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Floriana

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4th February 2021

**Re: Important buildings at Żejtun proposed for scheduling**

While noting with satisfaction that in the past months, the Planning Authority has scheduled two villas and their gardens in Żejtun, as an active NGO with its principal aim at proactively protecting our heritage, we would like to propose the following properties for similar scheduling.

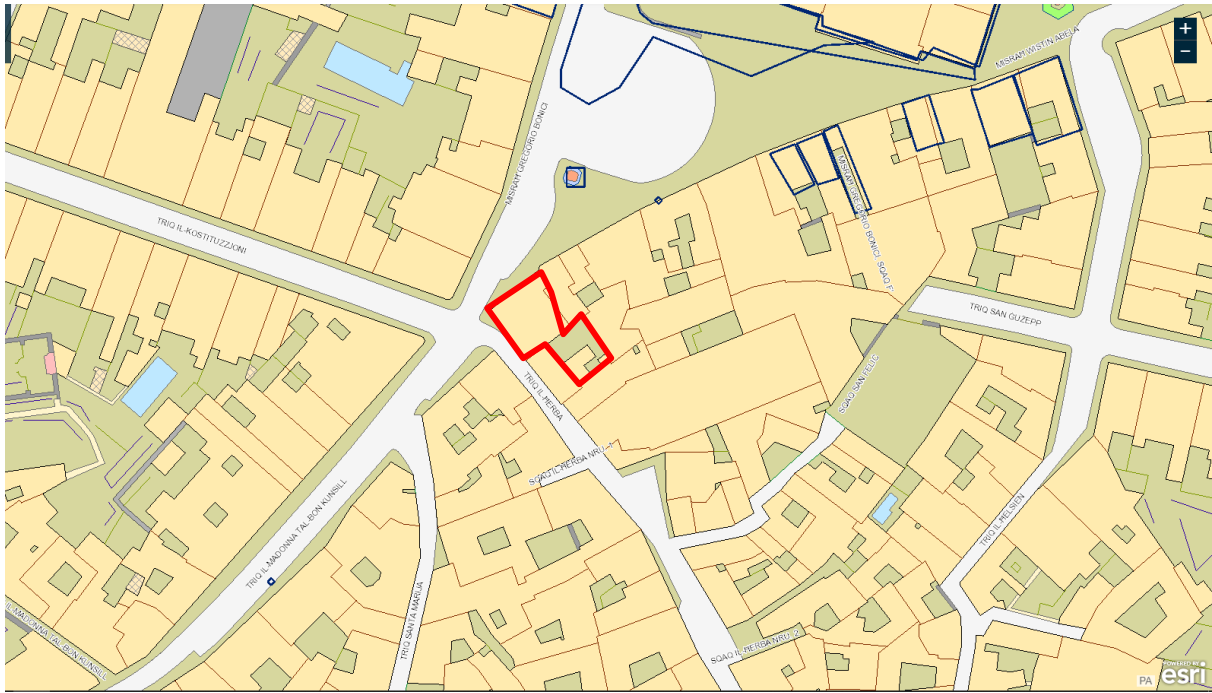
**No 28, Misraħ Girgor Bonici (Residence of Maestro Carlo Diacono) – Grade 2**

This well-known composer from Żejtun lived for a number of years in this house. His legacy is the various musical compositions still enjoyed today, especially the numerous anthems dedicated to different saints, which are played on feast days in the parish churches all over Malta. Diacono did not however, limit himself to sacred music. His opera “L’Alpino” was performed in the Royal Opera House at Valletta in 1918.

On the 25th anniversary of his death, a bronze bust by the sculptor Censu Apap was incorporated into the façade of the house above the main door. This memorial was restored by Wirt iż-Żejtun in 2016.

The architectural style of this house differs significantly from the rest of the buildings in the main square. The upper storey has a row of arched windows above a balustrade, which is a late 19th century British architectural feature. The lower storey, especially the main door and the hall are from an older period.

It appears that this building was originally much larger and parts of it were demolished when the opening onto the main square was enlarged to the size it is today. It is also said that Grand Master De Rohan had a house on the same spot. It could be that the lower storey is part of De Rohan’s house.



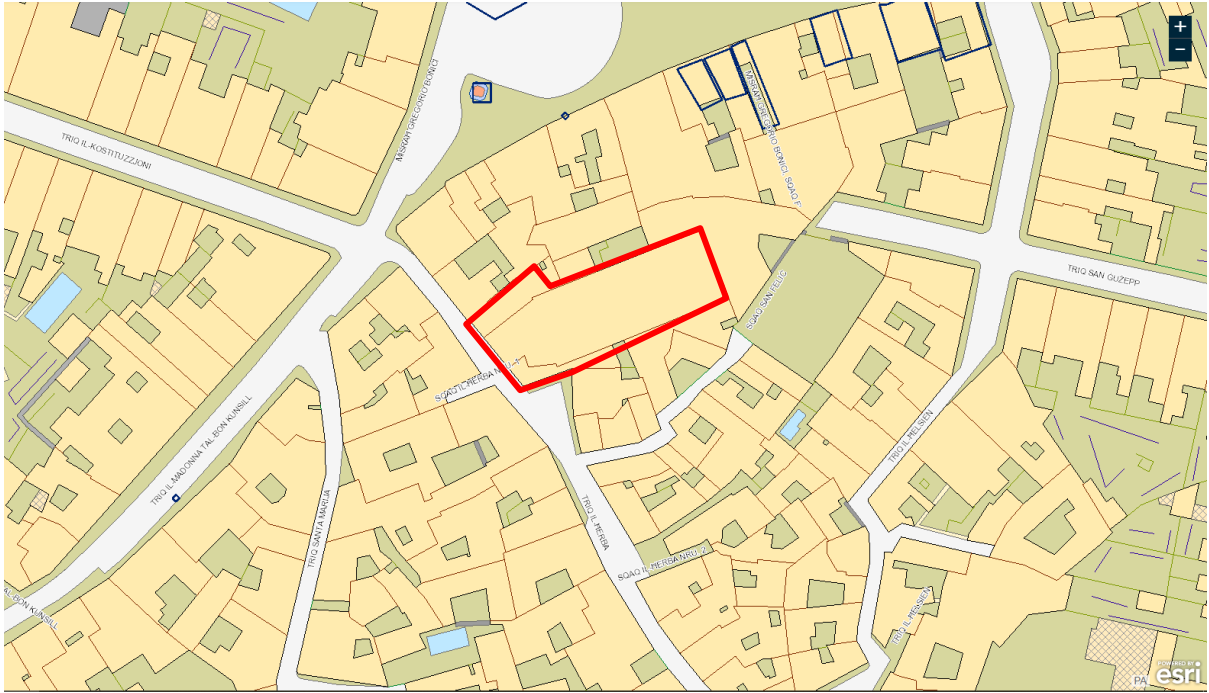
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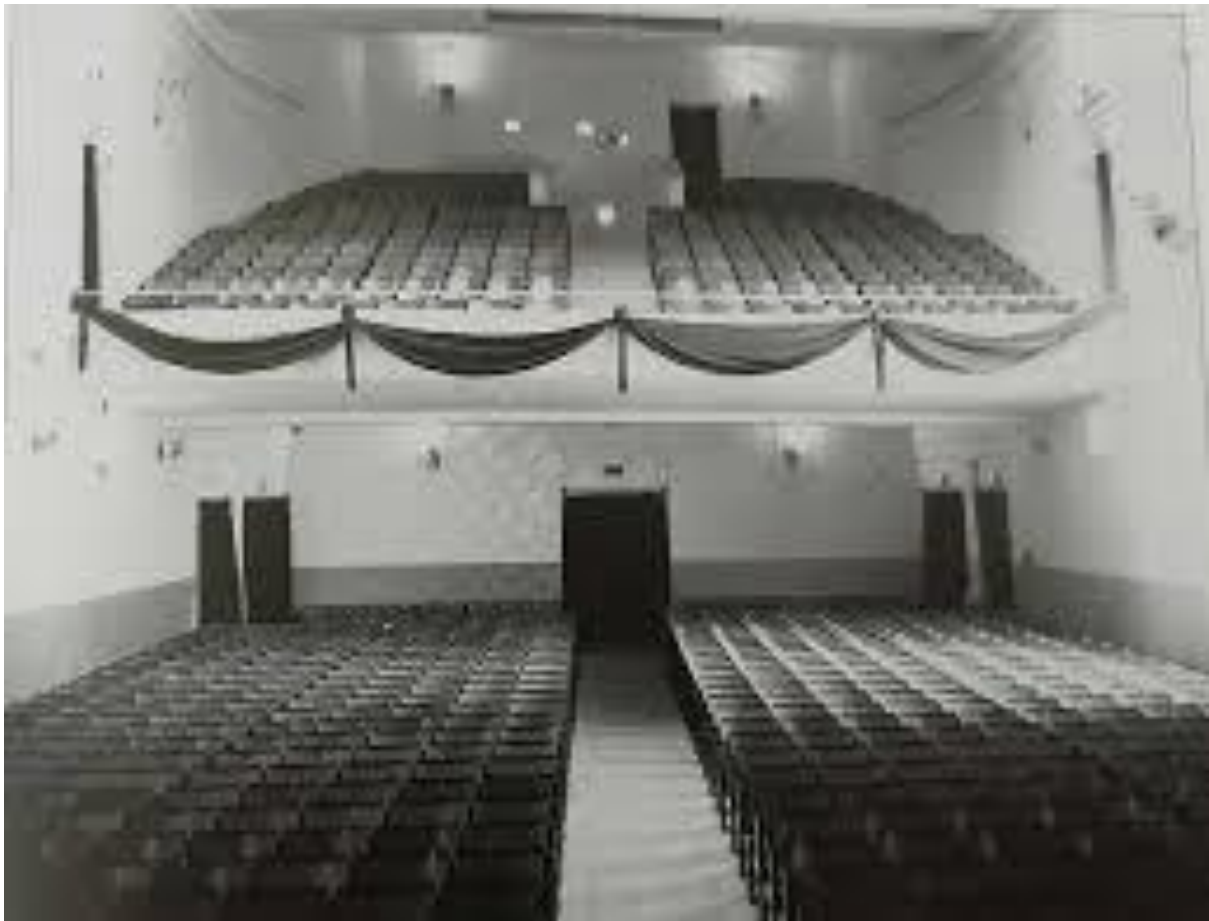


**The Pandora Theatre, Triq il-Ħerba – Grade 2**

This theatre was designed by Architect Edwin England Sant Fournier. The architectural style of the façade is Fascist, a style which was still popular at the time. The theatre belongs to the Żejtun Band Club and is one of the three theatres in use in Żejtun during the 20th century. It stopped being used as a cinema in 1983.



