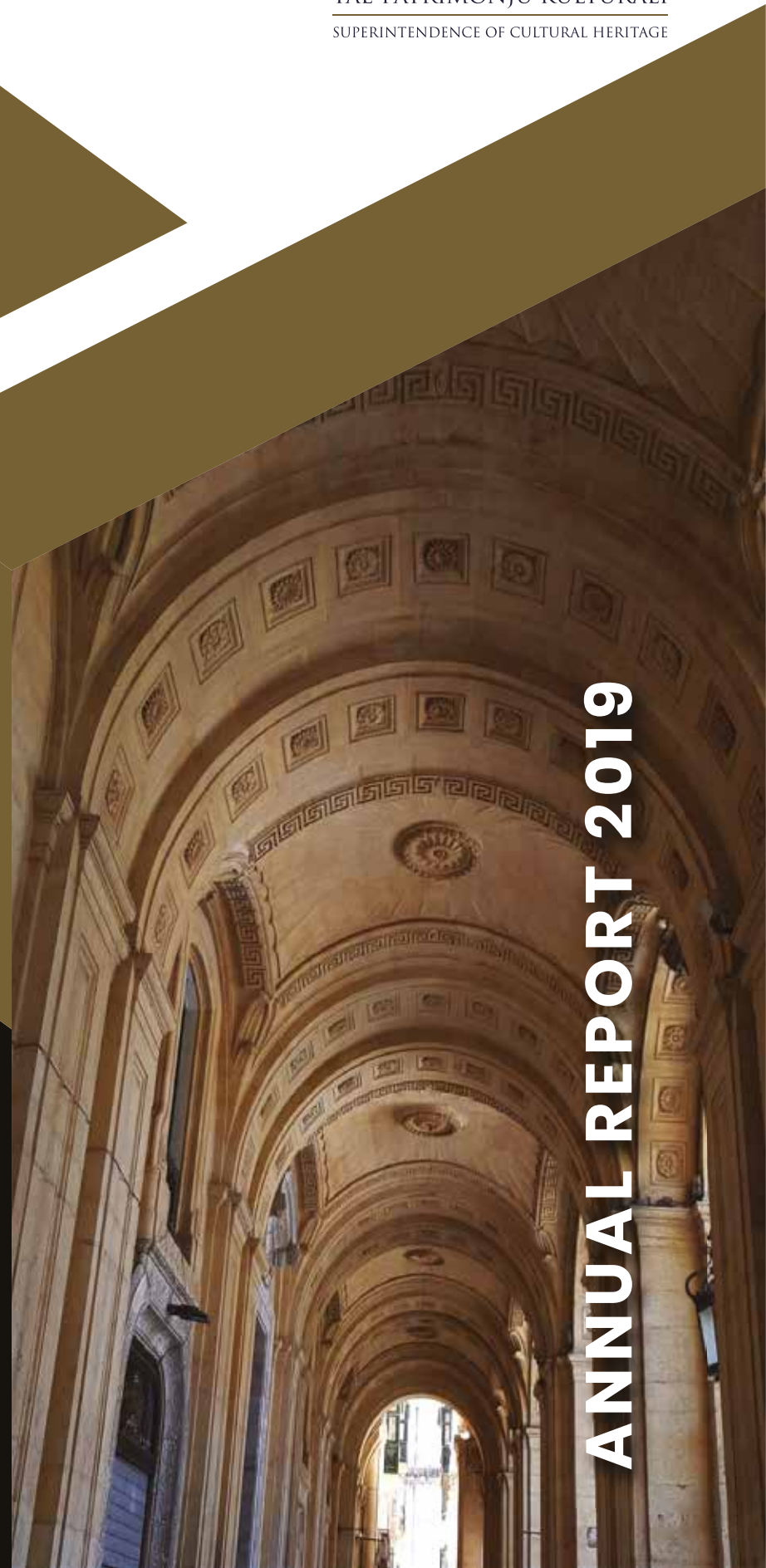




SOVRINTENDENZA
TAL-PATRIMONJU KULTURALI
SUPERINTENDENCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

“

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage's mission is to fulfil the duties of the State in ensuring the protection and accessibility of Malta's cultural heritage.

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FOREWORD



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

This is the second Annual Report giving account on the organisational restructuring of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH) commenced in April 2018, whilst it builds up on the work achieved in previous years.

Continuity and Change.

1. Thanks are due to former Minister responsible for Justice, Culture, and Local Government, the Hon. Dr Owen Bonnici, and the respective former Permanent Secretary Johan Galea and former Chief-of-Staff Angele Abela for having faith and support in the Superintendence's restructuring programme. By the time of writing, there was a cabinet reshuffle, and we take this opportunity in welcoming the Hon. Dr José Herrera as Minister for National Culture, the Arts and Local Government (MHAL), the new Permanent Secretary Joseph Camilleri and the new Head of Secretariat Pierre Vassallo, and other officials of MHAL, who immediately engaged with the work, challenges and amelioration of the Superintendence. Of note, is that this is the very first time that a government has appointed a Minister specifically for National Heritage, a much welcomed and deserved decision, as finally, government's priorities places Malta's Cultural Patrimony at par with other national priorities.

2. Gratitude is also due to all staff, old and new at the Superintendence, for their unwavering zeal and stamina towards the care of national heritage and in serving the public.

3. The Superintendence is also grateful to the archaeological service providers registered with the Superintendence who act as an extended arm through their on-site monitoring during development works. In 2018-19 the Superintendence engaged with the archaeological service providers and clients with meetings consultations, inspections and carried out analysis for procedural improvements, which are set to continue further in 2020. An improvement was noted in the professional service provided by the archaeological monitors, and there was also a slight increase in their number resulting in better efficiency and customer satisfaction.

4. In 2019 the Cultural Heritage Act was approved through all stages and came into effect in September after revisions carried out between 2016 and 2018 to update the 2002 Act. Nonetheless, the implementation of the Act indicates areas for legal, procedural and resource improvements to meet evolving circumstances through up-to-date approaches. Although the types of challenges are the same as before, however, the present and foreseeable future pose a larger scale of pressure especially on immovable cultural heritage and in illicit trading of heritage items at local and worldwide levels, in which sectors the Superintendence needs to upscale its engagement.

5. The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage is the direct descendant of the work commenced by Sir Themistocles Zammit, who in 1910 introduced the first legal instruments in Malta for the care, protection and control of cultural heritage within Malta's territory. That the Superintendence is continuing Zammit's work in the vigilance, regulation and safeguarding of Malta's patrimony is not only honourable but very demanding.

Concerns.

6. Irrespective of legal updates, the acceptance of heritage by the majority of the public is still a major desideratum. Nimbyism¹ is still rife in Malta and often heritage is trivialised for short term economic gains. Valletta and the other World Heritage Sites (WHS), candidate sites on the WHS Tentative List (such as Mdina and Cittadella), as well as cultural landscapes such as Urban Conservation Areas,

¹Acronym for 'Not in my back yard'

Areas of Archaeological Importance, Areas of High Landscape Value, and underwater cultural heritage are still not spared from physical and visual impacts arising from overuse and incessant building demolition, excavation and construction. As cultural heritage is a finite and a non-renewable asset, any loss has to be carefully accounted for, justified and documented. The false belief held by some that Malta has 'too much' heritage is counteracted by the fact that we already lost too much, especially in the past 60 years. This exaggerated and unfounded excuse is a narrow perspective when considering that we have limited land territory (316Km²), that any amount of heritage may seem too much to those who try to push their agendas. Owing to the exponentially increasing rate of attrition due to building demolition, excavation and construction, as well as the alienation of mentalities by globalisation and social media, the stock of heritage will diminish to an insignificant few items. Within twenty years it would be too late to act, and in some cases, it may be already too late to act now, but we are still in time to save others. This goes against the basic human obligation of sustainability – a sustainability for the planet and future generations, not for the pockets of a few in the present. Facing the realities of this scenario, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage is foremost in championing cultural heritage from the front and all other angles. This does not mean that the Superintendence has to object and stop all proposals for development, and hence it is increasing its efforts to convince mitigated and culturally sustainable approaches that improve quality of life. However, it is imperative that the Superintendence is given the required human resources, funding, capacities, and other means to operate its statutory remit.

7. Surprisingly, after 30 years of planning, environmental and heritage law improvements and the setting up of authorities, policies and procedures aiming at sustainability, the Superintendence still experiences development applications that often lack thought and effort in understanding, appreciating and acknowledging heritage. This unnecessarily lengthens the process with negotiations by the Superintendence to convince proponents to appreciate heritage and mitigate impacts.

8. There is a positive increased interest from the press and social media on matters affecting cultural heritage and the work of the Superintendence. Unfortunately, some of the reporting was not based on facts but personal opinion, especially on social media, and at times misinterpreting the Superintendence's actions and feedback. The Superintendence hopes that in 2020, information to the public and the press is more frequent and anticipatory of events, provided adequate resources are available.

A Positive 2019.

9. With satisfaction it is positive to record that the organisational restructuring started in April 2018 continued, particularly in building up the Administration. In April 2019, for the first time, the Superintendence enrolled a Director Support Services, Mrs Elizabeth Vassallo who was formerly Director Operations at LESA². Mrs Vassallo's vast experiences and outgoing character gave a big boost to the administration and strengthened the restructuring process.

10. During 2019, the Superintendence continued with its recruitment of five new officers and in replacement of officers who moved elsewhere. Great investment was made in staff training in GIS as well as other areas of expertise as reported in the appropriate section of this report.

11. Investment was dedicated towards an overhaul of the Superintendence's ICT systems. However, for the second year running, the Superintendence did not manage to secure the necessary funds for data servers with backups and GIS.

²Local Enforcement System Agency (LESA)

12. Office maintenance and maximising of space based on the Office Space Audit 2018 continued.

13. During 2019 the Superintendence also introduced online forms and payments as an initiation towards the digitisation of internal processes. This project also aimed at digitising data gathering on workflows by means of dashboards, and the digitalisation of the archaeological monitoring system.

14. The level of service of development consultation reached in late 2018 was maintained and improved. Consultation response output to the average 200 cases weekly is now consistently at 100% and kept within the statutory timeframes, including any inspections and meetings with periti, without compromising on the quality of recommendations. New cases are being filtered to select and provide an early reply on cases having no or little bearing on cultural heritage, the rest are processed through a triage for Major Projects, Urban Conservation Areas and others. Recommendations for archaeological monitoring have also maintained the rational approach introduced in 2018 to focus on sites having greater predictability and thus make better use of the resources of all. This procedural improvement yielded very positive results in 2019, as the Superintendence managed to respond with more ease to the demand of archaeological monitoring, including underwater, despite spikes in major infrastructural projects of roadworks by Infrastructure Malta and Water Services Corporation.

15. In 2019, for the first time, the Superintendence also took action to counter non-compliance with the archaeological monitoring conditions in development permits. In liaison with the Planning Authority, during 2019, the Superintendence presented over 83 cases of non-compliance resulting in compromised fines totalling c. half a million Euros which will be administered by the Planning Authority.

