

Appendix B: Revised Pages of Explanatory Statement and Planning Statement

Executive Summary

This planning statement is prepared in support of a S16 Application for the proposed Tai Po Kau Nature Academy at Lots 1, 2, 4-8 in D.D.33 and adjoining Government land in Tai Po Kau, Tai Po.

The application site has a site area of about 0.9ha. It falls within land zoned “Green Belt” (“GB”) on the draft Tai Po Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/TP/29 gazetted on 17 September 2021. It is a piece of long-abandoned farmland covered with overgrown vegetation and weeds. Several single-storey structures are found on the site and they are left vacant and severely dilapidated.

In order to step forward to facilitate the promotion of environmental protection and conservation, Pine Garden Foundation Limited (the applicant), a charitable body, proposes to establish a field study/education/visitor centre with ancillary tent camping facilities known as “Tai Po Kau Nature Academy” at the application site for organising educational activities/programmes and conducting field study/research. The proposed Tai Po Kau Nature Academy will be operated in collaboration by Smiley Planet and Outdoor Wildlife Learning Hong Kong.

The proposed development will involve redevelopment of three existing structures within the application site into a visitor centre, an activity centre and a plant nursery with ancillary facilities. It will provide a tent camping area for overnight educational activities. It will be compatible with the rural character of the surrounding environment and enhance the existing natural landscape of the area. With careful design and proper management, it will have no adverse traffic, ecological, environmental, sewerage, drainage or geotechnical impacts.

Since the application site is suitable for the proposed Tai Po Kau Nature Academy and will bring planning gains to promote nature conservation and tidy up the unsightly environment, we would be grateful that Members of the Board will give favorable consideration to approve this application.

行政摘要

本計劃書旨在支持根據城市規劃條例第 16 條於大埔滘第 33 約地段第 1, 2 及 4-8 號和毗連政府土地用作大埔滘自然學院的規劃許可申請。

申請地點面積約 0.9 公頃，位於已在 2021 年 9 月 17 日公佈的大埔分區計劃大綱草圖(圖則編號 S/TP/29)上的「綠化地帶」。申請地點為一片廢棄已久的農地，上面覆蓋著雜草叢生的植被，現時有幾座空置並殘破的單層建築物。

為進一步推動環境保育，慈善團體 Pine Garden Foundation Limited (申請人) 擬議於申請地點設立郊野學習／教育／遊客中心及附屬帳幕營地，名為“大埔滘自

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** On behalf of Pine Garden Foundation Limited (Pine Garden Foundation), PlanArch Consultants Ltd. submits a planning application to the Town Planning Board (TPB) for the proposed field study/education/visitor centre with ancillary tent camping area at Lots 1, 2, 4-8 in D.D.33 and adjoining Government Land in Tai Po Kau, Tai Po.
- 1.2** The Pine Garden Foundation is a charitable body registered for tax exemption under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance, with the objectives to promote awareness and advances conservation, restoration and rehabilitation of the environment, ecosystem and areas with natural beauty and scientific interest. It proposes to establish a field study/education/visitor centre with ancillary camping facilities known as “Tai Po Kau Nature Academy” (TPK Nature Academy) at the application site for promotion of nature education through organising educational activities and programmes, as well as for conducting field study and research.
- 1.3** The application site has a site area of about 0.9ha and falls within land zoned as “Green Belt” (“GB”) on the draft Tai Po Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/TP/29 gazetted on 17 September 2021 (Plan 1). The proposed TPK Nature Academy will redevelop three existing structures within the application site into a visitor centre, an activity centre and a plant nursery with ancillary facilities. It will provide facilities for field study and a tent camping area for overnight educational activities. Since the proposed ‘Field Study/Education/Visitor Centre’ is a Column 2 use in “GB” zone, approval from the Town Planning Board under S.16 of the Town Planning Ordinance is required.
- 1.4** In support of this application, this planning statement sets out the site background, outlines the development proposal and provides justifications for the proposed field study/education/visitor centre with tent camping area. The structure of the planning statement is as follows:
- Section 2 : background of Pine Garden Foundation
 - Section 3 : site context and surrounding land uses
 - Section 4 : introduction on the development proposal
 - Section 5 : justifications for the proposed development
 - Section 6 : conclusion

3. SITE CONTEXT

3.1 Location

The application site comprises Lots 1, 2, 4-8 in D.D. 33 and adjoining Government Land in Tai Po Kau, Tai Po. It has a site area of about 0.9ha. Please refer to **Plans 1 & 2** for details.

3.2 Land Use Zoning and Land Status

The application site falls within land zoned “Green Belt” (“GB”) on the draft Tai Po Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/TP/29 gazetted on 17 September 2021 (**Plan 1**).