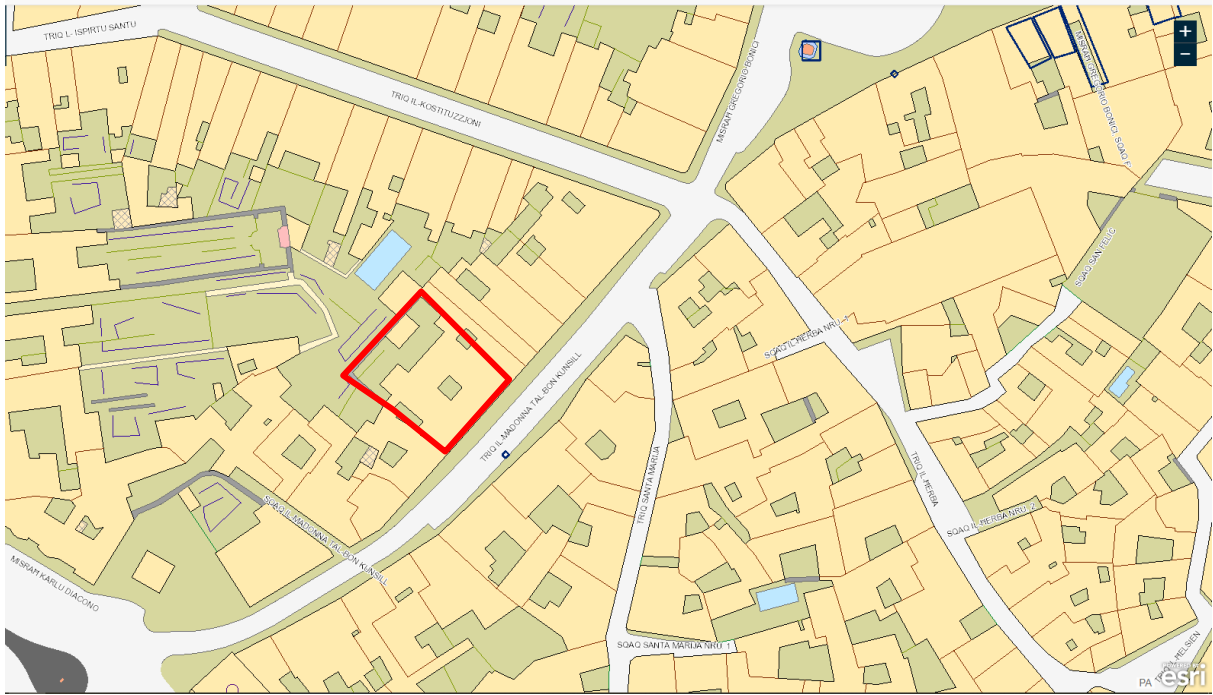
X57909 Y68094





### **The Police Station, Triq il-Madonna tal-Bon Kunsill – Grade 2**

This police station is probably the only building in Malta purposely built as a police station. It was built in the neo-classical style in the late 19th century. A clinic where patients could be seen by the “Police Doctor” also formed part of the complex. In fact, the coat-of-arms above the building includes the symbols for the police as well as those of the medical profession.



X57826 Y68069



### No 13, Triq il-Madonna tal-Bon Kunsill – Grade 2

The well-known Żejtun sculptor Xandru Farrugia lived in this house. Some of his artistic works include the statue of the Scourging of Christ at the Pillar, which forms part of the Good Friday procession in Żejtun, the statue of the Annunciation in Tarxien, the statue of St. Paul in Safi and St. Mary in Mqabba. Incorporated into the façade of this house one can see a small niche containing a small statue of St. John the Baptist, also sculpted by Xandru Farrugia.



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## Aedis Danielis Palace and the Church of Our Lady of Good Council, Misraħ Carlo Diacono – Grade 1

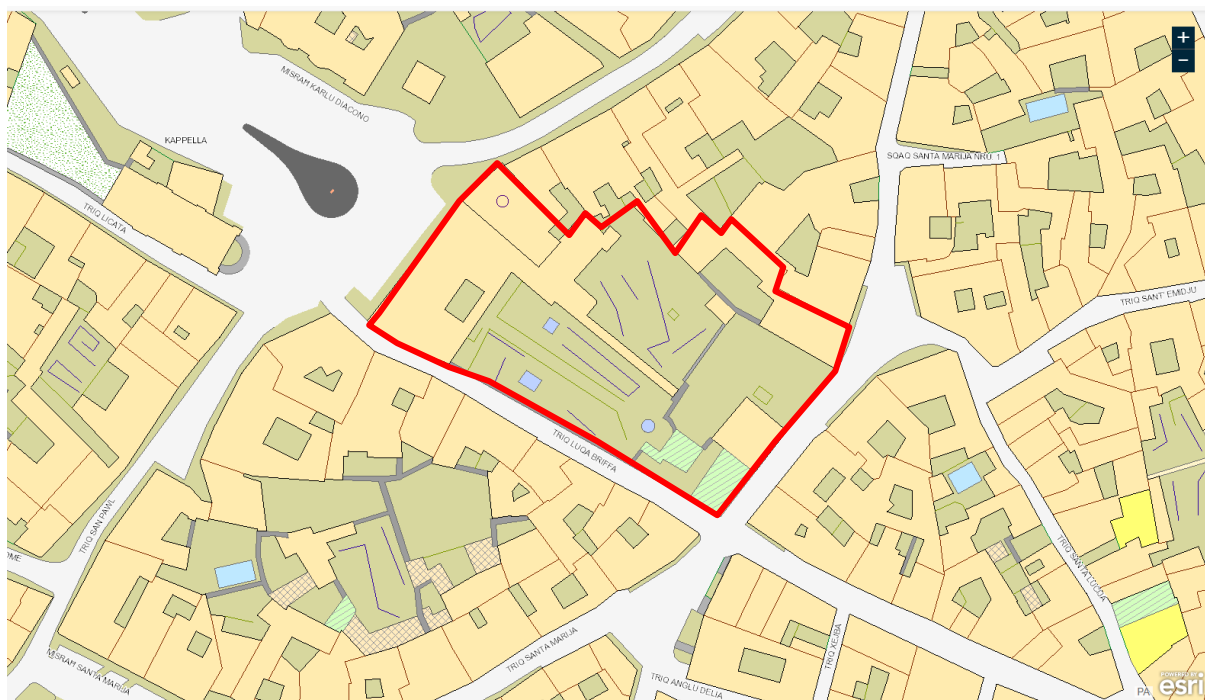
The name of this palace “Aedis Danielis” translates as “the house of Daniel”. In the middle of the façade there is a large niche with the stone figure of the prophet Daniel. This palace was built by the Testaferrata Bonici family. Among the many important people who lived in this house one must mention Girgor Bonici, who was the ruler of Imdina and also the main benefactor of the Parish Church of Żejtun.

Underneath the statue of Daniel, there are lions’ heads which refer directly to the story of the prophet in the Old Testament.

The building style is Renaissance and dates back to the beginning of the 17th century. It has a large garden at the back decorated with garden architectural features. There is a mill room at the corner between Triq Santa Marija and Triq Luqa Briffa and a horse cart entrance from Triq Santa Marija.

It was the intention of Girgor Bonici to build the new parish church directly in front of his palace. However, after disagreement between the residents of the villages of Ғal Biżbud and Bisqallin, Girgor Bonici and Gużé Abela, the other benefactor, decided to buy a piece of land in Gwiedi, where the present church was in fact built.

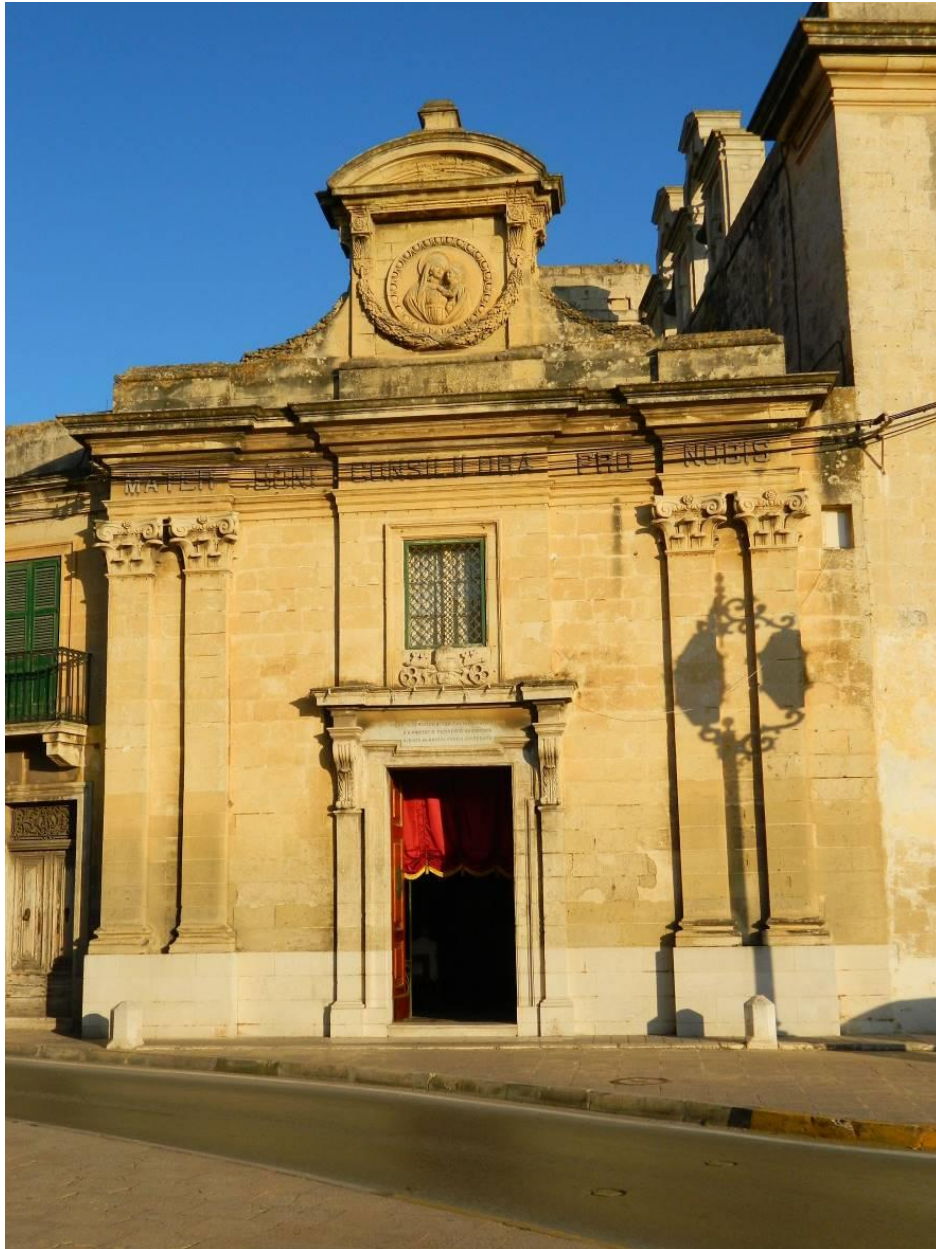
The palace is also abutted by a private church dedicated to the Mater Boni Consilii which forms part of the palace. It was built in 1750 and is decorated on the inside with the most beautiful marble, as well as various artistic treasures. Few people know that this little church has the honorific of Lateran Basilica.





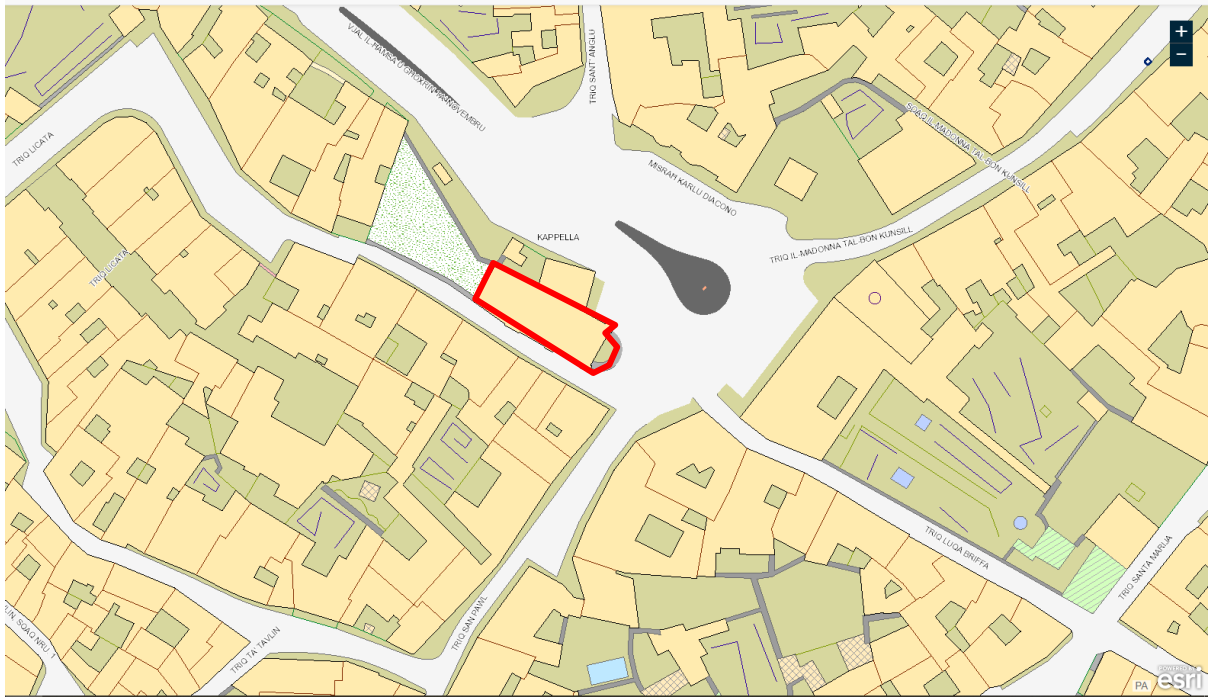






**Church dedicated to St. Angelo, Misraħ Carlo Diacono – Grade 1**

This church was built in 1670 by Girgor Bonici, who was an ardent devotee of St. Angelo the Martyr. Girgor Bonici was also the principal benefactor of the building of the parish church. This church still belongs to the Testaferrata Bonici family. Inside there are paintings by Ġużeppi d’Arena. Girgor Bonici is interred inside this church, together with other members of his family.