16. Given the increased number of officers in 2018, and the stabilisation of the provision of development consultation and archaeological monitoring services at acceptable levels, during 2019, the Superintendence was in a position to dedicate efforts on one of its major statutory remits, that of compiling the National Protective Inventory of immovable and movable heritage, which is also an Electoral Manifesto deliverable. The initial process included the identification and review of existing data sources and contents at the Superintendence as well as at other entities. The Superintendence also actively contributed in the protection of a number of heritage properties on land and underwater listed in the inventory as published in the Government Gazette. Great strides were also made in archaeological excavations and research with local and foreign institutions, and an increase in the Superintendence's direct implementation of archaeological investigations and monitoring including underwater. Advancements were made in addressing the publication of key past development-generated archaeological excavations by the Superintendence in collaboration with several individuals, including the former Superintendent Dr Anthony Pace, and Deputy Superintendent Nathaniel Cutajar. During 2019 the Superintendence also managed to restart holding exhibitions and public events. The Superintendence also formed partnerships on research with other foreign and local entities as part of its outreach initiative, mainly with the University of Malta, Heritage Malta and the Restoration Directorate as reported in the appropriate section of this report.

17. On another positive note, significant work and advancement was made by the Board of Warrant for Restorers and Conservators in preparation for the much-awaited commencement of the conferment of warrants in 2020. During 2019, several cases of Guardianship Deeds, the review of the Cultural Heritage Act and other matters were discussed at the Committee of Guarantee. Throughout 2019 the Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee met weekly to discuss and advise on development projects which had a major bearing on heritage. The Superintendence attended regularly to several committees on which it is represented as indicated in the appropriate section of this report.

Looking forward to 2020.

18. The Superintendence will continue to implement its approved recruitment plan for 2020 and training needs. 2020 will be crucial for the Superintendence to secure the necessary funds for a data server with backups and GIS. These will enable the Superintendence to implement various statutory obligations, as well as deliverables emanating from the Electoral Manifesto, and which will significantly improve the organisation's efficiency, enhance public perception and trust.

19. Financing is one of the major problems the Superintendence faces, as so far, the entity is mainly depended on the allocated subvention from government, now increased and ranging from €0.7 to €1.0 million annually. Recognition of the monetary value of the services provided in kind by the Superintendence need to be taken into account, especially as these are conservatively estimated to be in excess of €1.2 million. In 2019 the Superintendence looked at options to improve its revenue for implementation in 2020.

Joseph Magro Conti
Superintendent of Cultural Heritage

Elizabeth Vassallo
Director Support Services

March 2020

1. Cultural Heritage Data Management



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

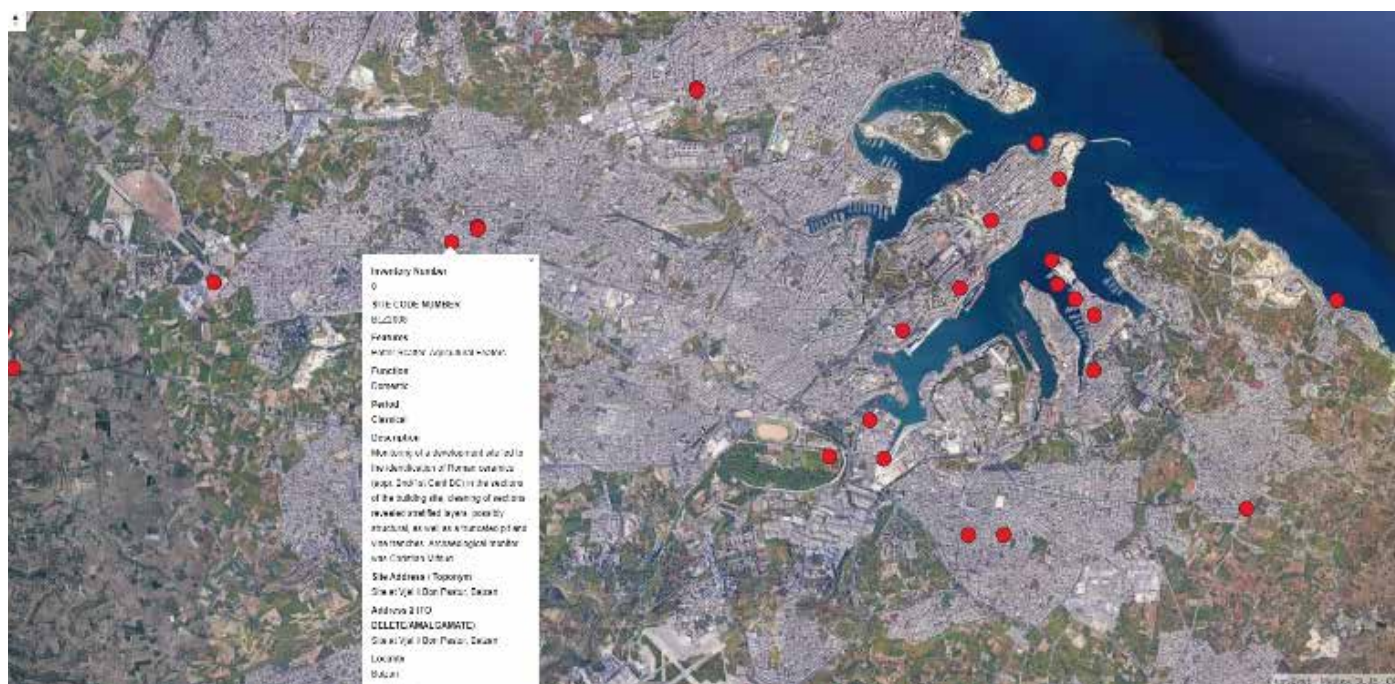
During 2019 the Superintendence reactivated and stepped up its function to gather and update heritage data as in previous years such tasks had to be held in abeyance due to staff shortage. The limited staff available at the Superintendence up to mid-2018 were engaged to meet the sudden increase in development application consultations since May 2016. This, owing to changes in the Planning Authority’s consultation process whereby the Superintendence, as a statutory consultee, began receiving all development applications³. Consequently, the Superintendence also had to manage the resultant increase in archaeological monitoring cases.

This refreshed thrust increased the interface between the Superintendence and other Maltese and foreign heritage and educational institutions as well as the public. 2019 has also seen a slow increase in the staff complement of the Heritage Data Management and Research Unit (HDMRU) with a Head of Unit and six officers, which is set to be further augmented in 2020. This will allow the unit to be in a better position to fulfil its statutory business functions. The HDMRU also administers proposals for the statutory protection of immovable cultural heritage through the Scheduling process in conjunction with the Planning Authority as well as research⁴.

The National Protective Inventory: Immovable Heritage

Continuing the direction adopted in 2018, the Superintendence has determined that in line with current technologies and trends, the best presentation format for its Inventory (immovable heritage) is through a GIS platform. However, progress in implementation is currently hindered by budgetary limitations as well as the ongoing over-hall of the Superintendence’s ICT set-up. Notwithstanding, a systematic review of the existing heritage data is currently underway.

Minimum Core Data Standards consonant with Council of Europe and ICOMOS criteria, which will be at the core of the National Protection Inventory, have been established and a process has been initiated to align the existing heritage data to these core data. The focus is currently on the records relating to archaeological discoveries made by the Superintendence during the monitoring of development works from the year 2000 to present.



Potential GIS interface for the National Protection Inventory

³ Refer to Section 2 – Heritage Advice on Building Development

⁴ Refer to Section 4 - Cultural Heritage Protection.

The existing inventory presently in list format and currently available on the Superintendence's website (2361 entries), is simultaneously being aligned with the same Core Data so that it will be incorporated within the same GIS system. During the 2019 budget speech, the Minister for Finance has expressly mentioned the National Inventory as a priority to be continued during calendar year 2020, in line with the 2017 Electoral Manifesto pledge.

The Superintendence is currently availing of an open source geospatial software for the presentation of the inventory, which will also be made available to the public. The Superintendence is awaiting commitment of funding for the acquisition of a licensed software which meets the requirements and security levels better. The Core Data Standards include centre point coordinates which will make it possible to upload the prepared data onto any GIS software.

Registry

The Superintendence holds record files of administrative and cases related to heritage aspects from 1934 to present. A long-term project has been initiated with the aim of re-organising the current registry system, which needed sorting, organisation and updates. The first stages of the project are concentrating on taking a stock-take of the actual quantity and physical location of the files.

Concurrently, the Superintendence is also identifying files relating to Planning Authority consultations which contain no additional information than that already found in the corresponding original planning application file held at the Planning Authority in physical and digital form online. Nonetheless, the pertinent redundant files will be scanned before disposing in line with the provisions of the National Archives Act. This procedure will create more physical space for the expansion of the registry with current and future case files where necessary. Once the stock-take is finalised, research in the registry files will be carried out to further augment the entries within the National Protective Inventory.

Archaeological Finds Depository management and upkeep

The re-organisation of the Superintendent's depository where archaeological finds are held for safekeeping, preservation and study has been given a new impetus, with a clear direction taken as to the storage requirements and the allocation of staff. The depository is being tackled systematically and currently the sorting of the cultural material by year since 2009 is underway. Once all finds are grouped by year it will be possible to sub-group by site code and give a unique shelf-mark for each site code which will enable full traceability of all materials as well as link the depository with the National Inventory. In conjunction to the management of the finds at the depository, basic cleaning, upgrading and upkeep of the premises is ongoing with the intention of more tangible improvements planned for 2020.



2. Heritage Advice on Building Development



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Development Consultations: Land-use and development applications

In 2017 the Planning Consultation Team consisted of four professional officers. As part of the 2018 restructuring, the Heritage Planning Consultation Unit (HPCU) was created and in 2019 consisted of a Head of Unit, nine professional officers and an administrative assistant.

During 2019, the Superintendence continued fulfilling its role as a designated statutory external consultee to the Planning Authority on land use and development applications including the major projects. The Superintendence is consulted on all full development applications, as well as on minor amendment applications, summary applications, development notification orders, dangerous structures, regularisation applications and planning control applications which may have a bearing 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 1 below.

Administrative changes

The increase within the HPCU from four officers in 2018 to 11 in 2019 permitted for the implementation of long-planned administrative changes. One such change introduced in 2019 was an initial filtering system. Each day, a designated officer within the HPCU is tasked to filter all development planning applications that are received by the Superintendence the previous day. The aim of this initial filtering exercise is to weed out applications having no or little cultural heritage concern and to communicate an immediate response to the Planning Authority. This results in a reduction in the numerical caseload of Superintendence officers allowing them to dedicate more attention to development applications which bear cultural heritage concern. At this stage, development applications are assigned to officers, whilst major projects are detected at an early stage, as these require more time, effort and resources to process than standard cases, often necessitating background research, meetings and inspections. The initial filtering process is an added enhancement on the triage system set up in 2018. Development applications are assigned according to area designation such as Urban Conservation Areas, Within Scheme, Outside Development Zones, and Major Projects.

During 2019, the Superintendence also started to engage with development projects at a pre-submission stage, through meetings with proponents and/or site inspections. The aim of these pre-submission meetings/inspections is to identify any possible cultural heritage impacts at an early stage, which by the time an application is submitted to the Planning Authority, such impacts are reduced and mitigated. Nonetheless, several aspects of concern to the Superintendence often persist leading to further intense engagement by the Superintendence during the actual consultation timeframes to further reduce impacts on cultural heritage.

Overview of development application trends

In 2019, the Superintendence received 12,334 consultations from the Planning Authority and Transport Malta.

