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By Hand and Email (tpbpd@pland.gov.hk)

TPB Ref.: A/TP/684
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Secretary
Town Planning Board
15/F., North Point Government Offices,
No. 333, Java Road,
North Point, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms. Leticia LEUNG)

14 October 2022

Dear Madam,

**S16 Application for Proposed Tai Po Kau Nature Academy
at Lot Nos. 1, 2, 4-8 in D.D.33 and Adjoining Government Land, Tai Po Kau, Tai Po**

We refer to the captioned S.16 application submitted on 22.7.2022 and subsequent departmental comments received from Planning Department (PlanD), Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), Drainage Services Department (DSD), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and Transport Department (TD).

The departmental comments are noted. In response to departmental comments, technical reports are revised and appended in the Response-to-Comments as follow:

- Appendix A** Revised Page of Ecological Impact Assessment (EcoIA)
- Appendix B** Revised Pages of Explanatory Statement and Planning Statement
- Appendix C** Revised Master Layout Plan (MLP)
- Appendix D** Revised Geotechnical Planning Review Report (GPRR)
- Appendix E** Revised Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) Report
- Appendix F** Revised Pages of Sewerage Impact Assessment (SIA) Report
- Appendix G** Revised Master Landscape Plan (LMP)
- Appendix H** Revised Preliminary Environmental Review (PER) Report

Please find enclosed 4 sets of hard copy submissions of Response-to-Comments for your consideration. The same will be uploaded onto One Drive using the designated link as provided.



We also noted some comments raised by the public. We would like to provide the following clarifications for your consideration.

Need on the Ancillary Tent Camping Area

The ancillary tent camping area is to support overnight programme and nature education of the Nature Academy. Overnight education activities will be organized only during March to April and September to November, with maximum number of 4 programmes each month (1 per week). A maximum number of 18 people including tutors and participants (including students) would be allowed for each overnight programme. These overnight programmes will facilitate bird biodiversity education and experience of nature and wilderness. The overnight camping will support early morning bird watching activities and can also enhance the nature education function of the programme where participants can immerse into and create bonding with the nature. Literatures demonstrate that the length of field-based programme could influence learner's outcomes. Long-term or repeated experiences were found to be important for the extension and continuation of implicit self-nature associations and there is considerable evidence indicating that longer programmes are more effective than shorter ones. Hence, the overnight education activities will be crucial to nurture participants' awareness of the nature and biodiversity in Hong Kong and to conserve Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve as a whole. This is in line with the conservation purposes of the Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve.

Disturbance to Wildlife

It is anticipated that the overall ecological impact will be at acceptable level as demonstrated in the EcoIA. Environmentally-friendly design, very small scale structures and well-thought construction programme will be adopted to minimise impact to the Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve. No construction work will be carried out in wet/breeding season to avoid disturbance to wildlife. All participants would need to strictly follow on the house rules. No cooking or camp fire will be allowed and no showering facilities will be provided at the application site. All participants will be well-educated and well-monitored to follow the code of conducts for joining the activities to make sure no negative impacts will be posed to the environment. For example, they are required to pack their own food as no cooking will be allowed, keep their voices low and use minimum level of light.

Future Management and Operation

The Tai Po Kau Nature Academy will be collaboratively operated by the Outdoor Wildlife Learning Hong Kong (OWLHK) and Pine Garden Foundation Limited (the Applicant). OWLHK is a professional environmental education organization equipped with expertise in ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation, in a wide array of specialised fields, including environmental education, environmental management and ecotourism. OWLHK and Pine Garden Foundation Limited as the future operators will regularly and carefully review on site management during operation. Details management and operation plan and work programme will be formulated in the detail design stage.

Geotechnical Aspect

It is not anticipated that slope upgrading works will be required within the application site. The small scale building works will not affect the slope stability both within our application

site and the TPKNR in the vicinity. Nevertheless, a Natural Terrain Hazard Study will be carried out in the detail design stage which comprises both desk study and site-specific ground investigation works to ascertain the slope stability in the vicinity and possible mitigation to minimise the possibility of terrain hazard events. Should the necessary investigation involve area within Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve, prior permission from AFCD will be sought.

Possible Technical Impacts

There will be no adverse traffic, ecological, environmental, sewerage, drainage or geotechnical impacts brought by the proposed development as demonstrated in the TIA, EcoIA, PER, SIA, DIA and GPRR. All excavation works would be conducted away from the Tree Protection Zone and trenching of roots would be avoided to minimise the landscape impact brought by the construction works.

In addition, we would also like to clarify that there is only one sewerage treatment plant at the proposed development which is located at the Plant Nursery. Please refer to the revised page of EcoIA Report in **Appendix A**.

To conclude, the proposed layout and design of the Tai Po Kau Nature Academy is prepared by the applicant with careful consideration on site context and impact to the surrounding areas especially to the Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve. The proposed Nature Academy will be carefully managed and operated for promotion of nature conservation to the general public.

The above information serves as a response to comments of relevant Government Departments under the Section 5(c) of the TPB Guideline No. 32, and we would like to seek an exemption from publication and recounting requirement. In case you decide that the above information is accepted but not exempted from publication and recounting requirement, we would like to proceed with the application with the further information.

We would be grateful if you can let us have the Government comments on the captioned application for our necessary action.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours faithfully,
For and on behalf of
PlanArch Consultants Ltd.



Betty S. F. Ho
w/e.

c.c.
Client

Mr. Kevin LAU
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