X57732 Y68014



## No 11, Triq Licata – Grade 2

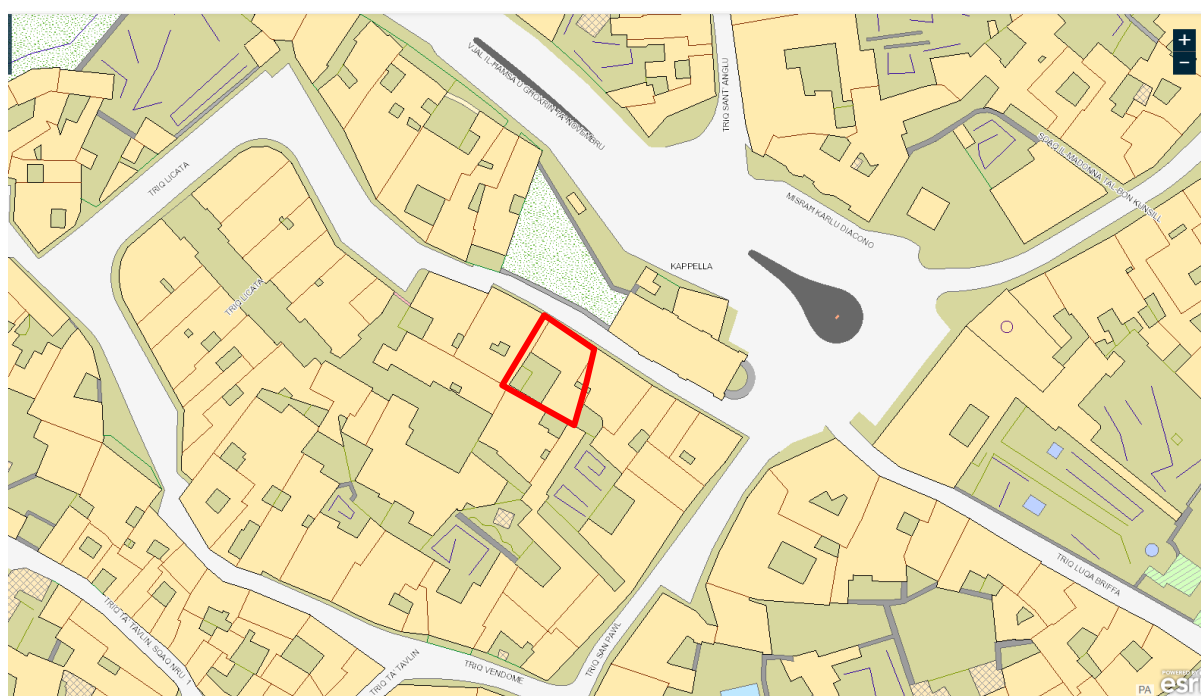
It is believed that Michele Cachia lived in this modest house. Michele Cachia was born in Żejtun on the 30th September 1760. He was very active during the French Occupation of the island, especially during the blockade, both as an architect and as a leader and patriot. He was responsible for the building of practically all the batteries under the control of the Maltese against the French.

In appreciation of his work, the British Commander, Alexander Ball, appointed him foreman of all buildings, with concomitant rights and salaries.

Michele Cachia left various documents relating to the works he created. A good number of these documents can be found in private collections, as well as in manuscripts at the National Archives.

In one of these documents Cachia lists a number of works for which he was responsible while in the employ of the Government. The list mentions the Granaries at Floriana; the square or market of Floriana; the four warehouses at the docks below the Capuchin monastery; the shops below the Barrakka Gardens; the repair of the Prisons; the continuation of the two houses at Lazzaretto; the repair of the Auberge de Provence; the repair and enlargement of the Theatre, as well as various repair jobs in warehouses, the Prisons at Birgu and the new granaries.

However, one of the best architectural works by Michele Cachia is without doubt the portico of the Church of Providence at Siggiewi. This church was built in 1750 but the portico was added after 1815-16.

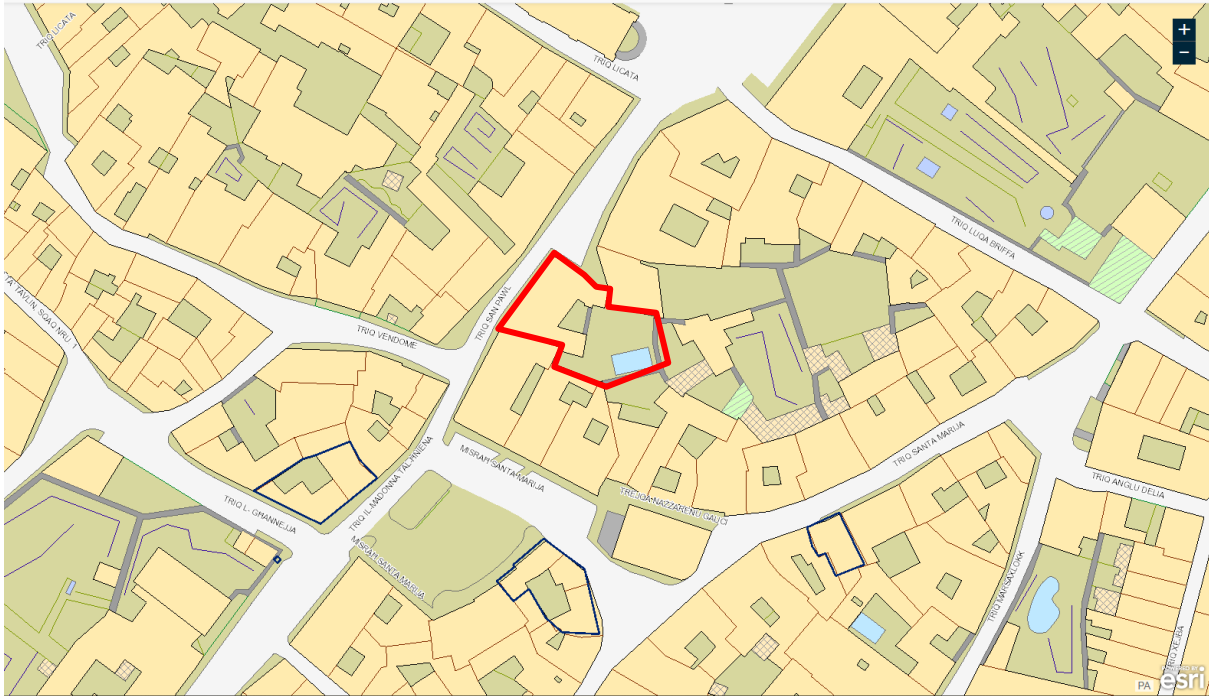


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### No 11, Vendome Tower, Triq San Pawl – Grade 2

This building was used as a tower at the edge of the old village of Hal Bizbud and was built by Engineer Philippe de Vendome, Knight and Gran Prior of France. Its massive and robust appearance closely mimics a fortified building. It goes back to the beginning of the 17th century.



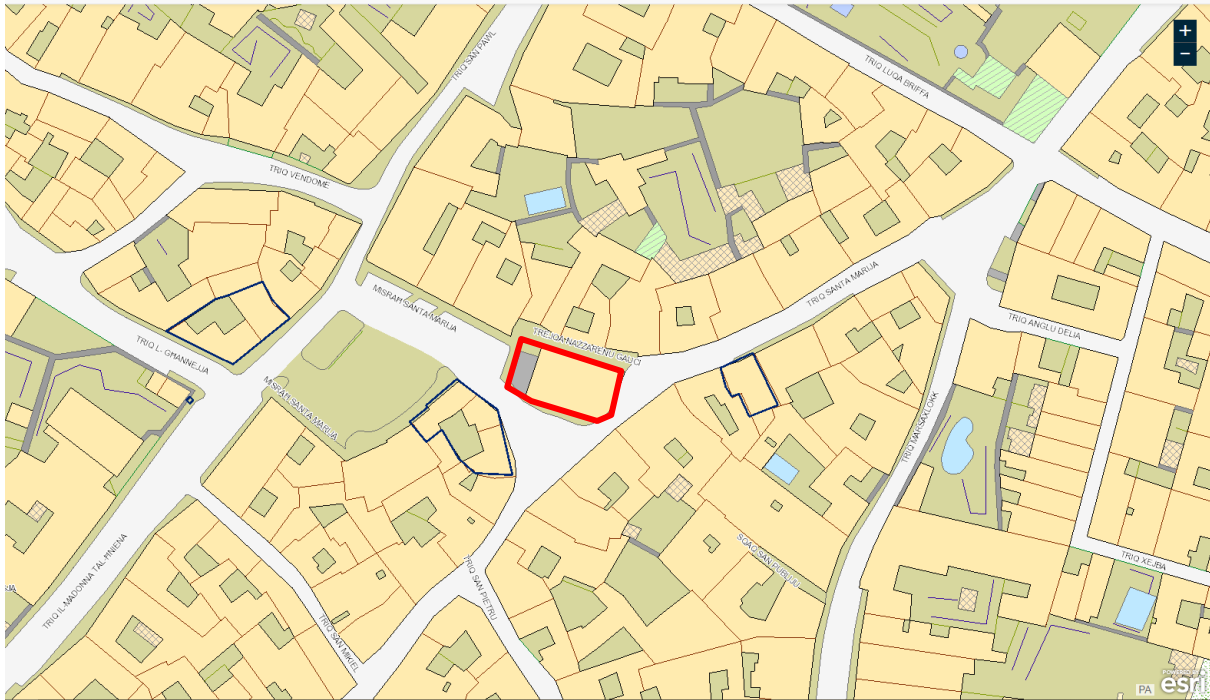
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**Church of St. Mary of the Delivery (childbirth), Misraħ Santa Marija – Grade 1**

Building on this church began in 1692 and the first stone was laid on the 25th November, on the same day that the foundation stone of the Parish Church was laid. But an older church, which dated back to the 16th century, had existed on the same spot. This church was also used for the burial of babies.

During his 1575 visit, Mons. Pietru Dusina reported on the state of this church, the principal one in Ħal Biżbud.