In 2019, the Superintendence received a total of 9,967 consultation requests from the Planning

Authority on various types of development applications. The largest number of consultations were on Full Development Applications of which 6,761 were first consultations, 1,786 re-consultations, 428 minor amendment consultations as well as 374 summary applications (see Table 1). Consultation on these applications is done through the Planning Authority's e-apps electronic system which is an efficient means of communication and facilitates easier processing. A further 618 consultation requests consisted of other types of development applications, such as Development Notification Orders, Planning Control Applications, Dangerous Structures, Regularisations amongst others. Consultation on these other types is mainly through electronic mail from applicants and periti, which is cumbersome, difficult to keep track of, verbose, and unreliable. The Superintendence made proposals and is in discussions with the Planning Authority to harness these types of consultations through e-apps for ease of access to information, reference, and reply.

The total number of development related consultations marks an increase of 456 consultation requests over the previous year when 9,511 development consultations were received. The main increase was noted in the number of Summary applications received when compared to 2018 value.

When comparing first consultations and re-consultations, which are the main bulk of development consultations, in 2019 the Superintendence received a total of 8,547 consultations, which marks a slight decrease to the 8,770 of the previous year.

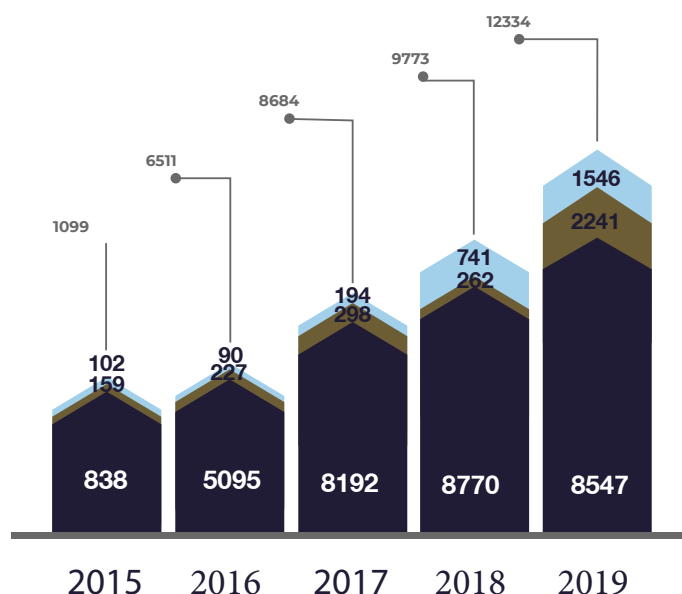
Of the total of 6,761 first consultations, around 3,000 applications were responded to at filtering stage, which amounts to c. 44% of the total new consultations received. Apart from managing the numbers better the filtering process has a qualitative objective which enabled the Superintendence to concentrate on critical development applications with more engagement with the proponents, the Planning Authority and other agencies and with the public to achieve improved design to lessen impacts on the cultural heritage environment.

Despite this slight decrease in consultations and re-consultations of Full Development Applications a remarkable increase was noted between the other types of development related consultations received in 2018 and in 2019 (see Chart 1). Road works permit applications have increase from 262 in 2018 to 2,241 in 2019, a 755% increase over the previous year. This significant increase is due to a change in practice by Transport Malta that took place during 2019. Transport Malta began consulting the Superintendence on all road works applications received by them. In previous years, Transport Malta consulted the Superintendence on cases within selected localities of high archaeological sensitivity. This limited criterion was missing on several other archaeologically sensitive areas necessitating delays during works owing to accidental archeologically discoveries. Such situation has now been surpassed through consultation with the Superintendence and inspection during works by officers from the Superintendence where required.

The responsibility to process road works permits has been shifted to the Archaeological Monitoring Team. In this manner any conditions to safeguard the cultural heritage issued in response to a road works permit application are followed-up by an official within the same Team.

2019 also marks a considerable increase in other development related applications, such as Development Notification Orders, Planning Control applications, Regularisation applications and Environmental Impact Assessments.

CONSULTATION REQUEST IN NUMBERS



■ Other development-related cases - DNOs, PCs, RGs, PDSs etc.
■ TM (and other road works) requests
■ PA (Planning Directorate) 1st & 2nd Full Development consultations

Type of consultation received	Amount
Consultation by e-Apps (Planning Authority online system)	
Planning Directorate Consultation	6,761
Planning Directorate Re-Consultation	1,786
Planning Directorate Consultation Following Material Change	475
Consultation Following Republishing	2
Consultation Following Deferral to Consultees	72
Minor Amendment Consultation	428
Consultation (External/pre 2016 cases)	23
Screening Consultation (Major Projects)	46
Summary - Alterations to heritage buildings	139
Summary – Restoration	235
Consultation by e-mail (difficult to keep track of quantities, as e-mails are sent to multiple officers and generic e-mails, often in copy of each other)	
Post Decision Consultation	Not available
DNO - Activities / Filming activities	6
DNO - Development Notification Order	23
DS - Dangerous Structures	23

PC - Planning Control	15
RG - Regularisation	10
RFC - Request for SCH Clearance (FDA post 2nd consultation)	Not available
EIA - Environment Impact Assessment	45
PDS - Project Description Statement	
SEA - Strategic Environment Assessment	
HIA - Heritage Impact Assessment (UNESCO World Heritage Sites)	1
TP - Tree Permitting	1
Other - Generic Requests	2
Consultation through Transport Malta electronic online system	
RWP - Road Work Permit	2,241

Table 1: number of the different types of applications received

Major Projects (Planning Consultations)

Major Project development applications are a critical part of the consultations that the Planning Authority refers to the Superintendence. Such projects usually involve a much heavier interaction in terms of time, thought and resource effort, and include site inspections, research, assessments, and various meetings with stakeholders and the periti/applicant. Below is a list of a number of the main major projects the Superintendence has engaged with during 2019 (see Table 2).

PA number	Site	Comments
PA 06951/19 PA 08650/18 PA 04203/19 PA 09941/18 PA 08773/18	Manoel Island	The Superintendence continued its engagement with the numerous applications related to the Manoel Island Master Plan. Apart from applications dealing on land development, the Superintendence engaged with applications involving the sea around the island, necessitating officers of the Superintendence to carry out underwater surveys.
PA 10444/18	Excelsior Hotel extension	A large-scale project involving the extension of the existing hotel, to which the Superintendence expressed reservations on the proposed extension in view of the visual impacts that would have been created on the Scheduled Grade 1 fortifications and the Valletta World Heritage Site.

PA 06951/19 PA 08650/18 PA 04203/19 PA 09941/18 PA 08773/18	Manoel Island	The Superintendence continued its engagement with the numerous applications related to the Manoel Island Master Plan. Apart from applications dealing on land development, the Superintendence engaged with applications involving the sea around the island, necessitating officers of the Superintendence to carry out underwater surveys.
PA 10444/18	Excelsior Hotel extension	A large-scale project involving the extension of the existing hotel, to which the Superintendence expressed reservations on the proposed extension in view of the visual impacts that would have been created on the Scheduled Grade 1 fortifications and the Valletta World Heritage Site.
PA 09938/18	Tigne Point block Q3	The application proposed the construction of a tower block in front of the remains of Garden Battery. The Superintendence has made several recommendations on the project to lessen impacts on the historic site, which has already been physically and visually compromised by earlier similar developments during the last two decades.
PA 06089/19	Pembroke - St Julian's connection	A national project for the construction of a tunnel to link St Julian's with Pembroke. The Superintendence has requested further documentation to enable the better assessment of the application.
PA 06131/19	Parking Area, Floriana	A project for a parking area within the Floriana fortifications, for which the Superintendence found no objection to in principle, provided that several mitigation measures are implemented.
PA 02517/18	Observation structure, Floriana	The proposal to install a Ferris wheel in front of the Granaries in Floriana has been strongly objected to by the Superintendence in view of the negative visual impact on the views and vistas towards Valletta World Heritage Site.

PA 05533/19	Former ITS site, St Julians	A mega-project involving the construction of a high-rise building and a hotel on the former ITS site. The site still contains a number of late 19 th century ex-British military buildings, including ones which are Scheduled and others which have come in public knowledge recently. The Superintendence immediately inspected and recorded the newly discovered underground military features and engaged several times on the application, making a number of recommendations to protect and integrate the heritage features within the project, including setting several reserved matters.
Various	Marsa Flyovers Vjal Hal-Luqa, Sta Lucia Imgieret Link Road, Luqa Sta Lucia Tunnel Central Link, Attard Hal Resqun Tunnel	A number of major road infrastructural projects between in various localities in Malta to which the Superintendence included a number of conditions to safeguard buildings of various heritage merits and for archaeological monitoring.
PA 10603/18	Malta Film Studios, Rinella	The proposed upgrading of the Malta Film Studios, part of which fall within the buffer zone of the arc of fire of the 100-ton gun at Fort Rinella. The Superintendence engaged heavily in the case, to upgrade the areas which are affected by Scheduling as well as to safeguard the views and vistas of this historic militarised coast.
PA 00698/19	Hotel in Pieta seafront	A multi-storey hotel along Pieta seafront, within an area where several historic 18 th and 19 th century townhouses, such as Villa Frere, including their extensive gardens still exist. The Superintendence expressed concern to the proposed overall massing of the project and encroachment onto the historic gardens. Eventually, the proposal was refused by the Planning Authority Board by the time of writing this report.
PA 08732/18	Hotel on former Tattingers site	The Superintendence continued engaging with the proposed hotel replacing the former Tattingers nightclub and a number of adjacent buildings. The Superintendence expressed its several concerns and has engaged heavily with the proponents to tone down the project to be in harmony with its surrounding historic landscape context of Mdina and Saqqaja, Rabat. The Superintendence is still in discussions on the case.

PA 02370/19	Former Times buildings, Valletta	The proposal to demolish the existing buildings and construct a block of 50 apartments and underlying basement garages has seen heavy involvement by the Superintendence in view of the impact the project may have on the Valletta World Heritage Site, and views towards the area. The Superintendence is still in discussions on the case.
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Table 2: A selection of some major projects the Superintendence engaged with in 2019

Planning Tribunal (Appeals)

As a statutory consultee in the planning process the Superintendence receives notification that an appeal has been lodged to the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal. On a number of cases, the Tribunal requested the presence of the Superintendent to attend hearings as witness or to act as external consultant in proceedings.

Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (CHAC)

The Superintendence refers for discussion complex development-related cases to the CHAC. The CHAC is appointed by the Ministry and tasked with making recommendations to the Superintendent on development-related issues as well as scheduling/de-scheduling requests.

During 2019, the CHAC held 47 meetings, made 343 recommendations on development applications, and carried out 39 site inspections. Cases referred to the CHAC by the Superintendence were mainly projects having a major impact on cultural heritage: major projects, impact on scheduled buildings, demolition, intensive alterations and additions, adverse visual impact, and development applications impacting on World Heritage Sites.

The Superintendence also presented a number of scheduling proposals to the CHAC which were approved following discussion.

3. Archaeological & Restoration Monitoring



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

As part of the organisational restructuring, management reforms at the Superintendence resulted in the setting up of the Heritage Monitoring Unit comprising of the Archaeology Monitoring Inspectorate (AMI) and the Building Restoration Inspectorate (BRI) under the supervision of a Head of Unit to streamline and improve surveillance operations.

Archaeology monitoring

Whereas in 2017 the Archaeology Monitoring Inspectorate had two archaeologists and one office support, in 2018 the compliment was strengthened to five archaeologists and an office support and maintained so in 2019.

As part of its surveillance responsibilities the Superintendence regulates archaeological monitoring of ongoing development works to ensure that demolition and construction works do not, either wilfully or by accident, damage historic structures or archaeological remains.

