

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING STATEMENT

Section 16 Application for Proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly (RCHE)) in “Village Type Development” Zone & “Other Specified Uses” Annotated “Rural Use” Zone in Lot 669 S.A ss.2 RP (Part) and Lot 669 S.B RP (Part) in D.D. 117, Wong Nai Tun Tsuen, Yuen Long

Applicant

TURBO REGAL LIMITED

Environmental Consultant



Planning Consultant



DeSPACE (International) Limited

Architect



Traffic Consultant



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Applicant, the registered land owner of Lot 669 S.A ss.2 RP (part) and Lot 669 S.B RP (part) in D.D. 117, Wong Nai Tun Tsuen, Yuen Long, now seeks a town planning permission from the Town Planning Board for a proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) (RCHE) at the aforementioned site.

According to the Approved Tai Tong Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL-TT/20, the Site is zoned as “Village Type Development” and “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Rural Use”. The proposed Social Welfare Facility (RCHE) is a Column 2 use which requires planning permission from the Town Planning Board. There is no development restriction on height, plot ratio and site coverage on the proposed RCHE. In view of the growing demand for RCHE and the prevailing policy, the Applicant intends to respond to the pressing community need by providing 300-360 nos. of beds in the proposed 8-storey RCHE in Yeun Long.

With reference to the Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Home for the Elderly Premises in New Private Developments (LAO Practice Note No. 4/2003) and its time-limited enhancements launched in 2023 (LAO Practice Note No. 5/2023) by Lands Department, the Applicant will request the Social Welfare Department for supporting the proposed RCHE under the Incentive Scheme which encourages private developers to self-finance to build quality RCHE premises on their own land, and design to comply with the statutory and licensing requirements of the participation in the Incentive Scheme.

The proposed development is fully justified on the following grounds: -

- i. A planning merit to provide more residential care services in territorial and district levels to meet the genuine need and to shorten the waiting time for quality RCHE places;
- ii. Fulfilment of the recommended guiding principles to provide best practice developing a Liveable, Sustainable, and Quality RCHE with a view to meeting the present and future social, environmental and economic needs and aspirations of the community;
- iii. Various design features/merits such as sufficient provision of multi-purpose area and open space in a purpose-built RCHE. The unique design merits of Barrier-free Leisure Green Path, Terraced Building Frontage & Individual Private Gardens, Sky Garden & Horticulture Green Area, and Building Disposition further enhancing the service quality;
- iv. Not only incompatible in terms of land use nature, development scale and intensity but also enhancing the connectivity between the adjacent YLS development and rural setting of Tai Tong; and
- v. No adverse environmental, landscape, sewerage, drainage, visual and traffic impacts.

Given the aforementioned justifications, the Applicant respectfully requests the Town Planning Board to approve the subject application.

行政摘要

申請人為元朗黃泥墩村丈量約份第 117 約地段第 669 號 A 分段第 2 小分段餘段（部分）和第 669 號 B 分段餘段（部分）的註冊土地的擁有人，現尋求城市規劃委員會的批准，擬議於上述地點作社會福利設施（安老院舍）。

根據大棠分區計劃大綱核准圖編號 S/YL-TT/20，申請地點劃作「鄉村式發展」和「其他指定用途（鄉郊用途）」地帶。擬議的社會福利設施（安老院舍）為第二欄用途，需要獲得城市規劃委員會的規劃許可。擬議安老院舍的高度，地積比率及上蓋面積均無發展限制。鑑於對安老院舍的需求日益增加及現行的政策支持，申請人擬議的八層高安老院舍能增加 300-360 個床位以滿足元朗社區的迫切需求。

有關地政總署發出的「鼓勵在新的私人發展項目中提供安老院舍的獎勵計劃」（地政處作業備考編號 4/2003）以及其於 2023 年公佈的試行優化計劃（地政處作業備考編號 5/2023），申請人將向社會福利署爭取政策支持，在私人土地建設以自負盈虧方式發展高質素的安老院舍，而所有設計將符合獎勵計劃的法例及牌照要求。

擬議發展項目有以下充份理據獲得支持：

- i. 為地區以至全港提供更多院舍照顧服務，以滿足社會需求並縮短優質安老院舍住位的輪候時間；
- ii. 建議及實現一套良好作業指導原則，以發展一個宜居、可持續發展和優質的安老院舍，並應對社區當前及未來的社會、環境和經濟需求與期望；
- iii. 各項設計特點/優點，例如在專門建造的安老院舍內提供充足的多功能空間和休憩空間，加上無障礙休閒綠化徑、階梯式建築立面、私人花園、天台花園及園藝綠化區等設計特色，進一步提升服務質量；
- iv. 在土地用途性質、發展規模和密度上沒有不相容，反而增強了大棠一帶的鄉村環境與元朗南發展之間的連接性；以及
- v. 沒有對環境、景觀、渠務、排水、視覺和交通造成不利影響。

鑑於上述理由，申請人懇請城規會批准本規劃申請。

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This Planning Statement is prepared by DeSPACE (International) Limited to act on behalf of Turbo Regal Limited (hereafter **“the Applicant”**), to submit a Section 16 Planning Application to the Town Planning Board (**“TPB”**). This application is for a proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) (**“RCHE”**) on a site currently zoned as “Village Type Development” (**“V”**) and “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Rural Use” (**“OU (Rural Use)”**) within the Approved Tai Tong Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL-TT/20 (**“the OZP”**).

