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The Conservancy Association

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24th November 2011

Town Planning Board
15/F North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road
North Point
Hong Kong

By e-mail: tpbpd@pland.gov.hk

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Comments on the Section 12A Application No. Y/NE-TK/10

The Conservancy Association (CA) OBJECTS to Section 12A Application No. Y/NE-TK/10. It should be noted that a rezoning application Y/NE-TK/2 was rejected in 2007 at the same site due to excessive scale and intensity. However, the proposed plan seems not demonstrate an effort to reduce the scale and intensity. Town Planning Board therefore should not endorse this plan.

1. Ecological Concern

CA considers an ecological impact assessment in this project as important but its methodology has not been clearly explained. In Paragraph 3.3.1, it mentioned that ecological surveys were conducted “*covering both wet and dry seasons during the period of June 2010 to May 2011*”. However, whether the survey has taken advantage of the transitional period between dry and wet seasons to reveal a biased pattern is still unknown. The project proponent should clearly justify the assessment by specifying the exact date of conducting survey.

CA would also express grave concerns on the areas below:

Ting Kok SSSI

The application site is located too close to Ting Kok SSSI and potential sewerage and ecological concerns would be anticipated. Ting Kok SSSI supported diverse benthic macrofauna community, with over 39 species were recorded in the benthic macrofauna of the mangrove¹. The large size of inter-tidal habitat in Ting Kok has also recorded species of conservation importance, such as Two-spot Goby *Psammogobius biocellatus* (listed as Lower Risk Near Threatened under IUCN Red List), Tropical Sand Goby *Favonigobius reichei* (listed as Lower Risk Near Threatened under IUCN Red List)². The ecological impact assessment indeed lacks sufficient details in impacts brought by the development, particularly potential increase in surface runoff and wastewater generated from both construction and operation of the spa resort hotel. Whether habitat fragmentation would be contributed by the project should not be left out without assessment.

Shan Liu Stream

Another foreseeable degradation would be Shan Liu Stream within the proposed plant nursery. Apart from the uncontrolled surface runoff which might cause adverse impact on hydrology of the stream and mangrove downstream of the site, CA queries if the proposed plant nursery along Shan Liu Stream would induce loss of riparian vegetation to give way for new trees. Despite the provision of stream buffer zone, it was only confined to the eastern bank of the stream (Paragraph 7.1.1. of Ecological Impact Assessment) but not include western stream bank. The applicant should give further elaboration to explain how the stream could prevent from deterioration from constant work in the plant nursery, located exactly on western portion of the site.

2. Cumulative Impact

CA is highly concerned that if cumulative environmental impact would be resulted due to the fact that Development project of different nature have already planned or proposed in Ting Kok, including Fung Yuen residential development, bathing beach in Lung Mei, Tsz Shan Monastery, and so on, not to say small house application from various villages expansion.

For the Traffic Impact Assessment, the applicant fails to reveal the worst-case scenario. The baseline scenario, apart from the development project mentioned in Paragraph 4.1.3, should also include the proposed spa resort hotel (Application number: Y/NE-TK/6) and

¹ Tam, N. F. Y. and Y. S. Wong. (1997). Ecological study on mangrove stands in Hong Kong. The City University of Hong Kong. Unpublished report to the Agricultural and Fisheries Department.

² EPD (2008). EIA Report on "Development of a Bathing Beach at Lung Mei, Tai Po" – Additional Information on Ecological Surveys. http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/boards/advisory_council/files/ACE_Paper_27_2008.pdf

the proposed columbarium (Application number: A/NE-TK/303).

With reference to the scale of the project together with the above ecological concerns, it would also be necessary to consult Environmental Protection Department if the project is identified as designated project under Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance.

Yours faithfully

Ng Hei Man

Senior Campaign Officer