		2017	2018	2019
1	Cases brought forward from previous year	426	310	589
2	New archaeology monitoring cases	373	415	380
3	Archaeology monitoring cases active during the year (total of headline no.1 and no. 2)	799	725	969
4	Cases closed	135	136	285
5	Ongoing cases as at end of year (subtracting headline no. 4 from no. 3)	310	589	684

Table 3: Statistics for 2017, 2018, 2019 for archaeological heritage

Overview and main challenges/achievements

During 2019, the Superintendence registered a slight decrease (from 415 in 2018 to 380 in 2019 – a decrease of 8.4%) in the number of new requests to carry out archaeological monitoring work on sites covered by development permission. This decline probably reflects the decrease in the number of requests for archaeological monitoring made by the Superintendence when replying to consultation by the Planning Authority during the processing of development applications. This decrease is the result of changes in criteria introduced by the Superintendence during 2018 when requesting archaeological monitoring at development application stage, where greater emphasis is made on better site prediction analysis.

The Archaeology Monitoring Inspectorate succeeded in closing 285 cases during 2019 whereas 136 were closed during 2018 – an efficiency improvement of 110%. This significant improvement is attributed to several factors, mainly:

- a) the new officers engaged during the previous year have settled down and acquired the necessary experience to deal with their tasks;
- b) the Archaeology Monitoring Inspectorate strived to build a better synergy, communication strategy and a mentoring process with the archaeology monitors in the private sector. This challenge was identified during last year's annual report and noticeable effort was paid to achieve this target;

- c) there has been a decrease in the pressure on the pool of field archaeologists to conduct archaeological field work during 2019. This enabled them to focus more on closing cases. This decrease in the pressure is the result of:
- i) a slight increase in the number of archaeology monitors available for work during the last year;
 - ii) the Superintendence officers directly carrying out a number of archaeological monitoring and excavation tasks in specific projects, mostly related to emergency infrastructural projects or where burials with the presence of bones have been found; and
 - iii) a slight decrease in the instances where the Superintendence has requested archaeological monitoring in development applications.

Notwithstanding, the Archaeology Monitoring Inspectorate succeeded in closing much more cases in 2019 than in the previous year. The total amount of active cases for 2019 (684) is still higher than that of 2018 (589) owing to the extraordinary increase in cases for archaeology monitoring that was experienced in 2017 and 2018 (at a time when the Superintendence was operating at a much reduced capacity), the effects of which are still being felt. This backlog is expected to decline by the end of 2020 if the momentum and efficiency achieved during 2019 is maintained.

Road Works Permits (RWPs)

In addition to the above, the Superintendence processed 2,241 applications for road works of which 329 (15%) were considered to require archaeological surveillance. Such roadworks include resurfacing, re-laying of services and repairs of services by Transport Malta, Infrastructure Malta and Water Services Corporation. Major road projects are subject to a Full Development Application and subject to different monitoring regimes. In total, TORs for archaeological monitoring of roadworks were issued for 61 cases.

There is a noteworthy discrepancy between the total amount of cases that were processed as requiring archaeological surveillance (329) and the total amount of cases where actual surveillance took place (61). This discrepancy is mostly the result of applicants submitting project details or revised drawings (post-permit) that eliminate the need for archaeological monitoring. In some cases, projected road and infrastructural works do not take place notwithstanding that a road works permit has been issued. Nevertheless, it cannot be excluded that in some cases road and infrastructural works that require archaeological monitoring are carried out without this monitoring taking place.

The Archaeology Monitoring Inspectorate also noted a marked improvement in the quality of the work, especially in terms of documentation standards, by several archaeologists registered with the Superintendence. Moreover, the Superintendence increased its on-site presence to offer more timely advice and guidance to the registered archaeologists, periti and other technical persons. The Superintendence carried out 323 site inspections related to archaeology monitoring during 2019 apart from numerous meetings with periti and clients to discuss the way forward in cases where archaeological features were discovered during the development works. The Archaeology Monitoring Inspectorate worked hard to build up a healthy rapport with the major infrastructural providers including but not exclusively, Infrastructure Malta, Water Services Corporation and the Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation. This has led to noticeable improvement in the carrying out of major infrastructures in terms of cultural heritage conservation.

Cultural Heritage Service Providers

Twenty three archaeologists were registered with the Superintendence at the end of 2019. In 2019 there was an increase of three registered archaeologists. This Register is accessible on the website of the Superintendence, together with a number of guidance documents defining the Operating Procedures and Standards⁵ to be followed in archaeological monitoring cases.

Unfortunately, one service provider was suspended due to negligence and non-compliance with the Superintendence's conditions, while another resigned the brief.

One archaeologist is currently on probation – a measure introduced by the Superintendence in the past year in its efforts to step up and improve the profession of the archaeologist. Additionally, the Superintendence introduced a new level in the profession, that of the Technical Archaeologists. These are persons formally qualified in archaeology but who do not possess the necessary experience or formal qualification in development-led archaeology. These persons are being registered with the Superintendence as Technical Archaeologists and cannot assume archaeological briefs in their name but must work under the supervision of one of the publicly registered archaeologists until they obtain the necessary experience and formal recognition. There were two such Technical Archaeologists on probation as at end of 2019. The list of Technical Archaeologists is not made available to the public.

Surveillance

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.

⁵Available online at [https://culture.gov.mt/en/culturalheritage/Documents/form/operatingproceduresandstandardsforarchaeologyservices\(OPSAS\)february2013.pdf](https://culture.gov.mt/en/culturalheritage/Documents/form/operatingproceduresandstandardsforarchaeologyservices(OPSAS)february2013.pdf)

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 2019. Notwithstanding, in 2019 the Superintendence implemented its surveillance function on 35 occasions. Several other cases were intervened upon by the Superintendence's restoration and archaeology monitoring teams. A number of emergencies and infringements were avoided by early detection by the Superintendence's vigilance, pre-empting damage.

Enforcement

The Superintendence, with the support of the Planning Authority, had to resort to the application of the Compromised Fine mechanism under the Development Planning Act (2016) for development projects implemented in breach of the obligatory archaeological monitoring conditions as required by the development permits. In other cases, the proponents failed to report the discovery of cultural heritage features as required by law. This mechanism was introduced as a deterrent to reduce the risk of non-compliance to permit conditions requiring archaeological monitoring.

The settlement of the Compromised Fine is necessary for the Planning Authority to issue the compliance certificate at end of works by which the applicant would be able to obtain the provision of water and electricity to the premises. During 2019, 80 cases were presented by the Superintendence to the Planning Authority which in turn fined the applicant. These fines amounted to a total of c. €500,000 and are administered by the Planning Authority.

Major Archaeological Interventions and Discoveries in 2019

The Superintendence's Archaeological Monitoring Inspectorate continuously engaged with development-led archaeological investigations. Several discoveries having varying degrees of cultural heritage value were uncovered during monitored works. Below are eighteen major discoveries in 2019. The professional service provided by the archaeological monitors registered with the Superintendence is highly commended and augers well for future professional improvement of the service. At the moment of archaeological discoveries, the project proponents raise concerns and are often not willing to preserve the archaeological features and redesign parts of the project. Ultimately, after persuasive negotiations by the Superintendence, most clients accommodate the preservation of archaeological remains, obviously at extra costs to the project. However, the preservation of cultural patrimony is the obligation of all Maltese citizens as upheld by Article 9 of the Constitution of Malta and by local legislation, apart from basic ethics, typical of an emancipated State. In such situations, notwithstanding the shortage of resources, the Superintendence is making extra effort to expedite direction and decisions as time costs money for all.

Major road infrastructural works at Marsa/Paola Junction, Vjal Santa Lucija, Vjal Sir Paul Boffa, Triq Garibaldi, Triq Aldo Moro, Triq il-Labour, Triq Hal Qormi, Industrial Estate, Marsa

During the archaeological surveillance of the infrastructural works at the Marsa/Paola Junction and the new vehicular tunnel between Vjal Santa Lucija and Triq tal-Barrani, a number of ancient features continued to be discovered and investigated under the direction of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. The features included another ancient tomb probably dating to the Punic-Roman period. This was found partially collapsed (as a result of the very weak bedrock in the area) and although rifled sometime in the past it still contained human remains and ancient cultural material entrapped under the collapsed upper part of the tomb. Three other Punico-Roman tombs were preserved following insistence by the Superintendence for the deviation of service trenches and a culvert. The Superintendence also requested Infrastructure Malta to provide entrance shelters for future controlled public access to the tombs which were integrated within the reinstated landscape area and outdoor gym at Sta. Lucia. Additionally, an extensive ancient agricultural landscape characterised by a highly regular and systematic pattern of agricultural trenches was also recorded along the ridge overlooking the Marsa-Luqa valley and plain. Most of the investigated features were preserved in situ and back-filled although some of the features had to be trimmed as the vehicular tunnel (an infrastructural work of national importance) is planned to pass through the archaeological area.

Manoel Island, Gzira

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage continued with its archaeological investigations at Manoel Island during most of 2019 to attain confirmation and be better informed about the expected extensive heritage potential on Manoel Island, so this heritage finally gets its deserved investigation, study, protection and integration within the development being carried out by MIDI plc.

Vaulted reservoirs were discovered at the back of the Plague Hospital. These appear to be 19th century, although a Knights' period phase is not being excluded. Most of the archaeological investigation in 2019 focused on locating the extents and identifying the characteristics and context of St. George's Cemetery, the 'Muslim' Cemetery and another adjacent cemetery which dates back to the British period. The evidence from the discovered fragments of tombstones in St George's Cemetery, discovered under a layer of wartime debris and architectural pieces from the area which were used to level off the site, suggests that this cemetery was in use between the late 18th century and the early 19th century. These historic cemeteries were unceremoniously levelled in the early 1980s for a marshalling yard of an oil-drilling company. Despite the extensive damage to the historic cemeteries, the levelling preserved the surface and below ground features and skeletal remains. These cemeteries are now being scientifically investigated by the Superintendence. Many posited the belief that these cemeteries were destroyed, but this was not derived from fact and proven outright wrong. In fact, apart from some records and circumstantial evidence, the Superintendent himself has living memory of the levelling works which had sparked public outcry at the time, especially from people of the adjacent Gzira and historians.

On the other hand, no burials were discovered in the so-called 'Muslim' cemetery except for a singular tomb without any burial, which was archaeologically excavated and appears to date to the 19th century although the cemetery is clearly rock-cut, formed and prepared to accept burials. It is not excluded that the burial contents of this cemetery were removed at some point in time during the 19th century and the site backfilled perhaps to make way for further burials which were never materialised. Of particular interest in this cemetery is a localised layer of soil used in the backfilling of the cemetery that is characterised by a significant amount of ancient pottery and marine shells.

The cemetery adjacent to the 'Muslim' cemetery is a highly formalised cemetery based on a grid pattern accessed through a flight of circular steps leading down to the seafront. The cemetery appears to have been used for British servicemen during the late 19th century and early 20th century. Circumstantial evidence indicate that a cattle shed was located adjacent to this cemetery and may have shared one of its outer walls. A fourth cemetery appears to have been discovered along the shore facing Ta' Xbiex. This will be investigated in 2020. Midi architects and consultants worked alongside the Superintendence to redesign parts of the project, including the major access road to allow the preservation and integration of the discovered sites.

Central Link Project Mrieħel, Balzan, Attard, Ta' Qali

A large-scale fieldwalking exercise was conducted along the tracts to be affected by the infrastructural works for the Central Link Project. This exercise resulted in the identification of a number of concentrations of pottery scatters which are usually associated with archaeological hotspots having high potential as well as the identification of an extensive number of previously undocumented old wells which suggest an intensive agricultural landscape. Further studies are required to identify the typology and dating of these discoveries. This information will feed in the management of the archaeological monitoring of the Central Link Project which is scheduled to start in early 2020.