Taking into account the acute demand for RCHE in Hong Kong and in light of the policy incentives of the Government in planning for the elderly, as well as the development potential of Yuen Long South (**“YLS”**) Development Area in the vicinity, the Applicant as the sole registered owner of the private lots intends to develop a social welfare facility (RCHE) at Lot 669 S.A ss.2 RP (part) and Lot 669 S.B RP (part) in D.D. 117, Wong Nai Tun Tsuen, Yuen Long (hereinafter referred to as **“the Site”**) (**Figure 1** – Location Plan). The Site falls within “Village Type Development” zone (98.7%) and “Other Specified Uses (Rural Use)” zone (1.3%) under the OZP. According to the Notes of the OZP regarding both zones, “Social Welfare Facility” falls into Column 2 use which requires planning permission from the TPB with or without conditions. There is no development restriction on the proposed RCHE.

Against the backdrop of an ageing population, the Government launched the “Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Home for the Elderly Premises in New Private Developments” (**“Incentive Scheme”**) in 2003 with a view to encouraging provision of quality RCHE premises in new private developments by exempting the GFA of eligible private RCHEs from premium payment. Recently in June 2023, the Incentive Scheme was enhanced to further raise the GFA of RCHEs that can be exempted in each development project and exempt such GFA from the calculation of the maximum GFA of the relevant projects. Intended to participate in the Incentive Scheme, the Applicant will request the Social Welfare Department (**“SWD”**) for supporting the proposed RCHE subject to compliance with all relevant statutory and licensing requirements and not implying any financial implication, both capital and recurrent by the Government.

1.2 AGEING POPULATION & SURGING DEMAND FOR RCHE

It is an undoubted fact that Hong Kong has been encountering soaring demand for RCHE supply. The life expectancies at birth for both sexes have steadily increased during the past 52 years, from 67.8 years for males and 75.3 years for females in 1971 to 81.3 years and 87.2 years respectively in 2022¹. The life expectancy of both males and females at birth in Hong Kong remains among the highest in the world, despite the exceptionally high mortality rates in 2022 during the COVID-19 epidemic. According to the Census and Statistics Department's population projection, the percentage of elderly persons aged 65 and above in the total population will gradually increase from 20.8% in mid-2022 to 25.3% in 2028, and

¹ Source: Centre for Health Protection
<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/27/111.html#top>

then to 35.1% in 2069. For elderly dependency ratio, it was estimated that 1,000 individuals supported 180 nos. of elderly in 2011 while in 2041, 1,000 individuals will be supporting nearly every 500 elderly (2 adults to 1 elderly). It is especially highlighted in the reply from the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council on 22nd March 2023 that: “...a continued rise in the number of elderly persons will increase the demand for various elderly and healthcare services. To this end, the Government will continue to improve elderly services with due emphasis on both quality and quantity, follow through with the policy direction of promoting "ageing in place as the core, with institutional care as back-up", and endeavour to provide diversified services to elderly persons in need.”

According to “Elderly Services Programme Plan” completed by Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan Elderly Commission², the projected service demand for residential care for residential care for elderly would raise from 49,000 places in 2016 to about 68,000 places in 2046. However, the total number of subsidised and non-subsidised RCHE places is only 38,626 as at 31st December 2023³. A huge deficit in demand is observed.

Furthermore, as at 31st December 2023, there were a total of 16,805 applicants being waitlisted for various types of subsidised residential care services (“**RCS**”) for the elderly in the Central Waiting List for subsidised long term care services. The average waiting time for (i) subvented homes and contract homes and (ii) private homes participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (“**EBPS**”) are 18 and 4 months respectively. The overall waiting time for subsidised RCS for the elderly is 9 months.⁴ It is revealed that the supply of private RCHE places is also crucial to meet the acute demand.

With respect to the population profile of Yuen Long District stated in the Population and Household Statistics released by the Census and Statistics Department on 3 April 2023, the population in Yuen Long District was nearly 652,500 in 2022 whilst the population aged 65 or above accounted for about 15.9% (around 103,750 elders) of the district population⁵.

In addition, a sharp growth in Yuen Long’s elderly population has been projected by the Planning Department, according to the Projection of Population Distribution, 2021 – 2029. The population aged over 65 or above in Yuen Long is estimated to be 169,260 (23.9% of the district population of about 708,200) in 2029. As such, there will be a drastic increase in elder population within a decade (from 103,750 [15.9%] in 2022 to 169,260 [23.9%] in 2029).⁶ The ageing problem is therefore considered to be serious from district perspective, sounding the alarm bell about the pressing demand for elderly services in the area.

