

as stewards of the cultural landscape. This recommendation was made in view of the strong correlation that exists between cultural heritage and the natural, rural and marine environment which should be recognised in the national cultural policy document in line with the provisions of the Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (ICOMOS, 1999). Whilst the policy document refers to cultural landscape and the European landscape convention, there is a need to strengthen the policy in terms of protecting both rural and maritime architecture and their context (e.g. rubble walls, field terraces, water management systems, farmhouses, hunting lodges, dove cotes, animal pens, boat houses), and the practice of these industries.

The Superintendence hopes that its recommendations towards the National Cultural Policy will strengthen this crucial policy document and looks forward to further collaborations to ensure the implementation of the identified vision and policy objectives.

## International Conventions and Charters

During 2021, Malta ratified one (1) international convention in the field of cultural heritage, unblocking a status that had remained unchanged for several years. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 Malta deposited its instrument of ratification on the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage to the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The ratification of the convention came into effect as from the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2021.

As one of the States Parties to the convention Malta is required to implement measures to:

- prevent the commercial exploitation and dispersion of underwater cultural heritage;
- guarantee that this heritage will be preserved for the future and in situ;
- assist the tourism industry involved;
- enable capacity building and knowledge exchange; and
- enable effective international cooperation.

The signing and/or ratification of international legal instruments remains a high national priority and an international obligation.

### **European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000)**

During 2021, the Superintendence continued discussions with the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) on the process leading to the ratification of the European Landscape Convention. The Superintendence was once again formally consulted by ERA – acting as the lead entity on behalf of the State – to provide its views on the draft regulatory impact assessment (RIA) on the implementation of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention in Malta.

The Superintendence submitted its observations on the draft text as prepared by ERA and made recommendations mainly directed at the cultural heritage perspective of the convention. Other recommendations put forward are:

- proposed the need to increase synergy between entities acting on landscape protection;
- placed an emphasis on data-sharing, synchronisation and harmonisation;
- underlined the importance of adequate resourcing and training to ensure proper implementation of the identified measures.

### 11<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention

The Superintendence participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention which was held between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (online). The conference was organised under the auspices of the Presidency of Hungary of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The conference brought together several stakeholders working in the field of landscape protection and served as a platform for discussion between them. Reports and draft recommendations detailing the results of workshops, good practices and recommended action were presented.

The recommendations by the jury for the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe were concluded and were to be forwarded to the Council of Ministers for adoption. In total, twelve (12) applications were received for the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Landscape Award.

The conference also discussed the work programme and action plan for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention 2021-2023. The work programme followed the standard methodology, consisting of the organisation of a bi-annual conference of parties with invited observers. The work plan includes workshops and sessions of the Landscape Awards. The promotion of synergy with other teams in the Council of Europe was also identified as a priority.

An emphasis was placed on the programme having a strong focus on sustainability and responsibility. It was proposed that this component of landscape should be added at a global level - which appears to be an important element of global debate, but it is not included in the formal documents. A very positive outcome is that rather than just meeting and drafting of papers and recommendations these papers have materialised into policies at a national level. This is important when raising issues and placing recommendations with the Council of Ministers.

Since Malta has not yet ratified the European Landscape Convention, Malta retains an observer status at such conferences.

**Table 17: Status of international conventions related to the field of cultural heritage**

Conventions – Council Of Europe	Signed	Ratified
European Cultural Convention, 1954	✓	✓
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, London 1969 ( <i>London Convention, 1969</i> )	✓	✓
Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, Granada 1985 ( <i>Granada Convention, 1985</i> )	✓	✓
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised), Valletta 1992 ( <i>Valletta Convention, 1992</i> )	✓	✓
European Landscape Convention, Florence 2000 ( <i>Florence Convention, 2000</i> )	✓	
Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro 2005 ( <i>Faro Convention, 2005</i> )		

<b>Conventions – United Nations</b>	<b>Signed</b>	<b>Ratified</b>
Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, The Hague 1954 <i>(Hague Convention, 1954)</i>		
Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, The Hague 1954 <i>(Hague Protocol, 1954)</i>		
Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, Paris 1970		
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris 1972	✓	✓
Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, The Hague 1999 (Hague 2nd Protocol 1999)		
Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, Paris 2001	✓	✓
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris 2003		
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression, Paris 2005	✓	✓
<b>Conventions – Unidroit</b>	<b>Signed</b>	<b>Ratified</b>
Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, Rome 1995		

## 8. Public Outreach

### European Archaeology Days (EADs)

The European Archaeology Days are celebrated across Europe and coordinated by the National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research (INRAP) in France. The EADs are celebrated annually in June. The Superintendence is the National Coordinator for EADs and seeks to mark this special day on the cultural calendar by ensuring that events are held locally to raise awareness of the richness of Malta's archaeological resources. The first coordinated events were held in 2019. In 2020 however no events were held - primarily in view of lockdown restrictions. In 2021, whilst pandemic restrictions still

impeded the organisation of mass public events, the Superintendence nonetheless ensured that this event was properly marked. The Superintendence launched a digital catalogue of finds from a tomb discovered in Haż-Żabbar earlier that year, which permitted remote access locally and internationally. Moreover, Heritage Malta once again collaborated in this year's EADs by organising controlled events at three of its sites; the Summer Solstice guided tours at Mnajdra and Haġar Qim, 'Ask the Curator' sessions at the National Museum of Archaeology, and Guided tours at St Augustine's Catacombs.

### European Heritage Days (EHDs)

The Superintendence is also the National Coordinator for European Heritage Days, a programme coordinated jointly between the European Commission and the European Union. Malta was one of the countries that participated in EHD events when they were first organised in 1985 - and has done so intermittently since then. After a short gap, Malta started organising events again since 2020. In 2021, event restrictions in view of the ongoing pandemic affected the possibility to organise mass events. However through the participation of a number of stakeholders, a program of twelve (12) events was drawn up for 2021. The main event organised by the Superintendence, in collaboration with The Energy and Water Agency, consisted of a two day event at the National Water Conservation Awareness Centre (Għajn) during which members of the public could follow an ongoing archaeological excavation of archaeological remains preserved within the Centre, an exhibition of artefacts never previously exhibited - which were discovered in tombs in the area and talks about the archaeology of the *Għajn Qajjet* area. Other events were organised by Heritage Malta,



the Valletta Cultural Agency, SKALI Gudja and Agones SFC. These events ensured a varied programme of events in line with the common theme for this year's EHD events which was *Heritage: All Inclusive*.



European Heritage Days 2021 event at National Water Conservation Awareness Centre (Ghajn)



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