Auberge d'Aragon, Valletta

The original kitchen of the Auberge d'Aragon was discovered in a cross vaulted chamber during archaeological monitoring works being carried out for the rehabilitation of the lower levels of the Auberge. The centre piece of the kitchen is the oven which dates between the 17th century and 18th century. This oven is constructed out of hundreds of pieces of broken pottery bonded together with a mixture of cocchiopesto and lime forming a dome-like structure and was connected to chimneys. Over the years, the oven area sustained various modifications, eventually buried and levelled until its recent discovery. The kitchen was connected to a system of water channels, wells and drainage was subject to extensive structural repairs including the introduction of buttress walls and propping arches sometime in the late 17th century and early 18th century. These interventions may have been necessary because of damage resulting from the 1693 earthquake. It is documented that Blondel, the Order's engineer, instructed that new stone was to be quarried from the square fronting the Auberge to repair the facade of the Auberge as it was leaning dangerously outwards after the earthquake.

St Augustine's Priory, Valletta

The remains of a side chapel and the access between the nave and choir of the late 16th century church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, built by the Girolamo Cassar, were discovered during works within the courtyard of St Augustine's Priory in Valletta. The nave and apse of the church which survive as part of the priory's magazines still survives mostly intact. Among the features uncovered from the site include the altar of a side chapel, single and double panelled decorated pilasters, the base and shaft of a pier with relief carvings of the pilaster, a section of the lower arch leading to the side chapel and altar, a fragment of a tombstone. This part of the church is located above a partly rock hewn barrel-vaulted reservoir or crypt, which is probably positioned along the axis of the nave. The decorative elements of the church also include traces of ochre and historic graffiti appear to date to the early 17th century. The church appears to have sustained a number of structural interventions and modifications before it was pulled down in the late 17th century to make way for a new church and priory. The resultant void was covered by a barrel vault to form the present courtyard space albeit this vault appears to have been destroyed during WW2 and voids backfilled with wartime debris. The material culture being recovered from this excavation ranges from 17th century Maiolica, to 18th century domestic pottery to early 20 century glass phials.

The Cloisters, Triq Imrabat c/w Bonavita c/w, Triq is-Sorijiet, San Ġiljan, Malta

A very large vaulted cistern that is partially dug into bedrock was discovered during the continuation of site clearance works under archaeological monitoring following the discovery of a truncated well and garden/agricultural related rock-cut features in 2018. The cistern which is accessed from a flight of steps, measures approximately 22m in length, 10m in width and it has an internal height of 8m. With the co-operation of the developer and the perit, The Superintendence secured its preservation, rehabilitation and integration within the project.

Site at Triq il-Mithna c/w Triq l-Ingjiniera c/w Triq Nofs in-Nhar, Valletta

Agricultural trenches, postholes and two small silo pits were discovered during archaeological monitoring of rehabilitation works carried out in a series of buildings in this part of Valletta. These finds are considered exceptional because they offer a rare testimony to human activity on the Sciberras peninsula before the city of Valletta was built.

Site at Triq is-Sorijiet c/w Triq il-Wied c/w, Triq id-Durrajsa, Paola

A World War II shelter was uncovered during soil/material removal works for the new regional health centre. The shelter comprises of a narrow staircase leading to a long corridor, with rock-cut rooms on the sides. Numerous artefacts were still in situ, including metal bed frames, remains of wooden doors, glass bottles and a gas mask. A few of the rooms were also found to be tiled. A large rectangular water reservoir which predates the shelter was also uncovered. The feature was found to be plastered with concrete but backfilled with dumped material at some later time. Other discovered features include tree pits, postholes and agricultural trenches, with the latter containing amounts of Classical period pottery, some of which seem to have been broken in situ, probably rifled from some nearby ancient tomb.



(above) A gas mask found still hanging on one of the walls of a rock hewn chamber.

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

(left) Remains of a metal bed structure still in situ within one of the shelter chambers.

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Site at Triq Hal Farruġ, Luqa

Proposed works close to Tad-Debdiaba, limits of Luqa, alerted the Superintendence to impose archaeological monitoring here as over a hundred years ago, in 1916, prehistoric structures were discovered and documented. Documents of the time indicate that these structures did not have an apparent typical megalithic temple form and construction methodology. Unfortunately, the site is also documented as having been destroyed and transformed as part of the airfield which was levelled and developed in the 1950s.

Various archaeological remains from different periods have been discovered during archaeological monitoring works in connection to works associated with various parts of the extensive Luqa/Safi airfield. During monitoring in 2019, in one particular area a collapsed alignment of large stones was uncovered, possibly being either the actual Tad-Debdiaba remains, or some associated part, which might have been left in situ after being destroyed. The remains consist of a cluster of aligned large and roundish stones with evident signs of collapse (domino effect). The remains have been preserved in situ after the project was redesigned to integrate and protect these features.

A pair of cart-ruts over 50m in length was also discovered on this site, traversing into a neighbouring site also redeveloped in relation to the airport use. These cart-ruts have also been protected and preserved in situ. These ruts run parallel to the present road, indicating the antiquity of this thoroughfare. Other rock-cut features discovered on site include agricultural trenches, post holes, cisterns, and rock-cut water channels.



Alignment of large stones at Tad-Debdiaba
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



A pair of cart ruts running for a distance exceeding 50m
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

University Campus, tal-Qroqq, Msida

Works at the University of Malta at tal-Qroqq continued to yield archaeological finds. During the monitoring works for the removal of soil, a number of rock-cut features were unearthed. These features include quarries, a substantial number of agricultural trenches and cart ruts. The project was redesigned to ensure that the cart ruts and the surroundings are protected by integrate them with the required development.



Aerial photo of the cart ruts discovered at the University of Malta at tal-Qroqq showing the junction between two pair of cart ruts.

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Site at Triq il-Miġna, Rabat, Malta

Possible remains of a Roman domus were discovered during site clearance works for an archaeological evaluation carried out in preparation for a proposed urban development in an undeveloped site within the Urban Conservation Area (UCA) of Rabat, Malta. The site is located in a highly sensitive archaeological area and is in close proximity to other several Classical period structural remains. The features discovered consist of several large ashlars scattered throughout the site, none standing in elevation or in a structural context; a layer of ash deposit rich in charcoal, pottery and marine shells; and evidence of rooms partially cut in bedrock. The context appears to be domestic and the exposed spaces follow a regular pattern around a central axis. The site is being dated to the Roman period on the basis of the pottery typology recovered during the archaeological evaluation. The site will be investigated further during 2020 in order to understand its archaeology better and protect it.

Site at Triq tal-Handaq, Tal-Handaq, Hal-Qormi, Malta

A silo pit and other rock-cut features associated with agriculture were uncovered during an archaeological evaluation of the site because of recorded tombs in the vicinity. The silo pit measures 5m deep and 4.5m wide and its opening was found to be almost intact. It is evident that the silo pit was later utilised as a well since a water channel cuts into it and it was found plastered throughout for waterproofing. Pottery and animal bones were also found at the bottom of the pit.

Site at Triq it-Torri l-Ahmar, Rabat

Extensive archaeological deposits 3m deep, including layers characterised by ash and lime deposits, were discovered during an archaeological evaluation conducted in preparation to a proposal for development. The boundary wall is also of archaeological interest as it appears to be partly constructed on the remains of an ancient wall. Substantial amounts of Roman pottery have been recovered and await further study. A reservoir connected to a very deep shaft, possibly a water gallery of the qanat type, was recorded on site. The upper part of the shaft and part of the reservoir are constructed out of what appear to be Classical-period ashlars. Another discovered feature is an underground rock-cut complex that seems to be connected to the water gallery. However, these spaces could not be investigated further in view of the constraints of the site, time and development requirements.



Entrance to the underground complex-external
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



Entrance to the underground complex-internal
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



Reservoir constructed out of large ashlars
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Site at Taċ-Ċawla, in Triq in-Neolitiċi, Rabat, Gozo

An exploratory trench was carried out at Triq in-Neolitiċi, in the immediate vicinity of the prehistoric site of Taċ-Ċawla in order for the Superintendence to direct the proposed reconstruction of the street which is in a state of bad repair. A substantial amount of prehistoric pottery was recovered from a trench of approximately 30m in length, 0.5m in width and 0.3m in depth. Pottery from the Mgarr phase (3800BC – 3600BC) and Ġgantija phase (3600BC – 3000BC) has been identified. However, further studies are required to understand the assemblage. A cluster of stone was identified at this level which may be associated with prehistoric structures.



A stone cluster possibly associated to prehistoric structures
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Site at Pjazza tal-Ġublew tad-Djamanti, Mqabba, Malta

A truncated catacomb complex was discovered during archaeological monitoring in a site within the scheduled buffer of the Tal-Mintna Catacombs. Although heavily truncated, the layout and morphology of the complex is quite discernible. One of the chambers is still intact underneath the adjacent property. This catacomb was probably cut into by an early modern quarry which was also identified a few years ago during archaeological monitoring on an adjacent site. Similarly, the quarry on the adjacent site cut into other archaeological features, including a small catacomb complex (it is not yet established whether it is a separate complex or a continuation of the one discovered in 2019), six circular pits that have been interpreted as silo pits or vats, and a subterranean chamber of yet-unclear purpose and date. A cistern complete with a water management system was also recorded on this previous site.



Aerial view of the truncated catacomb
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



View of the entrance in rock face leading to an unexplored chamber underneath the adjacent site
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Site at Triq Fejġel, Rabat, Malta

A Punico-Roman tomb containing numerous ancient burials was discovered during archaeology monitoring of development works being carried out above the rock surface. The tomb was found to have been damaged by past construction. The burials mainly consisted of inhumations of adults and children including infants. Apart from identifying the human skeletons and other human bones, other objects were found in the tomb, including pottery, beads and other ornamental objects. The site also included other rock-cut features including one that contained possible funerary or ritual ashy deposits with pottery vessels, agricultural features and quarrying. The Superintendence has concluded the excavations at the site and is analysing the remains and processing the documentation for publication. The tomb has been preserved.



The tomb from Triq Fejġel, Rabat
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Site at Triq Ġużeppi Montebello, Tarxien, Malta

A number of rock-cut features, mainly consisting of ancient tombs dating to the Punic-Roman period, were unearthed during archaeological monitoring of the clearing of soil in lieu of approved development works. Three shaft and chamber tombs were discovered, but another two features; possibly also tombs, have been identified as well. The Superintendence has concluded the archaeological investigation of one of the tombs which was found undisturbed. The burials in this tomb consist of a number of urns (pottery vessels) with cremated human bone inside them. Next to the urns smaller vessels were discovered. In the coming months the other tombs will be investigated. The tombs found in this plot form part of a larger cluster which have been previously identified and investigated, and which extends to neighboring plots. All tombs will be preserved and integrated with the proposed development.

Site at Triq il-Ġargjir off, Triq in-Nigret, Rabat, Malta

The monitored works on this site revealed a number of rock-cut features including agricultural trenches, two wells, underground funerary structures and quarrying. The funerary structures are probably the older features and date to the Punic-Roman period. They consist of at least one chamber and shaft tomb, which remains unexcavated and preserved for future generations, as well as larger funerary structures, which give the impression of chamber units and spaces in a catacomb/s. The latter is less preserved since heavy quarrying was carried out in the past but the floor outline in some areas is still visible, together with infant niche burials on the sides of the rock. These features have all been conserved and revised development drawings are being prepared to integrate them into the project to ensure their survival.