² Source: Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan of Elderly Commission:
https://www.elderlycommission.gov.hk/en/download/library/ESPP_Final_Report_Eng.pdf

³ Source: Social Welfare Department (last revision date: 31 December 2023):
https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/elderly/elderly_info/elderly_ah_sps/elderlysps/rcse/

⁴ Source: Social Welfare Department (last revision date: 31 December 2023)
[https://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/632/en/LTC_statistics_HP-Eng\(202307\).pdf](https://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/632/en/LTC_statistics_HP-Eng(202307).pdf)

⁵ Population and Household Statistics Analysed by District Council District 2022, Census and Statistics Department
<https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/wbr.html?ecode=B11303012022AN22&scode=500>

⁶ Planning Department (Last review date: 1 September 2023)
https://www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/info_serv/statistic/wgpd21.html

1.3 PREVAILING POLICIES

1.3.1 Leveraging Market Forces to Increase the Supply of RCHEs

The acute demand for RCHE has long been an issue the Government trying to address. To encourage developers to provide RCHEs in new private developments, in July 2003, the Government launched the Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly Premises in New Private Developments (“Incentive Scheme”), under which eligible RCHE premises would be exempted from payment of land premium in respect of land transactions relating to lease modifications, land exchanges and private treaty grants for residential/commercial developments, subject to meeting certain conditions for the delivery of the RCHE premises, such as a maximum limit of 5,400 sq.m for GFA.

The Chief Executive pointed out in the “2022 Policy Address” that the Development Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau will put forward proposals and provide more incentives such as exempting total GFA to encourage developers to provide elderly service facilities in private development projects. The Financial Secretary has also indicated in the 2023-2024 Budget that it has decided to raise the GFA of RCHEs that can be exempted in each private development project, and has further proposed to exempt such GFA from the calculation of the maximum GFA of the relevant projects to increase the supply of quality private RCHEs.

In this connection, time-limited enhancements were introduced to the Incentive Scheme launched by LandsD in 2023 under LAO Practice Note No. 4/2023. In addition to continue to exempt eligible RCHE premises from payment of land premium, (i) the number of RCHE premises eligible for premium payment exemption in each site will increase from one RCHE premises to no limit on the number of RCHE premises, and (ii) the maximum total GFA of not exceeding 5,400 sq.m to 12,000 sq.m or 10% of the total GFA permissible under lease, whichever is greater. (iii) When calculating the total GFA of the entire project, the total GFA of the eligible RCHE premises in the private development project will be exempted and will not be counted in the original total permissible GFA of the entire project, allowing the developers to use the original permissible GFA for other purposes.

1.3.2 Purchasing Additional Places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (“EBPS”)

SWD has purchased places from private homes for the elderly under the EBPS since 1998 in an attempt to upgrade the service standard of the private homes and increase the supply of subsidised care-and-attention places. The Government is now taking forward various development projects and purchase additional places under the EBPS to increase the supply of subsidised residential care places for the elderly. According to the reply from the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council on 22nd March 2023, these development projects and measures are expected to gradually provide more than 6,200 subsidised residential care places for the elderly by end-2027, of which 2,600 will commence service by the end of 2023.

1.3.3 Residential Care Service Voucher (“RCSV”) Scheme for the Elderly

Providing elderly persons with greater flexibility to freely choose and switch among RCHEs, SWD has launched the RCSV Scheme since March 2017. The waiting time for subsidised residential care services (RCS) is greatly shortened while the elderly can pay in accordance with their affordability. SWD has also increased the number of beneficiaries under the RCSV Scheme for the elderly from 3,000 to 4,000 in 2022-23, and regularised the RCSV Scheme in April 2023 as well.⁷

1.3.4 Proposal on Increasing the Minimum Area per Resident for RCHE

The residential care services for the elderly in Hong Kong in general have long been criticized for their low living standards as compared to the major cities internationally, especially with regards to the amount of living space. There have been persistent discussions among the society about increasing the minimum area per resident for RCHE. The Residential Care Homes Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2023 (the Amendment Ordinance) was gazetted on 16 June 2023, which has raised the minimum area of floor space per resident from 6.5m² to 9.5 m².

⁷ LCQ6: Measures to cope with an ageing population
<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202303/22/P2023032200177.htm>

2. SITE CONTEXT

2.1 THE SITE

The Site with a site area of about 2,244 sq.m (**Figure 2** – Site Plan) is fenced-off, hard-paved and largely vacant. Located in the southern part of Yuen Long near Wong Nai Tun Tsuen, the Site is abutting on and accessible from Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road to its east. There is an existing 2-storey structure at the centre of the Site. The Site is situated at the fringe of V zone and OU (Rural Use) zone under the OZP and partly falls within the village environs (“**VE**”) of Wong Nai Tun Tsuen (**Figure 2**).