According to the Notes of OZP, the planning intention of “GB” zone is to “define the limits of urban and sub-urban development areas by natural features and to contain urban sprawl as well as to provide passive recreational outlets.”. Under the “GB” zone, ‘Field Study/Education/Visitor Centre’ is a Column 2 use which requires permission from the Town Planning Board (TPB) under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance.

The lots concerned are demised for agricultural use.

3.3 Existing Land Use

The application site is a piece of long-abandoned farmland covered with overgrown vegetation and weeds. Several single-storey structures are found on the site and they are left vacant and severely dilapidated. Please refer to **Photos 1-4** for the existing condition of the application site.

3.4 Adjacent Land Uses

The application site is adjacent to the Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve, bounded by a stream along the northern boundary, and Tai Po Kau Forest Track – Kau Lead Section along the southern/eastern boundary (**Photo 6**).

Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve is also known as Tai Po Kau Special Area. It comprises dense hilly woodlands and is rich in flora and fauna. It is one of the most popular places for bird watchers and hikers. Nature trails and forest walks are provided in the Nature Reserve. A country park management centre with an information post as well as public toilets operated by Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) are found in the vicinity. Tai Po Kau Garden is located down the foothill to the further northeast of the application site.

4. THE PROPOSED TAI PO KAU NATURE ACADEMY – FIELD STUDY/EDUCATION/VISITOR CENTRE WITH ANCILLARY TENT CAMPING AREA

4.1. The Development Proposal

The proposed TPK Nature Academy mainly consists of three single-storey buildings which will be redeveloped from the existing structures. It will have a visitor centre, an activity centre and a plant nursery for nature education and field study purpose. Outdoor spaces will be reserved for activity ground, viewing deck, event lawn and plant nursery area for field study/research purpose. A camping ground will be provided for overnight educational activities/programme for about 18 persons.

The project adopts a sustainable design concept namely the “Three Zeros” indicating “Zero Carbon”, “Zero Waste Water” and “Zero Distance to Nature”. Elements from the existing structures will be preserved to reduce the carbon footprints in construction stage. Sustainable construction materials with CIC Green Product Certification will be adopted. The Visitor Centre and the Activity Centre will use split-levelled ceilings design to introduce natural lighting and reinforce natural ventilation. These buildings will provide flexible activity areas with folder walls, which can turn into a boundaryless space completely opened to the nature. An on-site sewage treatment plant will be installed in the Plant Nursery to minimize wastewater output for the Nature Academy.

Please refer to **Table 4.1** below on the development parameters and structure details, and **Appendix 1** for the master layout plans of the proposed development.

Table 4.1 Proposed Development Parameters

Development Parameters				
Site Area		About 0.9 ha		
Total GFA		About 560 m ²		
No. of Blocks		3		
Structure Details				
Structure No.	Use	Covered Area (approx.) (m ²)	Building Height (m)	No. of Storey
1	Visitor Centre	220	Not more than 4.7	1
2	Activity Centre	146	Not more than 4.5	1
3	Plant Nursery	194	Not more than 6.65	1
Total		560	/	/

4.3. Overnight Educational Programme

A maximum of 4 overnight programmes will be arranged each month during March to April and September to November, with maximum of 18 people including tutor and participants.

A tent camping area will be provided within the proposed TPK Nature Academy to support overnight educational programmes. The participants can use the toilets and changing rooms in the activity centre, which is about 3 minutes walk from the camping ground. No cooking will be allowed, and all campers are required to pack their own food to the camp.

4.4. Plant Nursery and Field Study

The plant nursery will facilitate growing of different native species and allow for field study purpose to be conducted in Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve. Seminars and research work will be conducted at the plant nursery in collaboration with non-government organisations or institutions.

Vehicular access and drop-off area will be provided at the entrance of the plant nursery for transporting seeds or other materials to the nursery area.

4.5. Operation

The proposed TPK Nature Academy will open Mondays to Sundays including Public Holidays, from 9am to 6pm (except for overnight programmes and special activities such as morning bird watching).

The proposed development is anticipated to accommodate a maximum of 400 visitors daily in various sessions with about 10 site staff in full operation. The number of visitors will be controlled as advance registration before visiting will be required.

4.6. Landscaping

The proposed TPK Nature Academy will provide a tranquil environment and act as buffer to the surrounding rural setting. The applicant intends to preserve and enhance the existing natural landscape. All existing trees will be preserved and maintained, except two dead trees and one existing tree in direct conflict with the proposed access road, which is in poor form and not suitable for transplant. Lush additional planting will be provided all around the site. This includes a wide range of tree species commonly found in the Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve and those that provide food and habitat for wildlife. Large and robust shrubs are proposed within the