Built Heritage Restoration monitoring

In line with the Cultural Heritage Act, the surveillance and monitoring of restoration of built heritage were transferred from the Planning Authority and amalgamated with those at the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage in November 2018. This measure lessened duplication and addressed gaps, as well as creating more synergy within the statutory functions of the Superintendence. As part of the Superintendence's restructuring, the Building Restoration Inspectorate (BRI) was set up and so far, consists of four professional officers, specialised and conversant in-built heritage and cultural heritage conservation practices. The BRI is set to be further augmented in 2020.

The main business functions of the Building Restoration Inspectorate are to:

- a. provide professional advice related to restoration practices of built heritage to the Superintendence in line with international standards and practice on restoration;
- b. assess and review Restoration and Works Method Statements (RMSs / WMSs) during the consultation stages of the planning development application process;
- c. assess and review Dangerous Structures (heritage buildings only) and advises the Planning Authority;
- d. 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, including trial patches before cleaning works and routine monitoring to ensure works are in line with the approved methodology;
- e. provide professional assistance to periti during restoration – such as the need for changes to the approved methodology and plans;
- f. ensure the documentation of updates on progress of restoration projects.

Review of RMS / WMS

The Building Restoration Inspectorate saw a further increase in the number of Restoration and Work Method Statements (RMSs and WMSs) in 2019. In 2019 the combined number of RMSs and WMSs assessed rose by 9.4% to 1323 compared to the 1209 (1027 RMSs + 182 WMSs) processed in the previous year. The increase in the number of assessed RMSs was mainly due to the Irrestawra Darek scheme for Scheduled Grade 1 and Grade 2 buildings and within Urban Conservation Areas that is financed and administered by the Planning Authority. Some of the increase can also be attributed to the Valletta 18 momentum.

An increase over the previous years was also 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 application monitored. During 2019, the Building Restoration Inspectorate conducted 1,091 inspections to monitor restoration and rehabilitation works within heritage buildings (including major projects); a marked increase of 24% when compared to the previous year (883 inspections). The Building Restoration Inspectorate handled 32 cases in support of the Enforcement Directorate of the Planning Authority.

In 2019, the Superintendence recommended to the Planning Commission the release of 335 cases related to restoration compliance bank guarantees and Irrestawra Darek grants associated with restoration works compared to the 99 that were processed in the previous year (an increase of 238%). The significant increase in the number of clearances of Bank Guarantees and Irrestawra Darek Grants processed by the Superintendence is a direct result of the substantial increase in RMSs and WMSs processed in 2018 and the improved efficiency due to the concentration and increase of specialised officers at the Superintendence during 2019. Now that the works approved in these cases are starting to be concluded, the requests to release the associated bank guarantees and for the grants are expected to increase as the final phase in this process.

		2017	2018	2019
1	Review of Restoration and Works Method Statement (RMSs + WMSs)	615	1209	1323
2	Built heritage monitoring site inspections	708	883	1091
3	Release of Bank Guarantee and Irrestawra Darek Grants	49	99	335

Table 4: Statistics covering 2017, 2018 and 2019 in relation to built heritage restoration.

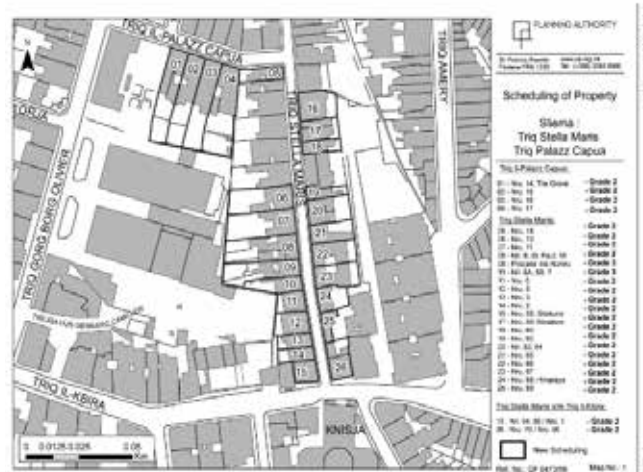
4. Protection and Guardianship of Museums and Sites



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Statutory Protection of Heritage Buildings and Archaeological Sites

In line with the provisions of the Cultural Heritage Act 2019, Article 58 stipulates that the Superintendent may commend for scheduling to the Planning Authority both sites and buildings which merit protection. Throughout 2019 officers from the Superintendence proposed 64 sites for scheduling which have been approved by the Planning Authority's Executive Council as published in the Government Gazette.



An updated list of guardianship deeds is presented in Table 5 below. Candidate properties range from small to medium-sized structures having cultural heritage value. These properties would normally have suffered from extensive damage sometimes caused by neglect or abandonment over the years, or that would have served for uses that were incompatible with their heritage values.

Amendments to the Cultural Heritage Act

Up till 2019 only Non-Governmental Organisations and Local Councils could enter into a public deed with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. The scope of guardianship deeds was widened as part of the revisions to the Cultural Heritage Act that was enacted in June 2019. The main revision permitted the inclusion of Heritage Malta – the State Agency which acts in the capacity of operator in the management of museums and sites, as an eligible entity for a guardianship deed.

As a direct consequence to the legal changes, during the last quarter of 2019 the Superintendence began receiving requests by Heritage Malta for guardianship deeds both for properties already being managed by the agency, as well as for others that do not yet fall under its stewardship. The requests were assessed by the Superintendence, and communications with the agency, the Committee of Guarantee and the Ministry for National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government are ongoing.

Properties recommended for a guardianship deed

During the last quarter of 2019 the Superintendence recommended two historical properties for the consideration of a guardianship deed. The recommendations were discussed at the Committee of Guarantee. The two properties are the Vendome Redoubt which is a Knight's Period coastal defence structure dating to 1715 located in Marsaxlokk, and the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sancir – a late Medieval chapel located in the limits of Rabat, Malta.

Both properties were considered good candidates for a guardianship deed. Consequently, focus must now shift towards an the appreciation and assessment of the feasibility and scale of the proposals for the properties. Since the Vendome Redoubt was requested in guardianship by more than one entity further engagement and discussions are considered necessary before moving forward.

Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sancir, I/o Rabat

The chapel is a free-standing Medieval building located within a rural setting in the outskirts of Rabat, Malta. Its rectangular form, use of pointed arches, its proportions and architectural style are typical of a fifteenth century chapel. The absence of a circular or square apse also suggests that this chapel is an early example of such rural chapels. The buttressing – the function of which is to support the structural integrity of the building – is an eighteenth century addition.

The interior of the chapel is rather plain. The floor is paved with stone slabs as well as some stone benches which are still present along the walls between the bases of the arches. Historic graffiti depicting sailing vessels may still be observed inside. Next to the chapel is an associated cemetery covered by stone slab paving.

The chapel served as a place of worship for farmers who tilled the fields in the area referred to by its Maltese toponym Ġnien is-Sultan.

The first known literary reference to the chapel is found in a 1575 report written by Bishop Pietro Dusinaon his visit to Malta. In 1678, Bishop Molina ordered some stone ceiling slabs (xorok) to be removed to indicate that the chapel had been deconsecrated, after which it started being used for agricultural purposes and to house animals.

Restoration and general repair works were carried out to the chapel in the 1970s. Between 1980 and 1983 a local Trust cleared rubble from within the chapel, carried out restoration works and excavated sondage trenches inside and outside the chapel.

Today, the chapel once again finds itself in a poor state of conservation due to abandonment and lack of repairs. This has resulted in rain water ingress, vegetation growth, open joints, rising damp, missing/broken ceiling slabs, cracks and some areas of collapse.

A local NGO, Din l-Art Ħelwa, has already secured sponsorships for its restoration and is petitioning for the historical chapel to be entrusted to it in guardianship. The process leading to a guardianship deed necessitates pre-requisites including authorisations from the Minister responsible for national heritage, consent from the Minister responsible for government property, and positive recommendations from the Committee of Guarantee further to discussions and careful consideration of the feasibility and scale of the proposal. Assessment and administration of the process is seen to be by the Superintendence who is authorised by the Minister to enter into a guardianship deed. The legal requirements are prescribed at law through Art. 64 of the Cultural Heritage Act.

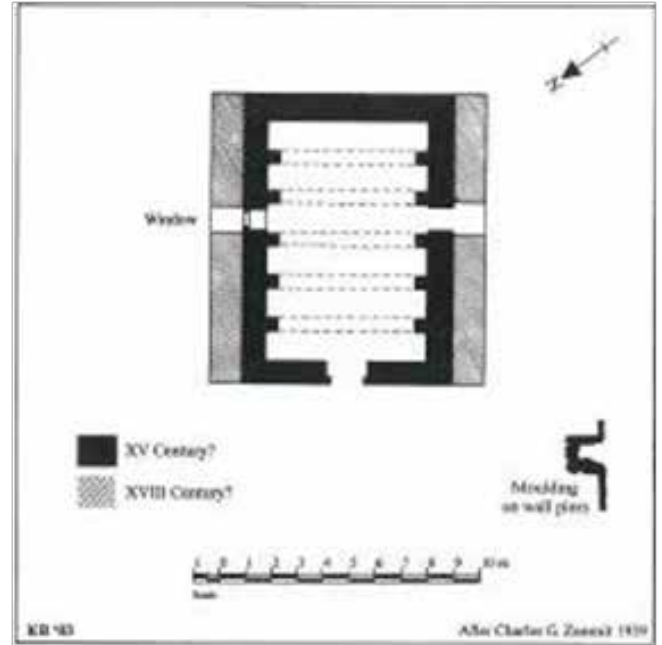
The conclusion of this deed is considered an important step for the preservation of the cultural significance of this historical property. The restoration, continued care and upkeep of the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir by Din l-Art Ħelwa will ensure that another valuable part of our built cultural heritage will continue to be enjoyed by present and future generations.

The Superintendence will also be making recommendations for the chapel's scheduling at Grade 1 owing to its rarity, cultural significance and vulnerability. This is the highest level of protection and recognition of value afforded to built heritage in Malta.



View of the front façade of the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir in c. 1968 before restoration works carried out in the 1970s. Note the buttresses aimed at providing support to the structure. The buttresses are eighteenth century additions.

Image: Buhagiar, M. (2005) The Late Medieval Art and Architecture of the Maltese Islands, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti. Progress Press, Malta



Sketch plan of the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir

Image: Buhagiar, M. (2005) The Late Medieval Art and Architecture of the Maltese Islands, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti. Progress Press, Malta



Long-distance view of the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir (centre)

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



View of the back façade (south-east) of the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



View of the front façade (north-west) and side buttress of the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



View of the interior of the Chapel of San Mikiel is-Sanċir
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Status of Guardianship Deeds

	Name of Cultural Property	Locality	Name of Guardian	Year of Signature
	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 (aka Sta 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	Lascharis War Headquarters Complex & Saluting Battery	Valletta	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2009/Renewal still in process
11	WWII Shelter at Sta Ubaldesca Street	Paola	Fondazzjoni Wirt Paola	2010
12	Couvre Porte Barracks at Vittoriosa (10 rooms at lower level) and underlying WWII shelter	Vittoriosa	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2011
13	Our Lady of Victory Church	Valletta	Din l-Art Helwa	2011
14	Wied Iż-Żurrieq Tower	Qrendi	Din l-Art Helwa	2013
15	Fort Rinella	Kalkara	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
16	Madliena Tower and adjacent structures, Room off Mediterranean Street and Bridge and Weir	Pembroke	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
17	Tower at Triqil-Wiesgħa	Xagħjra	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
18	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
19	Notre Dame Gate	Vittoriosa	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016
20	St Thomas Tower	Marsaskala	Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna	2016

Table 5: Status of Guardianship Deeds at the end of 2019

5. Movable Heritage Control



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Import and Export of Cultural Goods

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage regulates the import and export of cultural goods being moved between Malta and other 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.