Regarding the application site boundary, the Applicant carefully observes the Revised Recommended Outline Development Plan (“**Revised RODP**”) of YLS promulgated in May 2020. The private lots (i.e. Lot 669 S.A ss.2 RP and Lot 669 S.B RP in D.D.117) mainly fall outside the YLS Development Area, while a minor portion at the north falling within an area zoned as “Residential – Zone 3”, and in the Third Phase of YLS Development where the development intensity is being reviewed. In avoidance of any contradiction to the long term planning of YLS Development, the affected minor portion of the private lots with an area of about 140 sq.m is excluded from the application site boundary (**Figure 2**).

2.2 SURROUNDING LAND USES

The surrounding areas currently have the following characteristics:

- i. predominantly rural residential in nature intermixed with car park/parking of vehicles, vacant land/structures and agricultural land, with scattered open storage/storage yards;
- ii. there are residential dwellings, mainly low-rise village house of two to three storeys high, in the vicinity with the nearest ones situated about 10m to its south;
- iii. to the east of the Site is an open nullah flanked by Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road and Kiu Hing Road;
- iv. to the immediate west of the Site is an agricultural land; and
- v. the Site is bounded by two local tracks to its south and north connecting Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road and the residential dwellings.

With regard to the YLS Development in the proximity, the surrounding areas in the long-run have the following characteristics:

- i. predominantly residential in nature with residential developments of different development intensities and supported by commercial uses, community and recreational facilities and the required public utilities;
- ii. A stepped building height and development intensity profile decreasing gradually from north to south is adopted, where medium and high-density developments are near Yuen Long New Town while low-density developments are near the rural setting and the Tai Lam Country Park in the south;

- iii. the Site is situated outside of and adjacent to the planning area of “LOHAS living” aiming to provide an urban experience that promotes a Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability in association with a plot ratio of 2.4-4 with natural and rural settings;
- iv. to the immediate north and west of the Site is an area zoned as “Residential – Zone 3” within the Third Phase of YLS Development, where the BHR is 60mPD; and
- v. road improvement works are proposed by the Government along Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road and Kiu Hing Road with the open nullah (subject to detailed design).

2.3 STATUTORY PLANNING CONTEXT

The Site is currently zoned as “V” and “OU (Rural Use)” under the OZP and the Applicant proposes to develop the Site into an RCHE. Such use is subsumed under the “Social Welfare Facility” use in town planning terms. In accordance with the Notes of the OZP, “Social Welfare Facility” falls into Column 2 use in “V” zone and “OU (Rural Use)” zone that may be permitted with or without conditions on application to the TPB.

The planning intention of “V” zone is to reflect existing recognized villages and areas of land considered suitable for village expansion. It also intends to concentrate village type development within this zone for a more orderly development pattern, efficient use of land and provision of infrastructures and services. More importantly, other commercial, community and recreational uses may be permitted on application to the TPB.

The planning intention of “OU (Rural Use)” zone, on the other hand, is to preserve the character of the rural area. Uses or developments compatible with the rural landscape, such as passive recreation uses and a selected range of rural uses, may be allowed on application to the TPB, with a view to upgrading or improving the area or providing support to the local communities.

According to the Notes of “V” zone of the OZP, no new development, or addition, alteration and/or modification to or redevelopment of an existing building (except development or redevelopment to those annotated with #) shall result in a total development and/or redevelopment in excess of a maximum building height of 3 storeys (8.23m) or the height of the building which was in existence on the date of the first publication in the Gazette of the notice of the interim development permission area plan, whichever is the greater.

As for “OU (Rural Use)” zone, no new development, or addition, alteration and/or modification to or redevelopment of an existing building (except development or redevelopment to ‘New Territories Exempted House’ or to those annotated with #) shall result in a total development and/or redevelopment in excess of a maximum plot ratio of 0.4 and a maximum building height of 3 storeys (9m), or the plot ratio and height of the building which was in existence on the date of the first publication in the Gazette of the notice of the interim development permission area plan, whichever is the greater.

Therefore, the maximum BH of 3 storeys and maximum plot ratio of 0.4 are not applicable to 'Social Welfare Facility' use. There is no development restriction on height, plot ratio and site coverage ratio on "Social Welfare Facility" use in both "V" zone and "OU (Rural Use)" zone.

2.4 LAND STATUS

With reference to preliminary land status check, Lot 669 S.A ss.2 RP and Lot 669 S.B RP in D.D.117 comprise Old Scheduled Agricultural Lots held under the Block Government Lease which contains the restriction that no structures are allowed to be erected without the prior approval of the Government.

There is an existing 2-storey structure erected at the centre of the Site which is held under License No. M22180. The Applicant will demolish the structure once the subject planning application is approved. The Applicant is well-noted that in the event of approval by the TPB and implementation of the project, it is required to apply to the Lands Department ("**LandsD**") for a land exchange to facilitate the proposed development.