X57745 Y67923



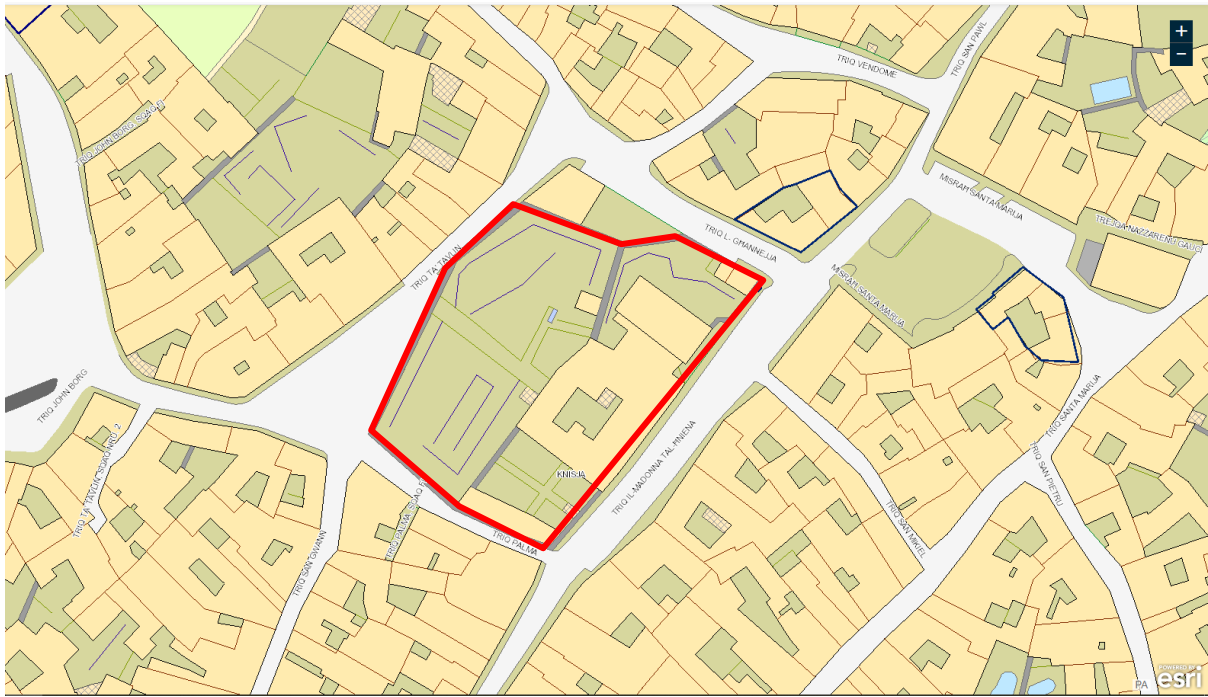




**No 14 (palazzino), the adjoining Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and garden, Triq il-Madonna tal-Fniena – Grade 1**

This church is better known as the Church of the Lady. It was built in 1881 by the Noble Miss Margerita dei Conti Manduca, who is interred inside the church. Inside the church there is a very old and rare organ, which closes up like a wardrobe.

The church formed part of the adjacent palazzino and surrounding garden which was the residence of Margerita dei Conti Manduca.

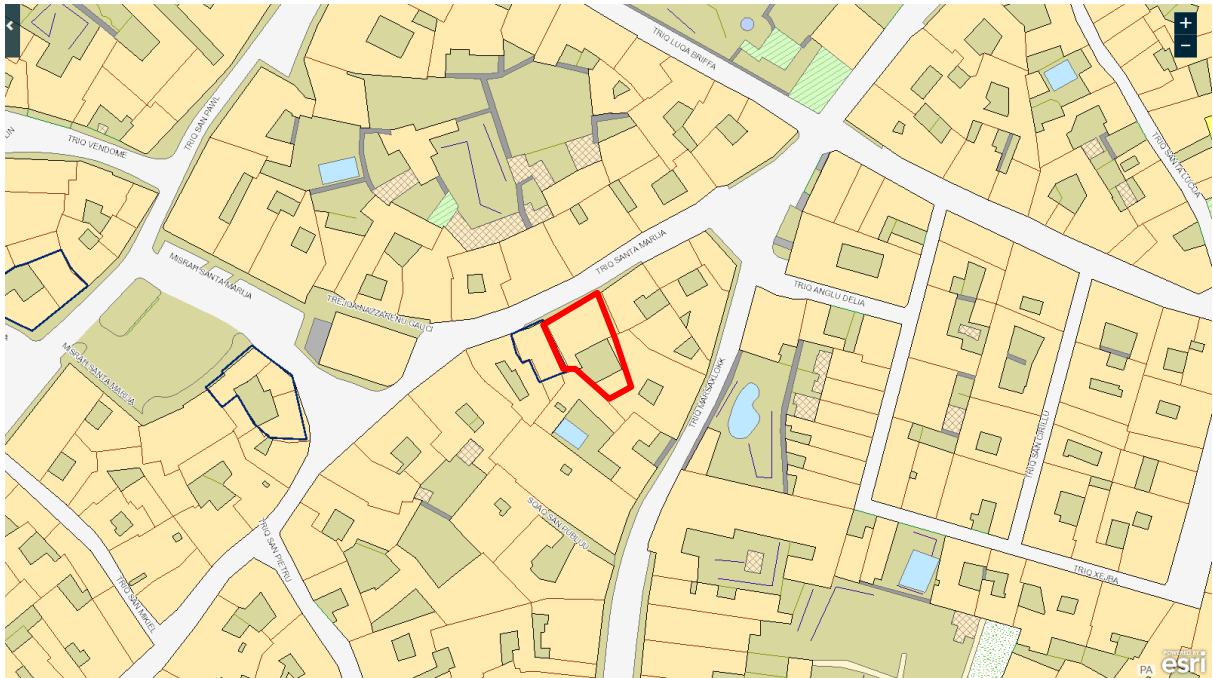


X57643 Y67909



**Nos 43. 44 & 45, Triq Santa Marija – Grade 2**

This was the house of Ġuże Abela, the first mayor of Żejtun, nominated by the British Governor after the victory over the French at the beginning of the 19th century. Abela had worked closely with Mikiel Cachia during the blockade of the French. The house is built in a Baroque style and has a big balcony resting on three big corbels. On one of the corbels there appears to have been a coat-of-arms.



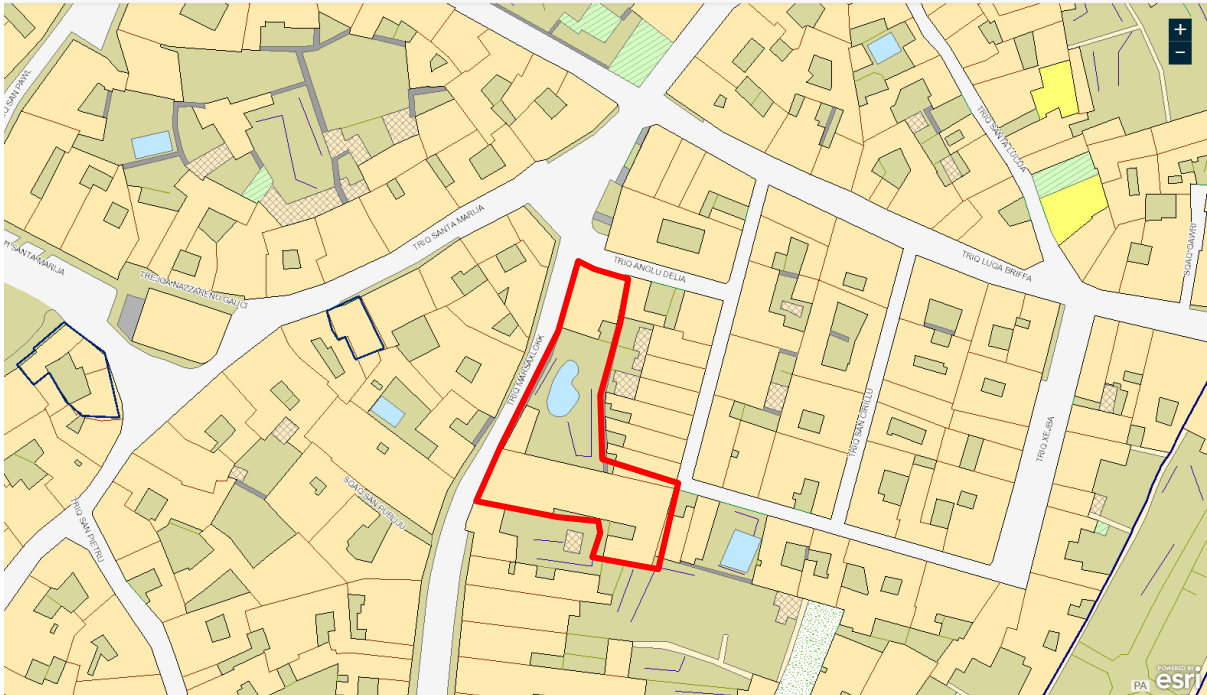
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### Ta' Ġużeppi, (Testaferrata Gate, garden and house), Triq Anġlu Delia – Grade 2

This house was built by the Testaferrata family, and it lies behind a garden, access to which is through an arched door. At the topmost part of the arch, the coat-of-arms of the Testaferrata family can be seen. It is engraved in stone and has exquisite details. This complex goes back to the 18th century and is further proof of the ties which this family had with Żejtun.

The façade curves gently inwards and attention was given to aesthetics and architecture. Of interest is the cornice on the parapet wall with classical details such as the two big stone flower pots at each end.



X57816 Y67922





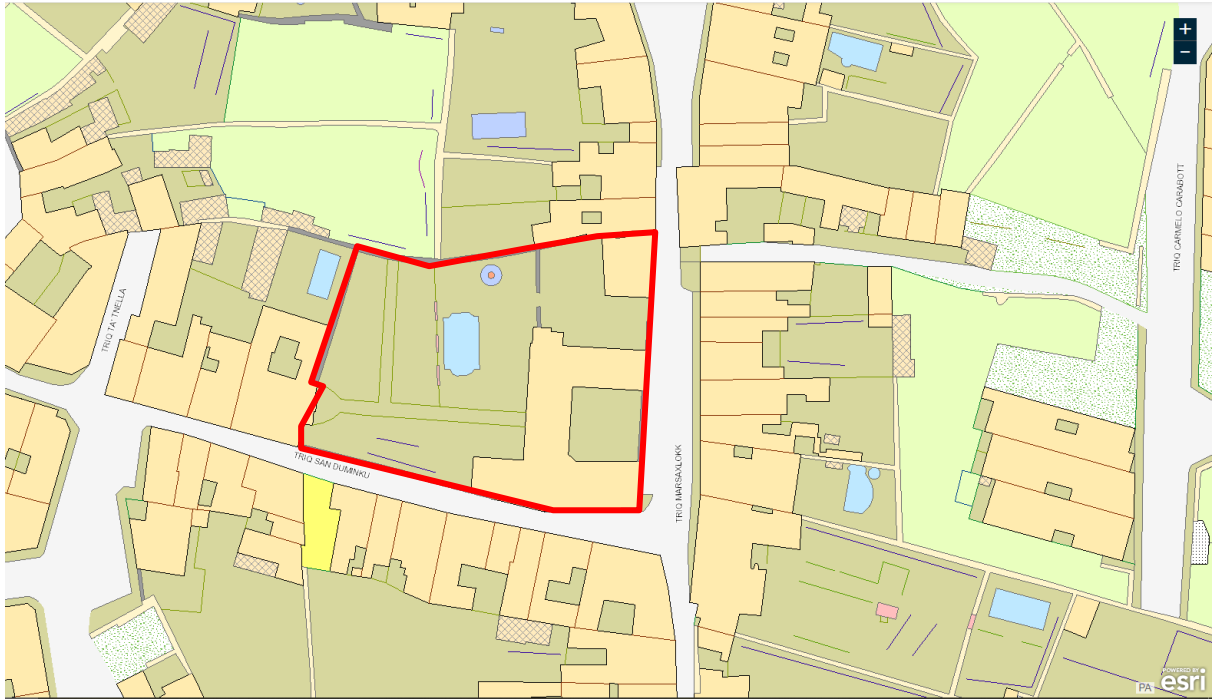
**No 102, (Casamento 77), Triq Marsaxlokk – Grade 2**

British soldiers were billeted in this villa when the British navy anchored in Marsaxlokk Bay, so that together with the Portuguese navy, it could give the Maltese a helping hand against the French during the blockade between 1798 and 1800. It originally belonged to Count Agostino Formosa de Fremaux, a nobleman who had served as the Consul to Holland during the period of the Order.

Agostino Formosa de Fremaux had been a close friend of Grand Master Hompesch, but at the same time he had worked to facilitate the arrival of the French in Malta. For this reason, the two villas he owned in Żejtun were requisitioned for public use during the French blockade.

During the period of use by the British soldiers, the villa sustained damage. Various reports were made by Michele Cachia as architect, wherein he asked, on behalf of the owners, for reparation from the British, after the latter had taken over the government of Malta.