Human resources dedicated to this function was mainly one officer who is assigned tasks related to both movable heritage as well development planning consultations. In 2019 the Superintendence introduced an Object ID form available online, which is to be filled-in by the applicant/representative for every cultural item proposed for both permanent and temporary export.

Certification for the Movement of Goods (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 these items do not include cultural heritage items.

In the course of 2019, the Superintendence reviewed 401 cases of export and movement, in which cases the exporter had declared that no item of cultural heritage was being exported. The number of cases marked a slight decrease on previous years, (Chart 2).

MOVEMENT OF PERSONAL ITEMS (NON-CULTURAL GOODS)

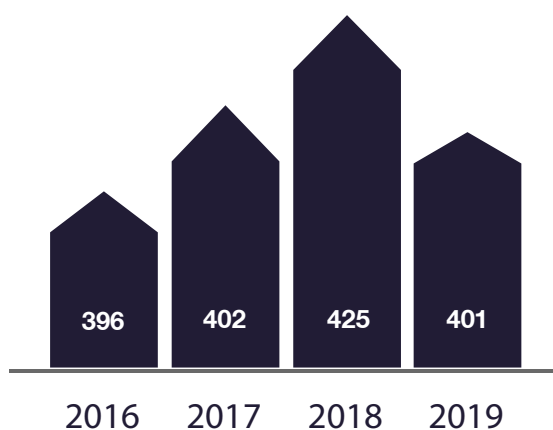


Chart 2: Movement of personal items (non-cultural goods)

Export of Cultural Heritage Items Leaving the National Territory

As stated at law, the export of cultural heritage items from Malta requires permission from the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. In the course of 2019, the Superintendence issued 61 permits for the export of cultural heritage items, of which 43 cases were for the export of contemporary or decorative art. None of the cases treated required inspection of the items, since adequate information for assessment had been made available to the Superintendence. The 61 permits granted in 2019 marked an increase over those issued in 2018 (37 cases).

PERMITS FOR PERMANENT EXPORT OF ART OR ANTIQUES

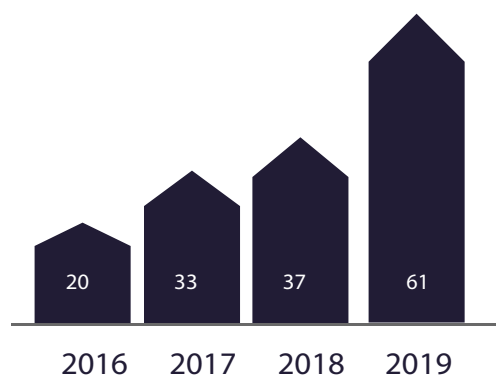


Chart 3:Permits for Permanent Export of Art or Antiques

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

The Superintendence is also called upon by Customs to inspect and certify that cultural heritage items that are imported from outside the European Union. This process is initiated by the importer in order to comply with Customs procedures. A 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 Superintendence's role is to document and confirm the cultural merit of the items, and that the declared monetary value are fair.

Items inspected in 2019 included silverware, paintings, archaeological artefacts and oriental cultural objects. In the course of 2019, the Superintendence inspected and certified the import of 25 cases of cultural heritage items. These inspections of imported items generated revenue of €23,228.50. This was a marked decrease when compared to the €65,259.34 collected for import inspections in 2018, whereby the value of one particular item contributed significantly to the annual amount. Variances in the number of cases and revenue depend on the demand and the declared individual monetary value of the items.

The Customs Department at times requests the services of the Superintendence when items of assumed cultural value are imported from within or outside the EU without the proper documentation, or when it is suspected that the items imported are in breach of the law of the exporting country. Such an instance in 2019 included the examination of an antique Ethiopian artefact which was confiscated by the Customs Department.

CERTIFICATION OF IMPORTED ART OR ANTIQUES



Chart 4:Certification of Imported Art or Antiques

Temporary Movement of Cultural Goods

The Superintendence has also reviewed and regulated 83 applications for the temporary export of cultural goods out of the Maltese territory for purposes of restoration, exhibition, study or for other cultural purposes. The main cases handled in 2019 are listed below:

Temporary export of various items including paintings, books, photographs and prints pertaining to the Schranz exhibition in Germany;

Temporary export of an installation, 'Cave of darkness - Port of no return' by Trevor Borg to the Venice Biennale;

- Temporary Export of portrait painting by Dmitry Grigoryevich Levitsky for Exhibition in Moscow;
- Temporary Export by Heritage Malta of Archaeological artefacts for exhibition entitled 'Carthago - Il Mitalmmortale' in Italy;
- Temporary Export of a painting by Mattia Preti to Sicily for exhibition: 'Santa Rosalia e la Peste' at the Palazzo Reale in Palermo;
- Temporary Export of parts of various pneumatic pipe-organs for restoration;
- Temporary Export of 'Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy' by Louis Finsonius for exhibition in Vienna and Amsterdam;
- Temporary Export of several paintings by Gabriel Buttigieg for exhibition in Poland.



Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy by Louis Finsonius, 1613, temporarily exported for exhibition in Vienna and Amsterdam



Painting from the Primordial series - *Two Women and Orange Trees* by Gabriel Buttigieg temporarily exported for exhibition in Poland

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

The officer in charge of the export/import of moveable heritage also attended experts group meetings on customs issues related to cultural goods. During these meetings, Member States had the opportunity to discuss certain issues related to the preparation for the implementation of the Import Regulation 880/2019.

The Superintendence has also renewed 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 has to be able to identify the concerned item via the notification.

Right of preference

As prescribed by Article 40 of the Cultural Heritage Act, "In the case of sale, export, exchange, emphyteutical grant or lease of an object of cultural property the Superintendent shall have the right, with the approval of the Minister for National Heritage in consultation with the Committee of Guarantee of acquiring the same, in preference to all others on equal conditions including consideration as that concluded between the parties". In the course of 2019, this measure was exercised in 4 cases comprising 26 cultural items acquired by Heritage Malta. Right of preference is generally carried out in connection with proposed export of cultural heritage items, or in the case of sale at auction. Such action (in connection with sale at auction) is generally initiated on request of Heritage Malta or directly by the Superintendence, with the intention of acquiring items deemed as significant assets for inclusion in the National Collection.

Requests for consent to restore paintings

During 2019 the Superintendence received a number of requests for the restoration of works of art of high calibre, especially those related with restoration funding schemes.

The requests were supported by a restoration method statement drafted by qualified restorers who carried out the restoration.

- Restoration of 7 paintings at Żejtun Parish Church
- Restoration of a polychrome statue at the Qrendi Parish Church
- Restoration of a painting at Our Lady of Victories Church, Valletta by Din I-Art Helwa who have a Guardianship Deed for the church with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

6. Cultural Heritage Research



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

National Research Agenda

The Superintendence has initiated several informal meetings with national cultural heritage related stakeholders with the aim of establishing the parameters within which a National Research Agenda can be agreed upon and set. The establishment of a National Research Agenda will be given priority during 2020. Part of this Research Agenda includes a partnership with the University of Malta, Restoration Directorate and Heritage Malta in the E-RIHS project with emphasis on science for heritage. Other entities who showed interest are the National Archives of Malta and St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation.

Research and Archaeological Excavation requests

The Superintendence, in line with its regulatory role, receives a number of requests for the carrying out of archaeological excavations within the Maltese territory as well as research requests centring on the Maltese cultural heritage. Such requests are usually submitted by Heritage Malta (the national agency responsible for the management of national archaeological sites under their care), by the Department of Classics and Archaeology (University of Malta), other universities, academic institutions, entities and independent researchers (both local and foreign).

The Superintendence supports such research initiatives when these provide a valid contribution to the research agenda of the local cultural heritage in line with its statutory role in ensuring accessibility to Malta's cultural heritage. Also, in line with its regulatory obligations, in issuing excavation and research consents, the Superintendence assesses the proposal and its contribution towards new information, issues terms of reference and includes conditions as deemed necessary for supervision and monitoring. Such conditions have led to important collaborations benefitting all parties involved.

In such research projects the Superintendence is providing its expertise, whilst in turn providing training possibilities for its officials. Within this context, the Superintendence has participated in research excavations in collaboration with



SCH archaeologist excavating at Xagħra Circle in collaboration with Heritage Malta



Dr Scerri from the Max Plank Institute recording samples for export

Heritage Malta at Għar Dalam, Xagħra Stone Circle, Roman Domus and Tas-Silġ (the latter also in collaboration with the Department of Classics and Archaeology at the University of Malta), as well as with international institutions amongst which the Max Plank Institute for the Science of Human History (Germany), the Missione Archaeologica Italiana a Malta headed by La Sapienza University and the Università della Calabria.

Also at a local level the Superintendence is collaborating with the NGO Wirt iż-Żejtun by providing its expertise in the field of osteology as part of the project 5SKOPERTA which is a project funded through the Small Initiatives Scheme of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector aimed at a scientific study of the human bones which were discovered 50 years ago in a secret passage in the Church of St Gregory.

In all, during 2019 the Superintendence issued 15 excavation and research requests which affect important national monuments such as the Xagħra Stone Circle in Xagħra, Gozo and the Sanctuary of Tas-Silġ at Marsaxlokk. The research requests cover subjects such as C-14 dating, pottery characterisation and analysis and remote sensing.

The Olea Project

The Superintendence signed a Memorandum of Understanding together with Heritage Malta and the Department of Classics and Archaeology of the University of Malta, as part of the Olea Project. This trilateral agreement sets out the parameters for the investigation, conservation and management of this archaeological site which was identified following a field walking and a ground penetration radar survey held between 2008-2012 in conjunction with the University of Ghent (Belgium). The first scientific excavations are planned for 2020.

Rescue archaeological excavations

Rescue archaeological excavations are a direct result of accidental discoveries reported by the person making the discovery, or by third parties. In other instances, discoveries are detected during surveillance by the Superintendence's officers, but mostly are made during the archaeological monitoring of development works. Such archaeological excavations are generally carried out by the independent archaeological monitors registered with the Superintendence, who are present on-site during works and under the supervision of the Superintendence's Archaeological Monitoring Inspectorate.

There are instances when it may be necessary for the Superintendence to carry out such archaeological excavations itself. Throughout 2019, the Superintendence has taken over the responsibility of archaeological excavations at two sites in Rabat and two sites in Tarxien, and another at Santa Lucia with the support of the archaeological monitors.

Post-excavation processing

During 2019, the Superintendence offered work placements as part of the Summer Work Opportunities 2019 to six University undergraduate students following courses in Classics and Archaeology. The placement was over a period of four weeks, during which the students were given exposure to the main functions of the Superintendence. One of the main tasks that the students were assigned was the sorting of the post-excavation documentation archive of the past ten years. The students sorted the physical data in preparation for its eventual inclusion in the inventory. The students were also provided with opportunities to participate in fieldwork as well as laboratory-based work as part of their professional development.