2.5 PLANNING HISTORY

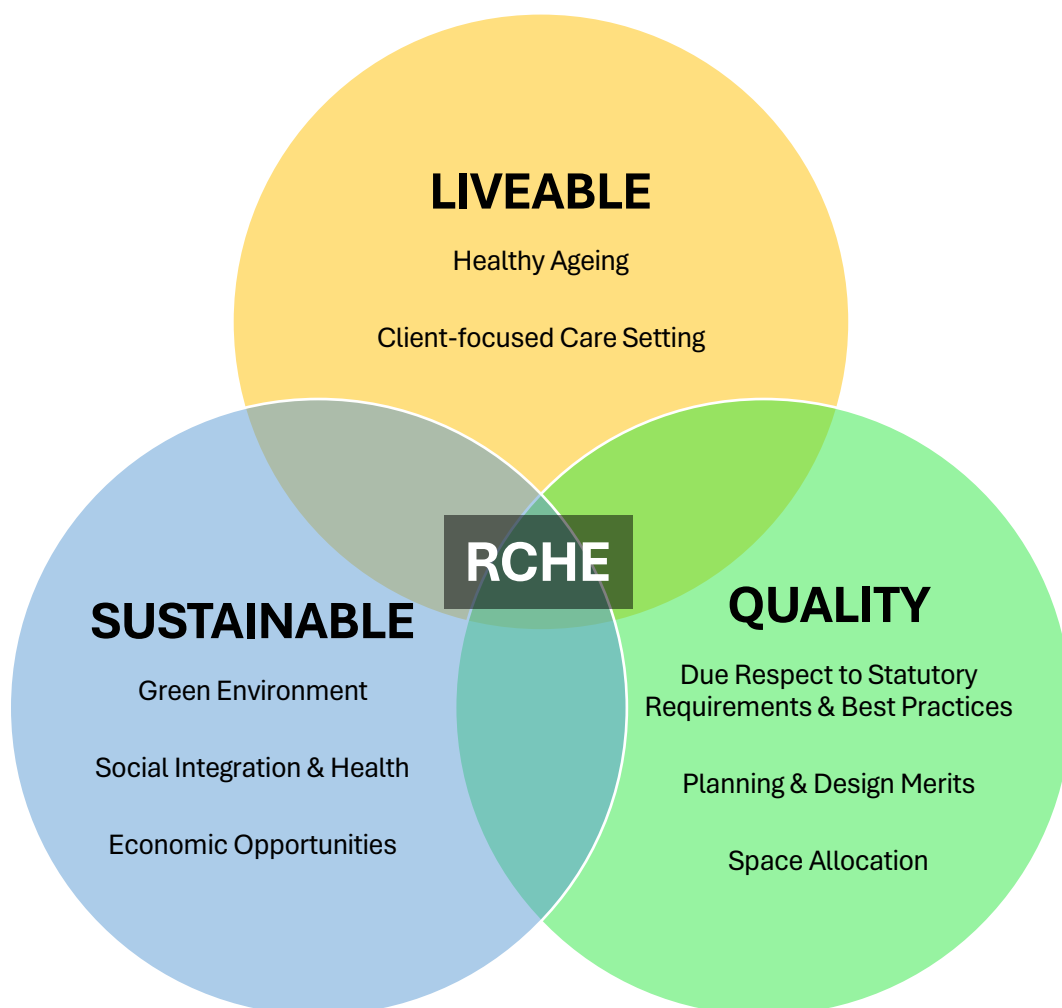
The Site does not involve any previous planning applications for development.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 PLANNING VISION

The Applicant holds a good intention to develop a **Liveable, sustainable, and Quality** RCHE with a view to meeting the present and future social, environmental and economic needs and aspirations of the community. With reference to the Best Practices in Design and Operation of Residential Care Home for the Elderly prepared by SWD, and in line with “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030”, a vision-driven strategic plan is formulated by the project proponent for guiding its private RCHE development projects in the territory. Concepts of sustainability, ability to use land resources wisely, and provision of better essential services and facilities for creating a more satisfying living environment are applied in the key guiding principles which shall serve as a reference of best practice for designing and shaping of the built environment of new private RCHEs in Hong Kong.

In addition, the above planning vision echoes with the positioning and vision of YLS development to create a **Sustainable, Green and Liveable** community providing enhanced infrastructure for the future development and improving the environment. The recommended guiding principles for planning a private RCHE are further discussed below: -



LIVEABLE

Healthy Ageing

RCHE residents are suffering from moderate to severe level of impairment and need assistance in most of their activities of daily living. The **overall well-being** of the residents should be promoted in the RCHE. They are entitled to the services necessary to enable them to achieve their optimum potential and to assist them to live happy and active lives.

Client-focused Care Setting

The RCHE should create a **safe, supportive, comfortable and home-like (non-clinical) environment**, create and promote individualized and personalized space for each resident, and maintain a safe environment. In general, the care setting should be designed to maintain the **privacy, autonomy, dignity, independence** etc. of the residents.

SUSTAINABLE

Green Environment

Greening opportunities should be maximized in the proposed RCHE in the forms of **podium gardens, soft and hard landscaped areas and edge planters**, etc. There should be a wide range of leisure and intellectual activities available for the residents to pursue which include exercise classes, indoor and outdoor gardening, therapies, reading, walking, etc.