This villa, known today as Villa Arrigo and its gardens, are of historical and architectural importance. One can find an article by Lola Sammut about the architecture of this villa, previously known as Casamento 77, in *Treasures of Malta*, Vol.3, Nr.3. The article also contains various photographs of the rooms, as well as the garden and the chapel contained within.



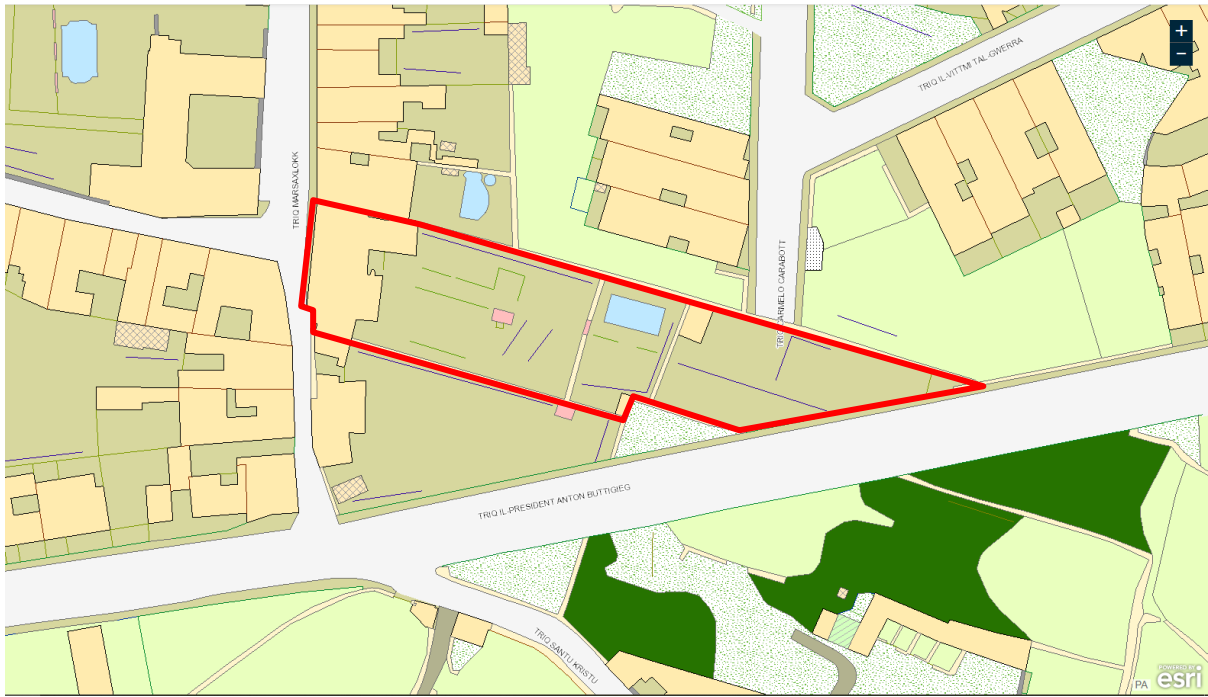
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**No 81, Triq Marsaxlokk – Grade 2**

The facade of this house is symmetrical and quite modest and although lacking architectural decoration, it is aesthetically pleasing and elegant. Of special interest is the bas-relief of St Francis Xavier, in particular the date when the indulgences were given, i.e. 5th December 1770. This makes it the oldest street shrine found on a house in Zejtun. This property enjoys large gardens at the back.



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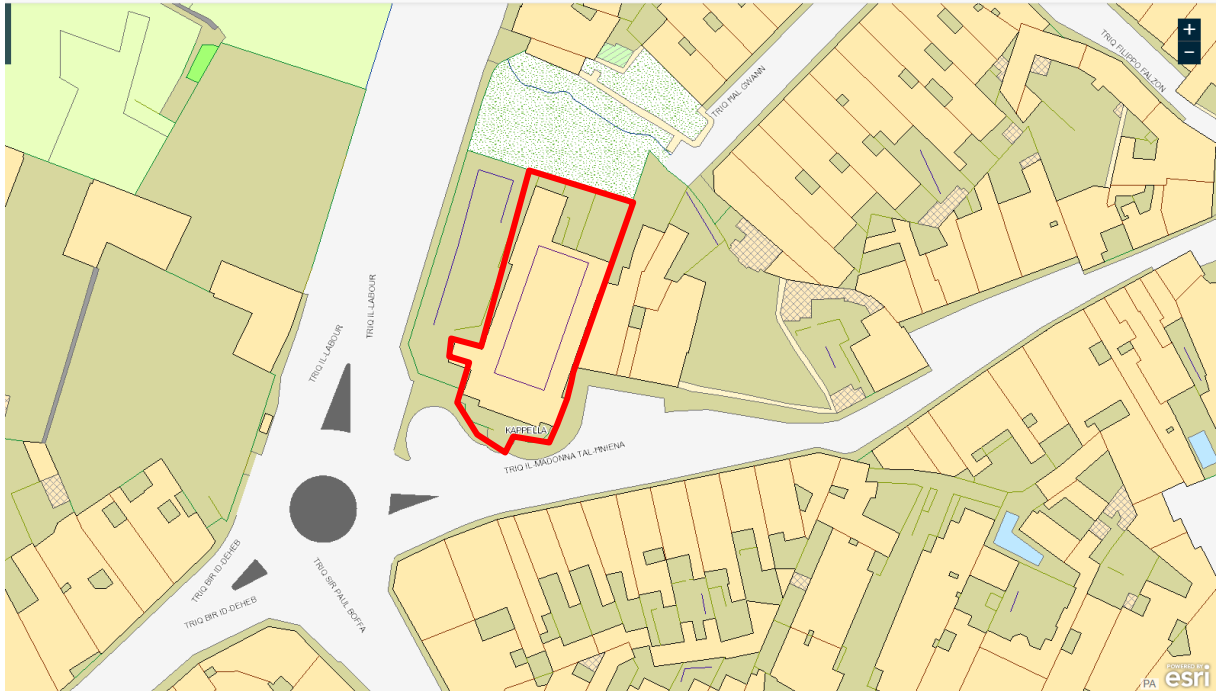






## Church of the Mother of Mercy, Triq il-Madonna tal-Ħniena – Grade 2

The present church is modern; work on the building was started in 1959. The front of the older church which had been built in 1865, was integrated into the new building. This area is known as Bir-id-Deheb. In front of the present church, where there is now a roundabout with a fountain on it, there used to be a windmill in former times.



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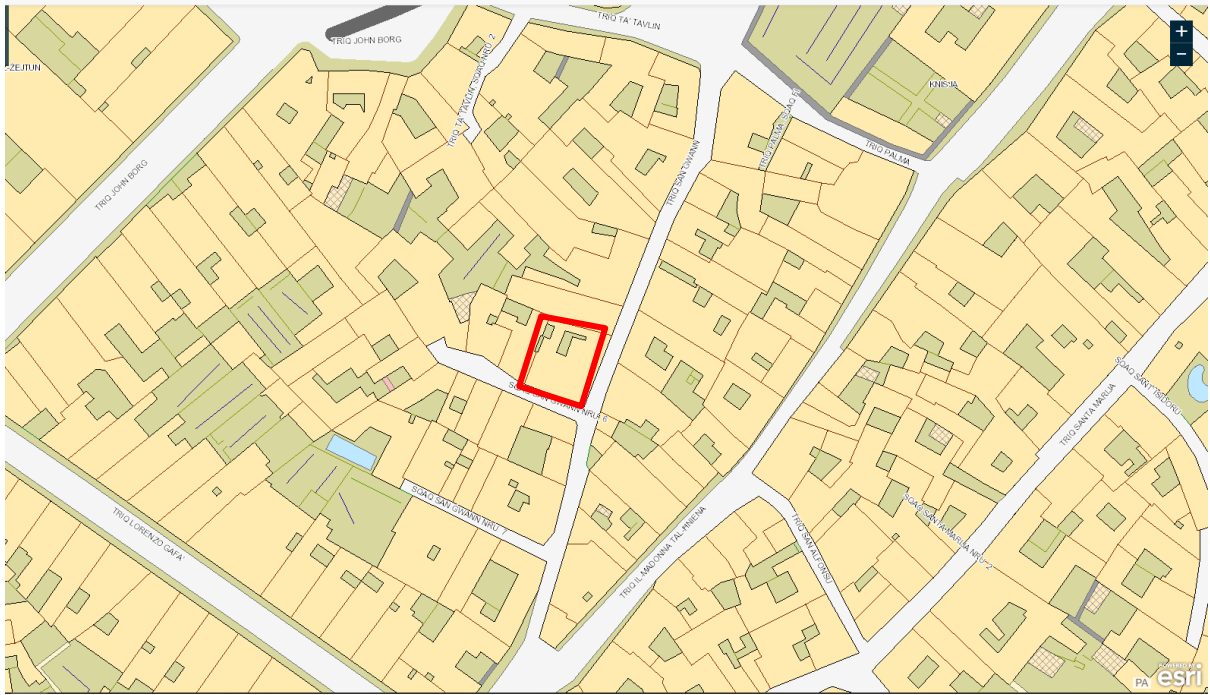


### **No 11, Triq San Ġwann – Grade 2**

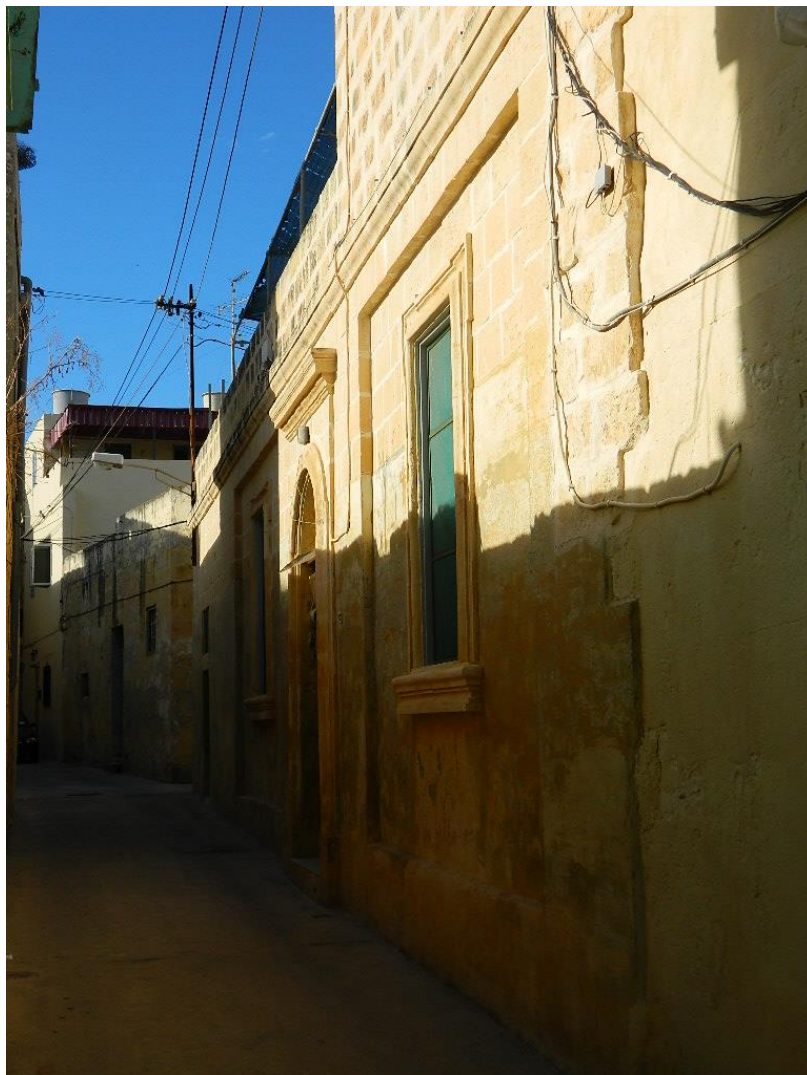
It is popularly believed that the Falconer of the Order – the man who took care of the Order's falcons – used to live here. The Order used to breed falcons for hunting purposes. There was a church dedicated to St. John somewhere in this area but the exact location is unknown.