7. Coastal and Underwater Archaeology



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Overview

The Superintendence is the national regulator responsible to control all activity which may impact on cultural heritage on land, on the coast, as well as underwater within the 25 nautical miles of Maltese territorial waters. During 2018, the Superintendence engaged deeply in the underwater cultural heritage sector. Three officials from the Superintendence, an archaeologist and two officers with experience, contribute in underwater operations, although their normal work is other.

Apart from issuing the relevant permissions for underwater excavations/surveys to established institutions, the Superintendence also participated in all the projects carried out by the University of Malta and Heritage Malta's Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit (UCHU), the recently established entity responsible for the management of a number of selected underwater sites.

In line with the new Cultural Heritage Act 2019, at the request of Heritage Malta, the Superintendence declared twelve sites as Archaeological Zones at Sea.

The Superintendence also participated in meetings and liaised with the Environment and Resources Authority on the LifeBaħar Project, as well as the Planning Authority on the Marine Spatial Plan.

Requests for Excavations/Surveys

The Superintendence received the following requests for underwater investigations or studies from the University of Malta or Heritage Malta (UCHU):

- Continuation of the Malta Shipwreck Survey Project;
- Underwater Excavation in Salina Bay of a possible Roman/Byzantine period deposit;
- Underwater excavation of the B24 bomber for the repatriation of the remains of an American airman;
- Underwater excavation of the Phoenician Xlendi wrecks;
- Retrieval of an aircraft engine.

The Superintendence participated on all projects as an observer in its role as regulator. During the Salina Bay investigation, officials of the Superintendence also contributed an active part in the project, both during the investigation, as well as in delivering a presentation about the role of the Superintendence as the regulator on coastal and underwater cultural heritage, and the discovery of remains within Salina Bay. The seminar was held at the Department of Classics and Archaeology of the University of Malta in December.



Participants preparing for the underwater excavation at Salina Bay
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Archaeological/Historic Wreck
JU88
Fairey Swordfish
HMS Olympus
ORP Kujawiak
SS Luciston
HMS Southwold – bow and stern
SS Polynesian
Schnellboot
HMS Russell
HMS Trusty Star
HMS Nasturtium
Xlendi Phoenician wrecks

Other Projects

The Superintendence carried out underwater inspections in relation to projects subject to a development planning application. The scope of these inspections was to inform the Superintendence of the possible presence of cultural heritage features which may be affected by the proposed development. The inspections in question were carried out on Manoel Island and Birgu Creek.

Officers of the Superintendence also monitored the beach replenishment works for the following sites:

- Bajja ta' San Ġorġ, Birżebbuġa
- Fajtata, Marsaskala



Photograph of the wreck 'SS Schnellboot'
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

The Superintendence also processed requests for the carrying out of surveys in relation to a submarine cable and for the mapping of marine habitats.

Declaration of Archaeological Zones at Sea

The new Cultural Heritage Act 2019 provides for the designation of cultural heritage items and remains found on the seabed within Maltese territorial waters as objects that may be declared as underwater cultural heritage. In 2019, at the request of Heritage Malta's UCHU, the Superintendence declared a total of twelve sites as Archaeological Zones at Sea as per Government Notice 615/19 and 1261/19 published in the Government Gazette dated 31 May 2019 and 08 October 2019 respectively, and in the Notice to Mariners 51/19 and 8/20 by Transport Malta as follows:



Possible cultural heritage features noted during the beach replenishment works at Bajja ta' San Ġorġ, Birżebbuġa

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

8. Other SCH Responsibilities



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Advice to Government and Entities

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

Representation on Committees / Board

The Superintendence participates and contributes in a number of government appointed Boards and Committees, amongst which include:

- Committee of Guarantee (ex officio);
- Board tal-Warrant tar-Restawraturi (ex officio);
- Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (Chair)
- Intangible Heritage Committee (Department of Culture);
- National Archives Committee (National Archives Directorate);
- Planning Authority Council (ex officio, no voting powers, only on cultural heritage matters);
- National Mirror Committee on European Standards (Restoration) (MCCAA);
- World Heritage Sites Technical Committee (Malta Ambassador to UNESCO);
- Cottonera Regeneration Committee;
- E-RIHS working group;
- Bidnija Archaeological Site Core Group (with Heritage Malta & Dept of Classics and Archaeology, University of Malta)
- World Heritage Site Tentative List – work with the co-ordinator of the nomination Dr Anthony Pace, the former Superintendent of Cultural Heritage (2003-18).

National Cultural Policy

The first National Cultural Policy was published in 2011 and focused on the cultural development needs in Malta. These included:

- improved cultural governance structures;
- international cultural cooperation;
- strengthening the professional status of the artist;
- articulating the specific needs of the arts, heritage and audiovisuals;
- development of the cultural and creative industries;
- recognition of cultural rights, cultural socialisation and cultural inclusion;
- ensuring the long-term sustainability of the cultural sector.



After almost ten years the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government felt the need to revisit this important policy document.

In May 2019 the drafting team requested the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage to provide feedback on the following:

- Progress registered on key policy actions identified in the National Cultural Policy 2011;
- Key policy actions (or parts thereof) that were not implemented;
- Proposals for new policies for the National Cultural Policy 2020.

Feedback to the National Cultural Policy drafting team was submitted by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage in June 2019. Suggestions for new key policy actions for the consideration of the drafting team addressed:

1. Pressures created on Malta's UNESCO World Heritage Sites;
2. Specific measures focusing on Valletta World Heritage Site;
3. UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Tentative List);
4. International commitments;
5. Traditional streetscapes and village cores;
6. National inventory, GIS of cultural heritage assets;
7. Key performance indicators of cultural heritage, and research;
8. Intangible heritage.

Conventions and Charters

During 2019, Malta has not registered any progress in the signing or ratification of a number of important international conventions related to the field of cultural heritage (refer to full list below). Subjects covered by these conventions range from the illegal trafficking of cultural goods, to the safeguarding of maritime cultural heritage and the intangible cultural heritage. The signing and /or ratification of international legal instruments remain a high priority.

European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000)

The European Landscape Convention is the first international treaty that is exclusively concerned with all aspects of European landscapes. The main objectives of the convention are to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise co-operation on landscape issues between parties to the convention.

In December 2019 the Permanent Representation of Iceland transmitted to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe the instrument of ratification of the European Landscape Convention. Malta remains the last country that has signed but not yet ratified the European Landscape Convention.

Malta was one of the first States to become signatory to the European Landscape Convention in October 2000. Despite the lapse of almost twenty years Malta has still not ratified this convention. Malta came closest to ratifying the convention in 2012, but this did not materialise. Changes to national legislation, policies and organisational structures, particularly in the planning and development, environment and cultural heritage sectors necessitated a renewed compatibility review between the European Landscape Convention and national legislation.

organisational structures, particularly in the planning and development, environment and cultural heritage sectors necessitated a renewed compatibility review between the European Landscape Convention and national legislation.

The Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) have now been tasked to act as lead entity to spearhead the process leading to the ratification of the European Landscape Convention. In September 2019 the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage was requested to comment on draft Terms of Reference to be issued by ERA to engage a service provider to conduct a Regulatory Impact Assessment on the convention in Malta. The scope of the Regulatory Impact Assessment is to fully assess the implications of ratification and implementation of the convention at national level.

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage communicated its feedback to ERA in November 2019.

9. Public Outreach



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

During 2019, the Superintendence set up two temporary exhibitions as part of its public outreach programme. The first exhibition was held between the 14th and the 15th of June as part of the European Archaeology Days, a Europe wide event coordinated by the National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research (Inrap) in France. The exhibition was set up at City Gate Valletta, with the intention of bringing archaeology out to the public. The exhibited artefacts and human remains were from recent excavations and all were yet unexhibited material.



Minister Owen Bonnici and the Superintendent at the opening of the exhibition.

Image: DOI - James Galea

In October, the Superintendence set up a second exhibition between the 3rd and the 6th of October at Notre Dame Gate, Birgu in conjunction with the annual book fair organized by Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna. The exhibition centred around the archaeology and the extensive cultural heritage of the Three Cities.



Exhibition at Notre Dame Gate

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

A third activity in which the Superintendence participated was the Żejt iż-Żejtun event, organised by the Żejtun Local Council, which was held between the 28th and 29th of September. As part of the ongoing collaboration between the NGO Wirt iż-Żejtun and the Superintendence in the 5KOPERTA project, officials of the Superintendence were present at the Church of St Gregory to explain the scientific analysis planned for the human remains and the possible information that can be derived.

To further support the sterling work done by these Heritage NGO's, the Superintendence donated a number of publications to both Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna and Wirt iż-Żejtun in conjunction with the events organised by these organisations. In 2020 the Superintendence will be offering the same assistance to other NGOs.



Presentation of publications by Superintendent Joseph Magro Conti to Perit Rueben Abela, President Wirt iż-Żejtun

Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

The Superintendence was also represented at the European Heritage Days (EHDs) assembly at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The last time that Malta participated in the Europe wide European Heritage Days events was in 2013.

Following the nomination of a National Coordinator for EHDs, it is the intention of the Superintendence to ensure local active participation in this year's (as well as the coming years) events where the common theme for 2020 will be Heritage and Education. The Superintendence will be liaising with national stakeholders to ensure a successful participation.

The Superintendence also contributed a number of public lectures, namely on human bones of the Temple people at an event by Heritage Malta at Hagar Qim about the workings of the Superintendence on an invite of the Malta Archaeological Society during the Baukultur conference held in Malta by the Culture Department, and on archaeological material washed ashore in Salina Bay during a seminar organised by the Department of Classics and Archaeology of the University of Malta. The Superintendence also participated in various television and radio programmes and replies to media queries. Traditional and social media reported on the work of the Superintended on various occasions.



Attendance at European Heritage Days Assembly
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

10. Capacity Building and Staff Training



Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

Eight Officers of the Superintendence followed courses in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) offered through the SpatialTrain scholarship scheme offered by the Planning Authority offered to statutory consultees in the development planning process through EU funding. Two officers followed the diploma course and six others the certificate course. A further four officers followed a certificate course in historic building construction and restoration, including practical's, custom-designed by the Institute of Baroque Studies of the University of Malta. Four others commenced a Masters course in Archaeological Practice, including a component of GIS and practical's, with the Department of Classics and Archaeology of the University of Malta. Other officers were offered other forms of training according to improve their capacity in meeting the needs of the Superintendence.

The Superintendence once again offered an intensive induction training for the 3rd intake of professionals within the past two years. New recruits were given a six-week induction course similar to that of the previous year consisting of two-weeks of lecturing, two weeks job shadowing and a further two weeks working under mentorship.

The Superintendence also provided continuing professional development opportunities to its staff through an Ancient Ceramics Workshop delivered by Mr Nathaniel Cutajar (ex-Superintendence, now Heritage Malta); Dr Maxine Anastasi (Dept. of Classics and Archaeology, University of Malta) and Mr Charles Dalli (Dept. of History, University of Malta). Additionally, Superintendence officers attended local conferences and participated in a number of archeologica excavations in collaboration with the University of Malta Heritage Malta.

A highlight of the year was a team building event held at Mount St. Joseph, Targa Gap, which involved both mental and physical exigencies.



Officials of the Superintendence participating in an activity during team building day
Image: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage



SOVRINTENDENZA
TAL-PATRIMONJU KULTURALI

SUPERINTENDENCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

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SOVRINTENDENZA
TAL-PATRIMONJU KULTURALI
SUPERINTENDENCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

