**ENHANCING THE COMMUNITY**

**A Mixed Use Development in Birkirkara**

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The vision for this design project was to create a development which is inspired from the context of Birkirkara, and in return aims to enhance it by creating improved connections and links between different spheres and dimensions of society, thus evoking a stronger sense of community. After noticing young generations showing great interest in the area during analysis stage, the inclusion of affordable housing within a new residential complex in the area was considered, so as to complement the existing land use context whilst encouraging a newer demographic to reside in the village. Several spaces were designed as part of the development, including both communal spaces for interaction between residents — such as a communal room at ground floor, and communal roofs with decked areas and small-scale urban farming — as well as private spaces for most dwellings. An integration of a sizeable bike room within the residential development also helps in encouraging residents to use alternative means of transport whilst cutting costs on usage of private vehicles.

As part of the mixed use project, and informed by uses best needed in the area, a coffee shop and workspace are included, catering for both residents and public users of Ġnien l-Istazzjon and thus creating a spot for better interaction and integration of these different communities. Further complementing the development, a multi-modal transport hub catering for alternative means of transport is designed to provide better and more sustainable connectivity to other locations. A major theme in the design process of the overall project was the development’s connection with the adjacent garden, aiming not to interfere with its present functions and users but rather to integrate them within the new development, maintaining a healthy relationship between different users and communities alike.