This area is one of the oldest parts of Żejtun and is characterised by its narrow winding streets, which are full of alleys, some of which are in their turn, roofed over.

There is documentation that states that the first battle of the Great Siege of 1565, during which the Knight De La Riviere was taken prisoner, took place precisely in this area. In the hamlet of Hal Ġwann, the Turks had set up a post to guard the road between their two camps at Marsaxlokk and Marsa.

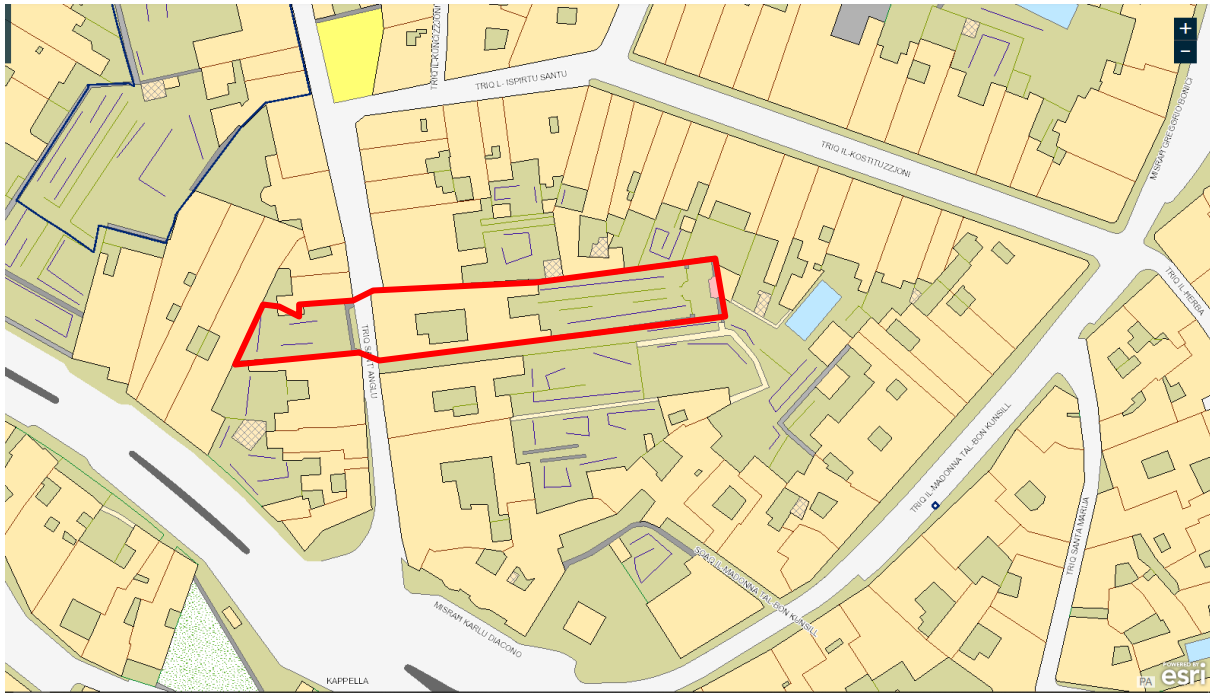


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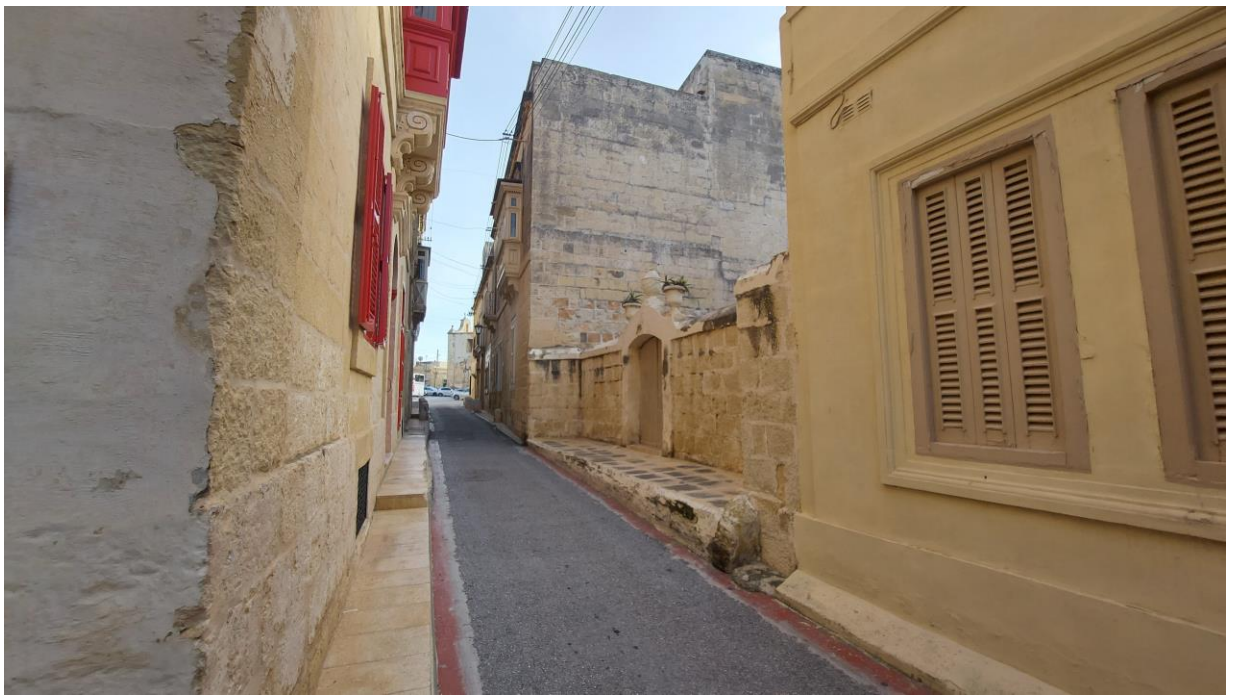
## No 22, Palazzio 1787, Triq Sant' Anġlu – Grade 2

This baroque palazzino was built in the 18th century and was the home to diplomats and first prelate of Malta, Bishop Emanuele Gerada. The palazzino enjoys a large garden at the back and also a small garden with a neo-classical facade on the opposite side of the street.



X57753 Y68094





## No 28, Żejtun Local Council, Triq Sant' Anġlu – Grade 2

The Żejtun Local Council is made up of nine councillors, from amongst which are chosen the Mayor and Vice-Mayor. This building houses the offices of the Local Council. The house itself was built in the 19th century in the neo-classical style, as were the rest of the houses on the street.



X57743 Y68106





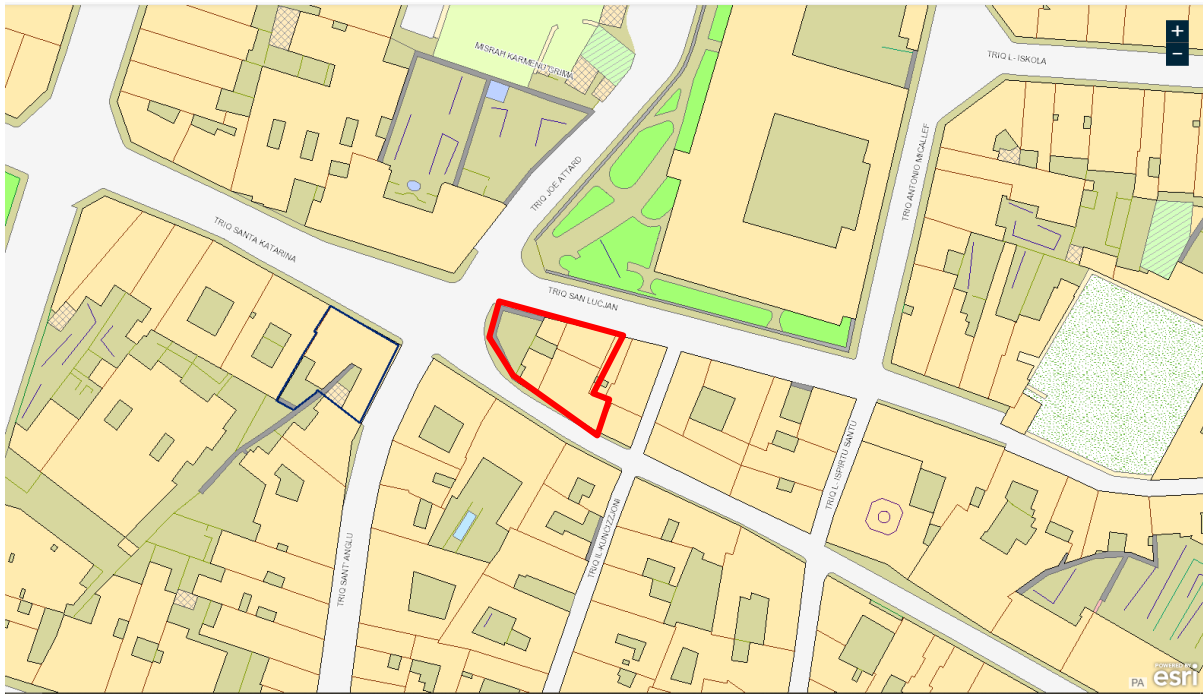




### **The Horses' Water Trough, the Cross and No 38, Triq Santa Katerina – Grade 2**

During the period of the Knights of St. John, this area was known as Piazza Croce, referring to the Cross which can still be found here. There is also today a replica of the animals' water trough, which used to be located here as well. Up till the mid-1950s, this was the principal entry point into Żejtun for traffic coming from Tarxien.

Dignitaries visiting Żejtun were greeted here, as happened when Grand Master De Rohan visited the village in 1776 for the feast of St. Gregory. A triumphal arch was set up at this point for the occasion.



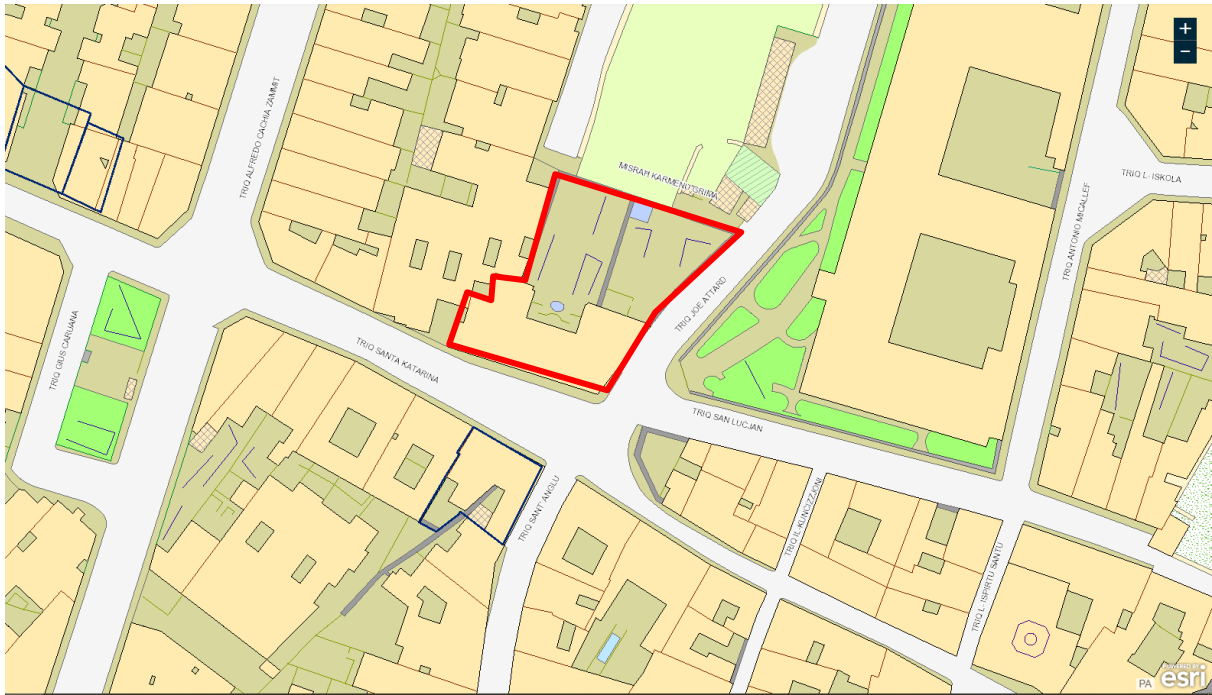
X57755 Y68261





**No. 40, Triq Santa Katerina – Grade 2**

This house and garden was the residence of Dr Joseph Caruana MD and his wife Dr Blanche nee' Huber. Dr Huber was the first female medical doctor in Malta. Blanche Street in Sliema is named after her.



