



長春社 Since 1968

The Conservancy Association

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30th December 2019

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 16 Application No. A/YL-NSW/275

The Conservancy Association (CA) OBJECTS to the captioned application.

1. Not in line with the general planning application

According to the Explanatory Statement of the Approved Nam Sang Wai Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL-NSW/8, the general planning intention is “*to conserve the ecological value of the fish ponds which form an integral part of the wetland ecosystem in the Deep Bay Area. The existing and contiguous, active or abandoned fish ponds in the Deep Bay Area should all be conserved. Moreover, the loss of fish ponds and habitat fragmentation should be avoided and any negative impacts arising from undesirable land uses and human disturbance should be mitigated*” and “*the planning intention of the area further away from the fish ponds is to protect the ecological integrity of the wetland ecosystem, and prevent development that would have a negative off-site disturbance impact on the ecological value of fish ponds*”. The proposed large-scale residential development would involve the loss of wetland habitats and induce adverse impacts on Tung Shing Lane Egret, which is ecologically connected to the Deep Bay area. Therefore, the application is not in line with the general planning intention.

2. Adverse ecological impacts

Although the application site belongs to “Undetermined” zone, it is situated in the vicinity of “Wetland Buffer Area” to the north and “Conservation Area” to the south. The ponds within the application site and the Tung Shing Lane Egret in the



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surrounding have been providing important habitats to water birds, particularly egrets and herons. According to the *Summer 2018 Report of Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site Waterbird Monitoring Programme 2017-18 – Egretty Counts in Hong Kong with particular reference to the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site by HKBWS*¹, Tung Shing Lane colony was the third largest colony in Hong Kong, comprising 7.8% of the total number of nests in Hong Kong. With 49 Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) nests and 35 Chinese Pond Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*) nests, it was also the second largest colony within the Deep Bay area. This indicates that Tung Shing Lane Egretty has a close ecological linkage with Deep Bay wetlands and is a vital part for maintaining the health of the internationally important wetland ecosystem.

The proposed comprehensive residential development would include the construction for 34 houses and 16 high-rise residential towers with 25 to 45 storeys. The large-scale development **would lead to a permanent loss of 1.96 hectares** of existing ponds and wetlands. Although the applicant has proposed to transform one of the ponds into a 0.51 hectare “Eco-lake”, the total area of wetlands would be significantly reduced by 70%. We **DO NOT AGREE** that such arrangement can mitigate or compensate wetland loss.

In addition to the loss of habitats, human disturbances would intensify with drastic increase in population of the area. During breeding period (March to August), the egrets and herons would be very sensitive to human disturbance. When seriously disturbed, the birds may even abandon their nests. It is of grave concern that the proposed residential development will significantly increase human disturbances (e.g. noise, light and air pollution), eventually resulting in a decline in nesting population of Tung Shing Lane Egretty.

Moreover, the EcoIA submitted by the applicant failed to provide adequate and comprehensive information on the ecological value of the application site. The survey period was limited to 6 months (March 2019 to August 2019). In Hong Kong, 30% of the bird species are winter visitors and, some of them are rare

¹ Anon, 2018. Summer 2018 Report: Egretty Counts in Hong Kong with particular reference to the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site. Report by The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.



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species or species with conservation concern. Given the close proximity to important bird habitats, the ecological surveys should have covered the winter period. Therefore, the results of the survey may not be representative to reflect the ecology of the area. The ecological value of the area may have been undervalued and the impacts on ecology may have been underestimated.

3. Insufficient open space

According to the Explanatory Statement of the Approved Nam Sang Wai Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL-NSW/8, “*under the “U” zone, any private developments or redevelopments require planning permission from the Board so as to ensure that the environment would not be adversely affected and that infrastructure, GIC facilities, open space are adequately provided*”. Even though a “green corridor” under the space beneath West Rail Line viaduct has been proposed by the applicant, the area of the “green corridor” **WAS NOT INCLUDED** in the application site. Also, eco-lake and preserved zone are only available to residents. Therefore, the applicant failed to provide sufficient open space for the public as required by the OZP.

4. Undesirable precedent and potential cumulative impacts

Over the past decade, many large-scale development applications inside the Wetland Buffer Area around Nam Sang Wai have been approved or submitted for approval. The entire region has been under high development pressure. Approving the captioned application would set undesirable precedent for similar applications for large-scale development in the area. Development would further encroach into lands with conservation and landscape values, decreasing overall quality of the environment.

Yours faithfully,
Charlotte Chan
Campaign Officer
The Conservancy Association