Social Wellbeing & Integration

Different social spaces should be designed in the RCHE for small group socialization among residents, interest classes, training programmes and social activities by volunteer groups, etc. Families and volunteers should be involved in the caring of residents, since they could contribute significantly in meeting the social and emotional needs of the residents.

Economic Opportunities

Taking the advantage of **economic incentives** including the premium exemption and GFA exemption under the Incentive Scheme, the private developers should provide a quality RCHE with **planning and design merits**.

Due Respect to Statutory Requirements & Best Practices

The design, construction and basic provisions for the RCHE should not only comply with all relevant **statutory requirements**, including the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Person), but also refer to the Guidance Note for Enhanced Incentive Scheme; Best Practice in Design and Operation of RCHE; and Best Practices Guideline: Basic Provision Schedule – Specific Requirements for RCHE.

QUALITY

Planning & Design Merits

Under the Incentive Scheme, more **design flexibility** of the **purpose-built** RCHE premises in new private developments can be enjoyed. The private developers should make use of their innovation and market sense to provide more planning and design merits to genuinely benefit the residents and local community.

Space Allocation

Elders admitted to the RCHE are likely to stay there for a long time and quite often, for the rest of their lives. While outdoor activities are encouraged, it is most likely that due to frail conditions, the residents may stay inside the RCHE for most of the time. The design of **personal/private, semi-private and communal areas** in the RCHE should consider the characteristics of elderly residents and daily routines. **Sufficient area of floor space** for each resident should also be provided.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

The key development parameters of the development scheme are summarized in **Table 3.1** below:

Table 3.1 – Major Development Parameters	
Major Development Parameters	Proposed Scheme
Site Area	2,244 sq.m (about)
Total Gross Floor Area (GFA)	Not exceeding 12,000 sq.m (NB: The current scheme is about 8,940 sq.m with double GFA counting for G/F; GFA counting for covered car park, outdoor balconies and garden.)
Plot Ratio (PR)	4 (about)
Site Coverage	80% (about)
Building Height	46.75 mPD (about) (or not exceeding 31m for the absolute building height) (NB: Mean Street Level is +15.45mPD)
No. of Storeys	8
Total No. of beds	318 beds (or within a range from 300 to 360)
Provision of parking facilities:	
Private car parking spaces	18 (including 2 disabled car parking spaces)
Light Bus Space	1 (3m x 8m)
Loading & unloading bay	1 (3.5m x 7m)

3.2.1 Proposed Development

The proposed development is a block of 8-storey social welfare facility (RCHE) comprising 300-360 beds, car parking spaces, loading/unloading bays, communal open spaces, landscape area and an access road. Please refer to the Master Layout Plan, development scheme and section drawings in **Appendix 1** for details of the development proposal.

Pursuant to the Incentive Scheme (i.e. LAO PN 5/2023), eligible RCHE premises being exempted from payment of land premium are subject to a cap of no more than 12,000 sq.m in total GFA. The proposed development with a total GFA of not exceeding 12,000 sq.m complies with all requirements as may be imposed by SWD and all applicable ordinances, by-laws or regulations.

For building disposition, over 5m of horizontal buffer distance from the kerb side of Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road will be provided to ensure the future users will not be subject to unsatisfactory air quality according to Chapter 9 of the HKPSG. The building mass is also designed to maintain a 1.5-2.3m setback from the site boundary at the northern, western and southern sides for prescribed windows. Most of the dormitory units face southeast instead of directly to village houses at the south while sufficient buffer is allowed between the proposed development and the nearby village houses to ensure privacy of both the proposed RCHE and neighbouring residents.

It is noted that all the facilities provided for elderly will be situated at a height of not more than 24m above the ground floor, measuring vertically from the ground of the building to the floor of the premises in which the RCHE is to be situated, as pursuant to the requirements as set out in para 5.3 of Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) January 2020 (Revised Edition) (updated in March 2023) (“**CoP**”). Ancillary facilities of the proposed RCHE to which the residents normally do not have access including laundry and storage are designed to be situated as a height more than 24m above the ground in the proposed development scheme. (**Appendix 1** refers.)

With reference to the Schedule of Accommodation which is a consolidated brief of accommodation facilities and provisions taking into account the operational, spatial and locational requirements of the user of a 250-place RCHE recommended by SWD, various function areas will be well provided in the proposed RCHE. They include Accessible Toilet cum Shower Room to Dormitory Room, Accessible Toilet cum Shower Room attached to each Sick/Isolation/Quiet Room, End-of-life Care Room, Soiled Utility Room, Cleaner's Room, Clean Utility Room, Refuse Room, Conference Room, Female/Male Staff Changing Room and Rest Room cum Pantry, Staff Toilet/Bath Room and Toilet for Communal Use. Cleaner's Rooms and Clean Utility Rooms will be provided in separate function rooms for achieving better infection control. In terms of the room layout, only preferable designs of the dormitory with not more than 6 beds are adopted. ONE (1) sick bay with negative pressure is to be provided on each floor with dormitory rooms. As shown in the SoA table in **Appendix 2**, the proposed development scheme can provide most of the required provision in the SoA.