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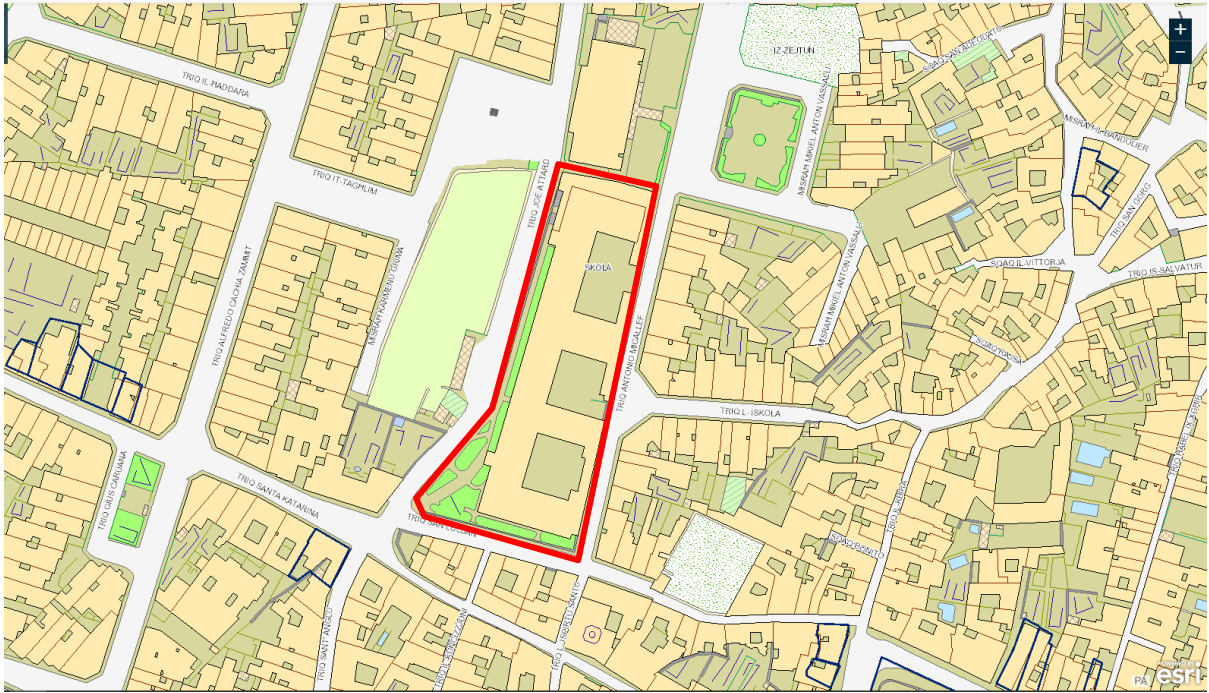




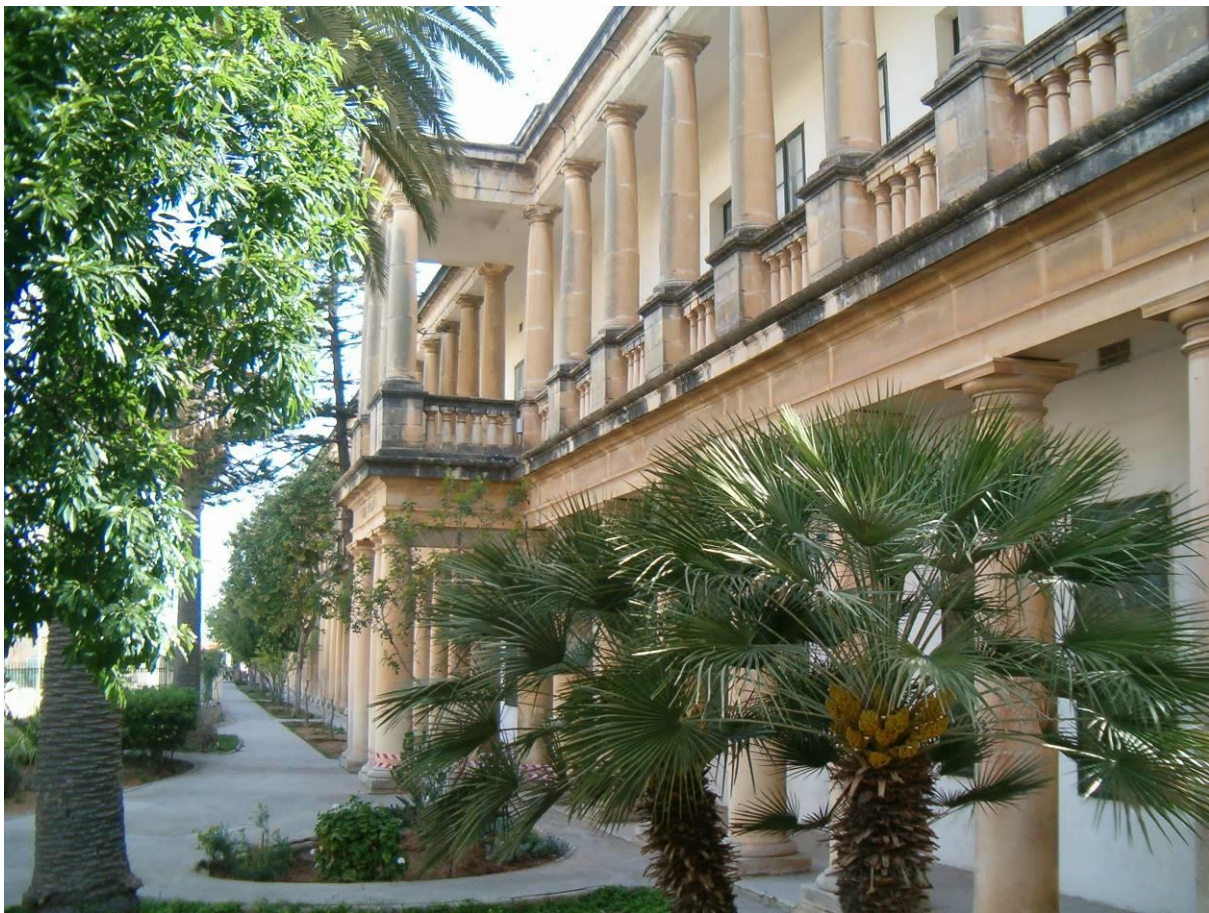
### **The Primary School, Triq San Luċjan – Grade 2**

The Žejtun Primary School was inaugurated on the 11th June 1908, after the central Government commissioned Architect Ġużé Pace from Żabbar to make a plan for this school. The school is built in the Neo-Classical style, with a substantial number of stone columns gracing the principal façade and the sides of the building.

Besides the kindergarten and primary school, this building also houses the public library, which is named after the writer and politician, Ġużeppi Pulis Montebello, who hailed from Žejtun.



X57806 Y68353











### **Dar San Ġuzepp and Church of the Holy Spirit, Triq San Luċjan and Triq Santa Katerina – Grade 1**

This building in the neo-classical style has two façades – the principal one on Triq San Luċjan and the second one on Triq l-Ispirtu s-Santu. It was designed as the first school in Żejtun at the beginning of the 19th century. The people behind this project were the priest, Dun Alwiġ Camilleri (1774 – 1849), together with two other benefactors, Bishop Mattei and the Spanish Consul, Chevalier Megino.

The building itself comprises two high storeys. On the Triq San Luċjan side, it is slightly elevated to accommodate a cellar, which is found under this side of the edifice. The principal façade is nearly symmetrical, with a central door and an open balcony resting on one corbel, which rises above the same door.

In the corbel itself there is a bas relief engraving of an interesting view of the East of Malta – from Grand Harbour to the bay of Marsaxlokk. This is a unique map, as it is engraved in stone. It is the work of the Maltese sculptor Marjanu Girada.

On the second floor, besides the central balcony, there are two other balconies, one on each side. All three balconies have an iron railing, in the centre of which letters have been incorporated. In the first one, it is the letter “P”, in the centre one, the letter “Z” and in the last one, the letter “F”. P.Z.F. stands for Populus Zeitunensis Fecit, meaning “the people of Żejtun made this”, which is proof of the help tendered by the population of Żejtun towards the building of this edifice.

The two benefactors of the project, Bishop Mattei and the Spanish Consul, Chevalier Megino, are acknowledged by means of a bas relief engraved in stone, which shows the











**Dar ir-Rikonċiljazzjoni (19th Century District Court), Triq Santa Katerina – Grade 2**

This building served as the District Court during the 19th century. It is built in the Baroque style and was probably erected in the 18th century after the building of the Parish Church. The main decorative feature of this façade is the scutcheon with a cross engraved above the main door, which points to the probability of the building having been built by a cleric.





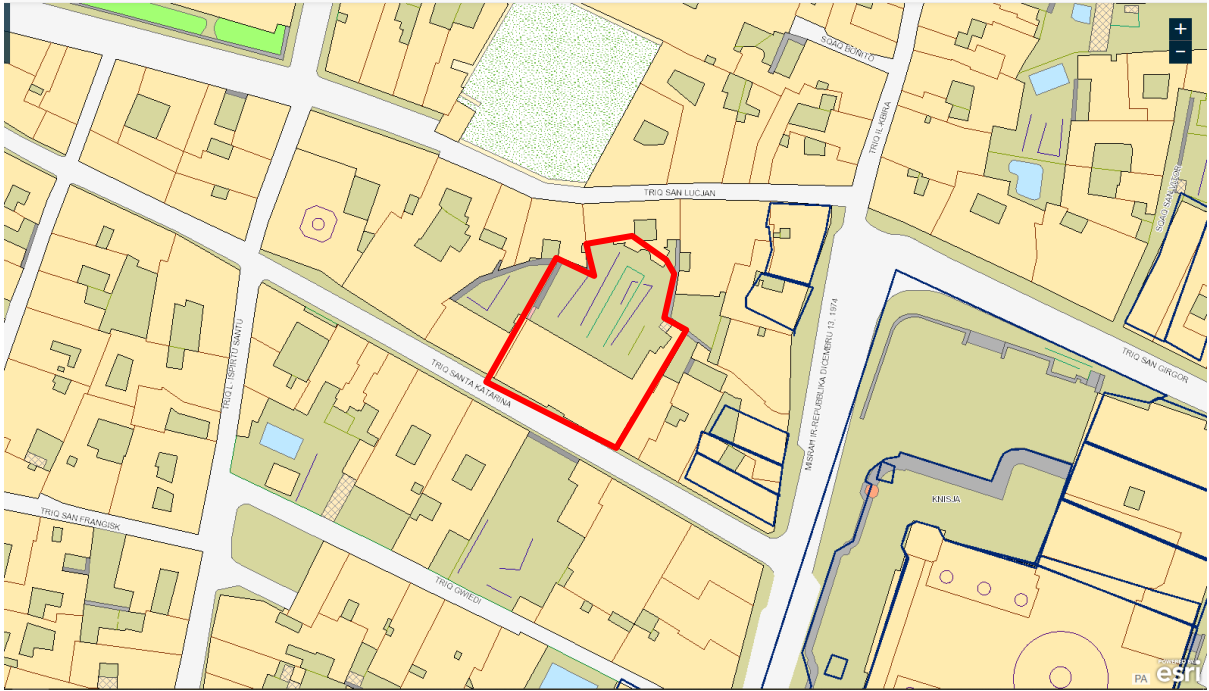


**No. 14, (Id-Dar tal-Barunessa), Triq Santa Katerina– Grade 2**

Commonly known by the locals as id-Dar tal-Barunessa, this house has a wide facade built in the Neo-Classical style in the 19th century. This was the residence of the Vella Bonavita family, including Marion Vella Bonavita, the daughter of Captain Francesco Vella Bonavita RMA.

