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NEWS

Lm6m hospital expected to be completed by end of this year

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January 1987 by the Malta Development Corporation through Hotels Management Services Ltd.

A total of Lm14.5 million is being invested by AX Holdings in tourism projects which – besides the Grand Hotel Verdala – include a new Lm1.5 million business centre nearby; the Lm3.5 million four-star 120-room Capua Court Hotel in Sliema and the Lm2.5 million 80-bed Duke of Edinburgh Hotel in Victoria, which will be turned into a four-star complex complete with clinic for senior citizens.

AX Holdings has a 75 per cent share in the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel which will retain its old facade.

The former Capua Palace Hotel is to be demolished and rebuilt.

Mr Xuereb said that by 1997, the group would be offering a total of 2,300 beds in the four to five star sector.

AX Holdings, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, is at present building the Lm6 million Capua Palace Hospital in Sliema, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The company plans to demolish the Verdala suites, next to the Grand Hotel Verdala, and transform them into high-class accommodation and develop Alexandra Gardens into a block of apartments. The two projects will cost a further Lm4.5 million.

AX Holdings is waiting for permits for the proposed projects.

The group is also involved in the ambitious \$300 million tourist project in Albania which will provide employment for around 6,000 workers, mainly Albanians.

Reporting on the project, Mr Xuereb said preparatory work was progressing as planned and he would be travelling to Albania next week in connection with the project. And as was expected, one problem being encountered is "the usual bureaucracy".

Referring to the anniversary, Mr

Xuereb said: "Twenty years ago I felt I had everything planned out. I had a clear vision of success and I set very ambitious targets."

"I knew where I wanted to go... but when I started I only had Lm200 in my pocket and it was difficult to conceive how I was going to get there."

But though it was rarely a matter of plain sailing, the saying that where there is a will there is a way, stayed in my mind and kept me looking forward to more challenges."

From his initial two employees, the group now has a staff of over 1,000 full time and part-time employees.

But Mr Xuereb is still on the lookout for other international challenges.

Mr Xuereb, who is also mayor of Naxxar, said that after the initial 10 years in the construction industry he felt the group should diversify. And since then the group established over 20 companies to handle operations in construction and tourism industries.

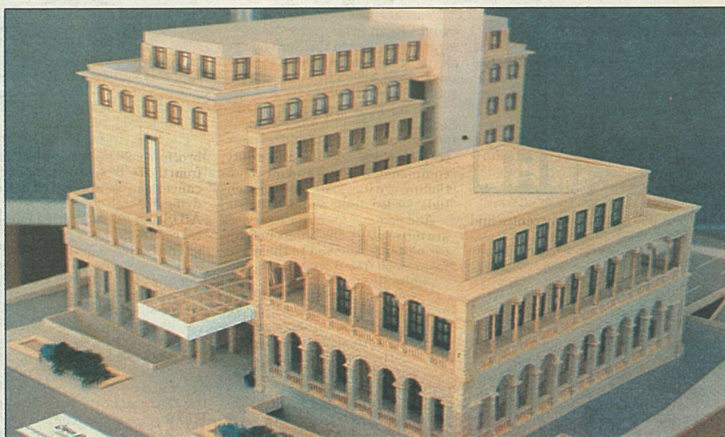
Over 40 per cent of the group's workforce are engaged in Angelo Xuereb (Construction) Ltd, General Precast Concrete Ltd, Hardrocks Ltd, suppliers of sand and gravel, and property and real estate development Sunny Homes Ltd.

AX Holdings also own the Suncrest Hotel and the Sunny Coast Resort timeshare complex in Għawra and is involved in the engineering sector through Oil and Construction International Ltd and in Securicor Malta Ltd, offering security services.

"AX Group is currently consolidating its corporate structure to strengthen its position as we prepare to enter the international market," Mr Xuereb said.

And he added that the capabilities of Maltese companies and personnel tended to be underestimated.

"Often we experience the grief of seeing large contracts being



A model of the Capua Court Hospital

awarded to foreign companies which later fail to fulfil their obligations adequately to the detriment of us Maltese."

When asked about the proposed golf course near the Grand Hotel Verdala, Mr Xuereb said the aim is to build the course on 13 hectares of non-irrigated agricultural land. And he pointed out that the area being proposed for the golf site was identified in the first draft of the Structure Plan for Malta.

Mr Albert Muscat Ingliott, general manager of Hospitality Management Co. Ltd, the tourism branch of the group, said that the drop in UK tourism was likely to have occurred as a result of fiercer competition from other countries than by design.

He also appealed to the authorities for cooperation regarding the issuing of permits for development.

The company was planning to have the Capua hotel and hospital,

which are adjacent to each other, completed together. But while construction work is taking place on

the hospital, they are still waiting for the permit for the hotel, he said.

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