3.2.2 Road Upgrade

According to a gazettal (i.e. G.N.1637) by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (“**CEDD**”) on 19th March 2021, there would be proposed road works for reconstruction of sections of Kiu Hing Road and Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road under section 3(3) of the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Chapter 370). Such road works are scheduled to be completed in 2028.

Details of the said road works could be referred to the Final Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report of the “Planning and Engineering Study for Housing Sites in Yuen Long South – Investigation” commissioned by the Planning Department (“**PlanD**”) and CEDD. The proposal of upgrading Kiu Hing Road and Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road was presented. There will be a 1-lane carriageway of 5.2m wide on both sides of the nullah provided to form 1-way traffic circulating system. Kiu Hing Road will be converted to one-way southbound while Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road will be one-way northbound. Partial decking of the nullah would be required. 2.5m-wide footpath would be provided as well. Such upgrading works are adopted in the proposed development and are reflected in the Master Layout Plan at **Appendix 1**.

3.2.3 Site Classification

It is well-noted that Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road where the Site currently abuts is not a specified street of not less than 5m wide. Yet, with the widened Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road of 5.2m-wide, the Site will then abut to a specified street. The site classification determining the permitted development intensity will be subject to Regulation 19(3) of the Building (Planning) Regulations (“**B(P)R**”). The proposed development intensity under B(P)R will be further justified at the building plan submission stage.

3.2.4 Emergency Vehicular Access (“EVA”)

The Site will be provided with means of obtaining access thereto from a street and EVA in accordance with Regulations 5 and 41D of the B(P)R respectively. An internal EVA of 7.3m wide is provided connecting to Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road of not less than 5.2m wide upon widening. The EVA provision will comply with the standard as stipulated in Section 6, Part D of the Code of Practice for Fire Safety in Buildings 2011.

3.2.5 Parking Provisions

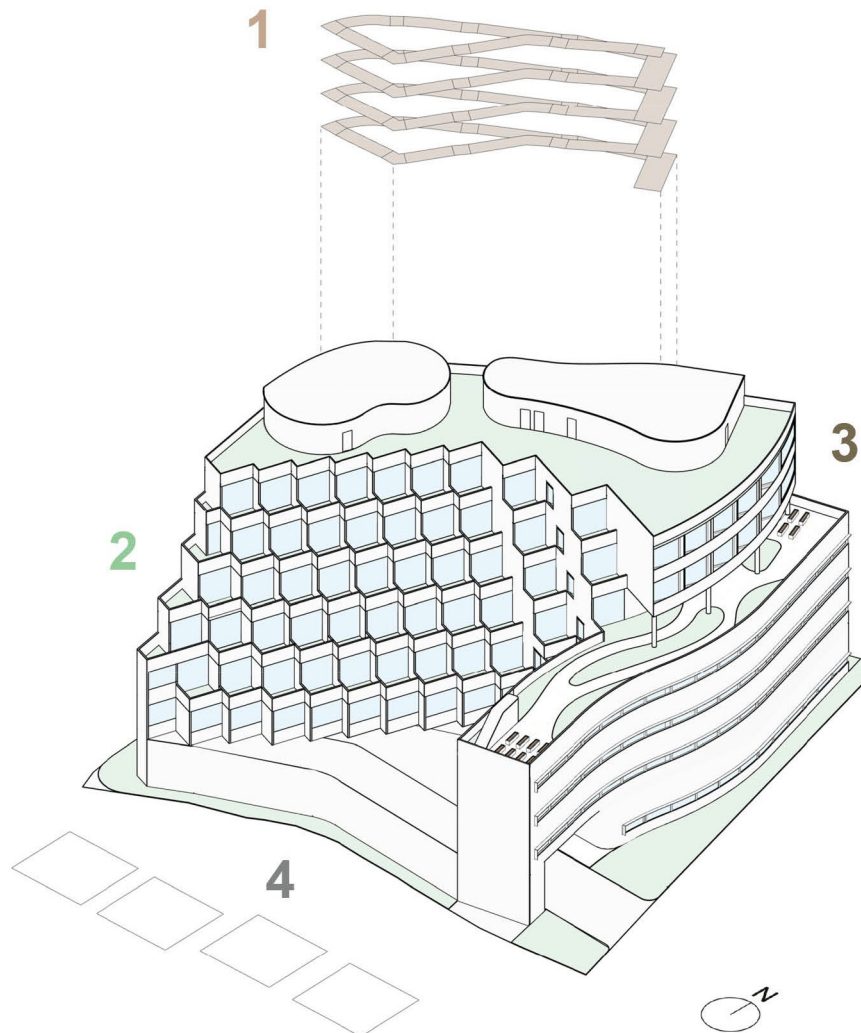
The Applicant proposes to provide within the Site 18 nos. of car parking spaces (including TWO(2) disabled car parking spaces), ONE(1) light bus space with an area of 3m in width and 8m in length, and ONE(1) loading & unloading area with an area of 3.5m in width and 7m in length. A road for EVA and internal access to the proposed development is designed. The location of ingress or egress to or from the Site for the passage of motor vehicles are illustrated in **Appendix 1**.