The house is elevated and includes a basement. Of particular interest are the symbols carved in the continuous corbel supports of the balconies. These are somehow linked to the medical profession. It is probable that the house was built by Rosa Bonavita Carbott Testaferrata, the grandmother of Marion Vella Bonavita who was married to Dr Vincenzo Vella, MD. One could notice the initials TFB (Testaferrata Bonavita) on the main door's fanlight.

The house enjoys a garden at the back which includes a number of architectural features.



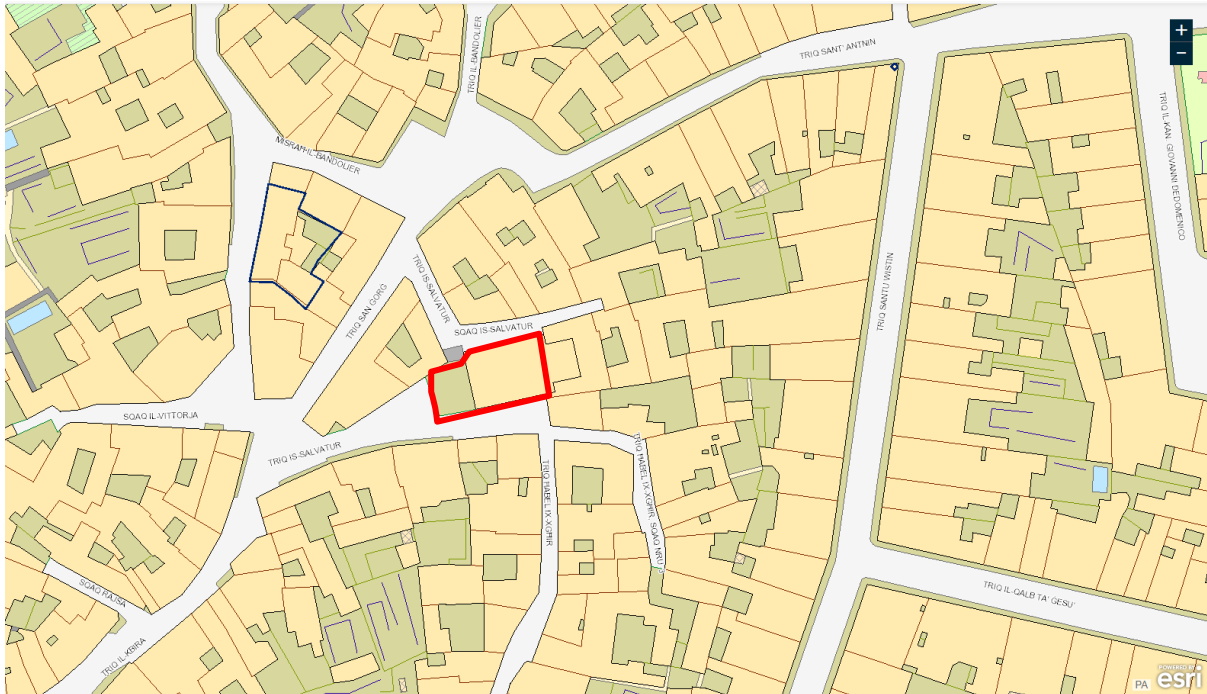
X57861 Y68226





## **Our Saviour Church, Triq is-Salvatur – Grade 1**

This church was originally dedicated to St. Mary and was popularly known as Santa Marija ta' Bisqallin. It used to serve as the vice parish of Żejtun before 1744. The façade of the present church was erected in the 20th century. However on the inside, one can still see the roof with the pointed arches, proof that the church dates from the medieval period.



X58028 Y68389





## Church of St. Clement, Triq San Klement – Grade 1

This church was built by Klement Tabone in 1658, as evinced by the date engraved in stone under the Tabone family coat-of-arms above the main door of the church. It is simple in architectural design with the main door decorated with Renaissance elements and is typical of other country churches built during the same period.

The face of Klement Tabone is painted in the bottom left-hand corner of the titular painting, which can be found above the church altar. Both the painting and the church itself were probably the fulfillment of a vow by Klement. In fact, Klement Tabone had lead the inhabitants of Żejtun against the Turks during the attack of the 6th July 1614. The latter had managed to reach the spot where the church stands today, before being repelled and retreating to their ships. It is therefore possible that Tabone had the church built as a symbol of the gratitude he felt he owed his patron saint for helping him during the attack.



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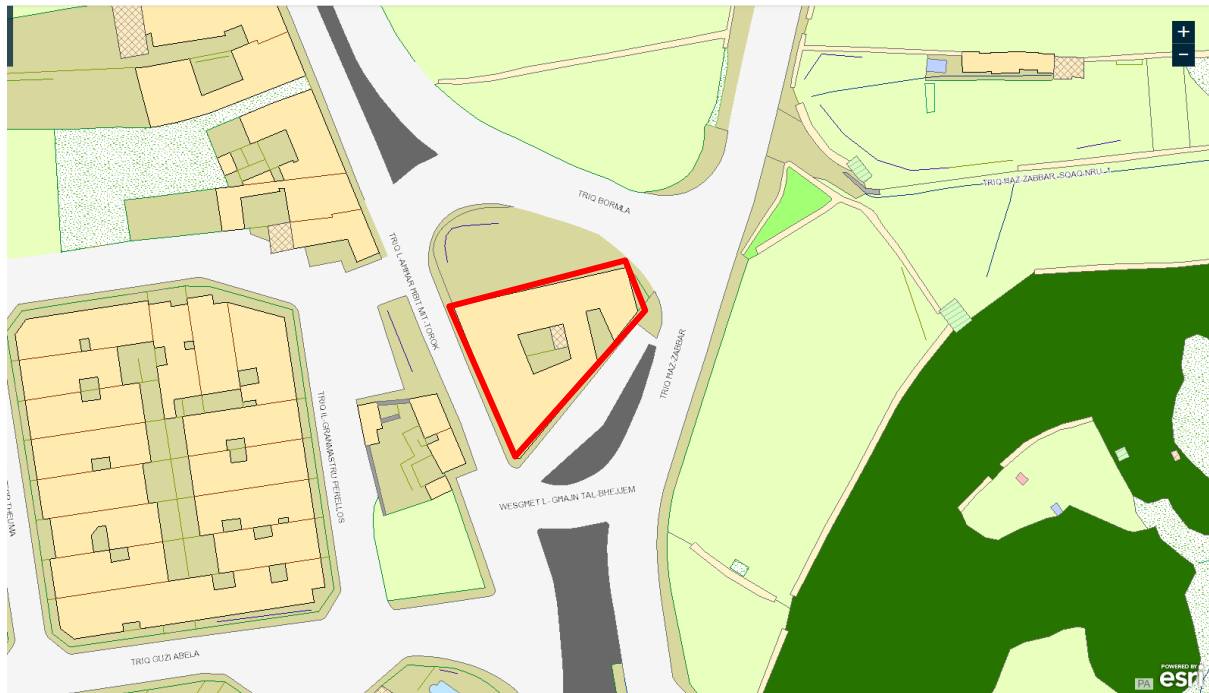




### Steam mill, Triq l-Aħħar Hbit mit-Torok – Grade 2

Few people know that this building was used as steam mill, as opposed to the more common wind mill. It was built in the latter half of the 19th century. There is an indulgences plaque beneath a niche dedicated to the Mother of Light on the principal façade. These indulgences were bestowed by the decree of Bishop Antonio Buhagiar on the 18th March 1886, which proves that the building was already in existence at the time.

This mill was still in use after the second World War and many still remember this. Beneath the building itself, there is a huge water cistern, the water of which was used for the production of steam. It is unknown whether the machinery used in this steam mill still exists.



X57795 Y68843





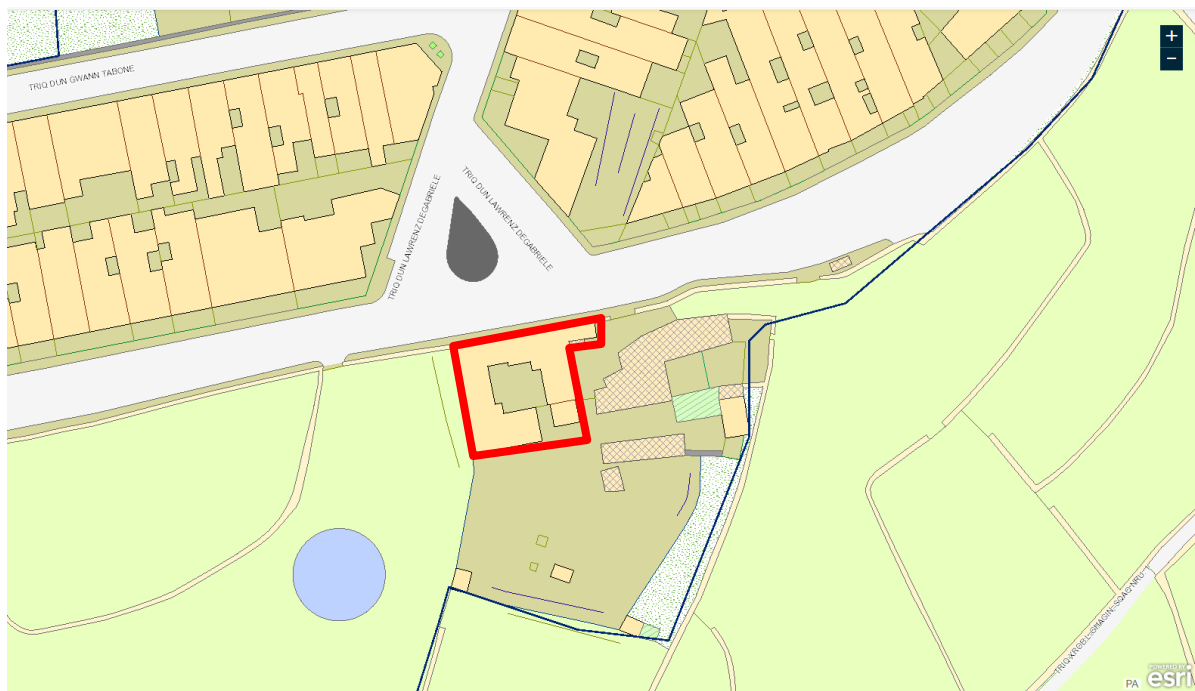
## **Military Observation Post, Triq il-President Anton Buttigieg – Grade 2**

When one looks at this building and observes its architectural detailing and the use of rusticated stone, one immediately associates it with military activity. At roof level one can notice a turret reached by a vertical ladder attached to the wall. This building is not a Semaphore but possibly an observation post which was used during World War II.

Aerial photography shows two circular platforms, one larger than the other, in the field next to the building. What was the purpose of these platforms?

This building is located at the highest point of Zejtun which is 60m above mean sea level and only a few metres away from the Old Parish Church (St Gregory's). From this point one has good views of St Thomas Bay and of Marsaxlokk Bay. Some two kilometers away from this site, along the Ghaxaq By-pass, one finds another building which, at first glance resembles this one. This is known as it-Turretta and was used as a Semaphore station built by the British Services in 1848 to house a communication system which was used as an early telegraphy system. There are two other two similar buildings which were used as Semaphore stations, one at Gharghur and another one at Nadur, Gozo.

The two circular platforms found in the field next to this building could have been used as cannon platforms. This building seems to have been built well before World War II and possibly was used during the same war. One should consider this building in the context of its location and the nearby barracks known as Il-Fortizza ta' Santa Marija, found at Triq Xrobb il-Ghagin.



X58237 Y67710



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**Perit Ruben Abela**

President

Wirt iż-Żejtun