3.2.6 Open Space Provision

Please refer to **Appendix 3** for the Open Space Provision and **Appendix 4** for the Landscape Master Plan. With the design of (i) common gardens on G/F along the site boundary and at the centre of the Site, (ii) sky garden and horticulture green area on 4/F, and (iii) roof garden on R/F, a total of about 1301.9 sq.m of open space will be provided for active and passive recreation of the future users. According to Chapter 4 of the HKPSG, the provision of open space is required at a minimum of 1 sq.m per person. Having 318 residents living in the proposed development which requires an area of the planned communal open space of not less than 318 sq.m, the open space provision is far more than required.

3.3 PLANNING AND DESIGN MERITS

The Applicant has an intention to make good use of innovative building design and incorporate several design merits in the proposed RCHE as follows:



1

Barrier-free Leisure Green Path

A barrier-free leisure green path is designed at the north face of the building for the enjoyment of the elderly and their bona fide guests, visitors and invitees. This is a semi-outdoor green ramp connecting from 2/F all the way to 6/F without the need of taking the lift. A gentle gradient of 1:12 conforms with the “Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008”, so it could be accessed safely by wheelchair users. Slip-resistant surface and the width of ramp are also carefully considered to allow wheelchair users. The semi-outdoor walkway encourages the residents at each level to go out for exercise (i.e. jogging and morning walk) even when it is raining. To further motivate the elderly to do different kinds of exercise and activities, semi-open common gardens, small group activity room, rehabilitation rooms and multi-purpose treatment rooms are provided on 2/F-6/F of the proposed RCHE interlinked with each other by the barrier-free leisure green path.

To maximize planting and soft landscaping opportunity within the development, ornamental plantings, flowering shrubs, foliage plants and open lawns are proposed along the walkway where practicable. Associated with the serene and beautifully landscaped open space, the residents are encouraged to get outside for a walk, exercise, sunlight and fresh air instead of staying at their rooms all day.



2

Terraced Building Frontage & Individual Private Gardens

To avoid monotonous design and preserve the rural character of Tai Tong area, the proposed development has a terraced building frontage design which descends gradually from R/F to 1/F along the southern frontage of the building. The building block comprises stacks of cubes which provide multi-layered planters and landscaping opportunities to soften and green-up the visual outlook of the building. In view of the surroundings with the overall visual context of residential developments in the vicinity of the Site, this building design creates a more inviting and welcoming gesture to passers-by, and enhances the vibrancy of the pedestrian environment in the area. The aesthetic appeal forms all individual gardens as one and creates a sense of togetherness. This could further preserve the rural character in Tai Tong area and ensure a compatible building mass in the local setting, thereby maintaining a spatial relief for visual permeability and wind penetration in the surrounding area.

Besides, the orientation of most of the rooms is designed to be southeast-facing for optimal natural lighting and north-south cross ventilation, and reduction of energy consumption. Blocks of individual private gardens are formed at each room at various levels for the users' enjoyment of a relaxing, open and peaceful landscaped space with sufficient natural lighting and ventilation. As the residents rarely leave the RCHE, these private but safe outdoor spaces would drastically improve their living quality.



3

Sky Garden & Horticulture Green Area

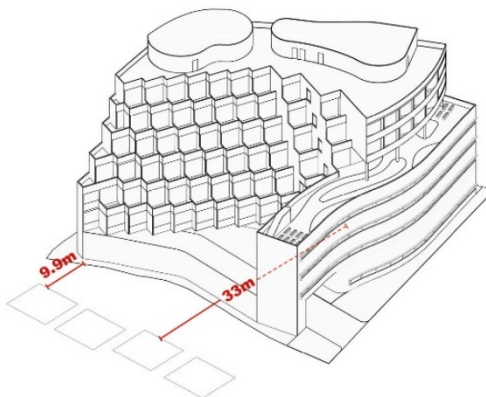
Horticultural therapy is promoted in the proposed RCHE in an attempt to help the elderly improve memory, cognitive abilities, task initiation, language skills, and socialization through passive or active interactions with the healing elements of nature. Sensory plants focusing on colour, texture, and fragrance will be carefully selected in landscaped gardens at various levels of the proposed RCHE. Sky garden and horticulture green area are purposefully designed on 4/F to provide the elderly with raised planters to grow crops on their own, and to enable an all-round horticultural experience for the elderly to see, study, touch and smell the plants. Horticultural therapists may be invited to regularly visit the proposed RCHE and carry out horticultural activities or therapeutic programmes. In order to secure a comfortable and home-like living environment for the elderly, enough multi-purpose area is also designed to carry out a variety of group activities.



4

Building Disposition

From air quality perspective, over 5m of horizontal buffer distance from the kerb side of Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Road upon widening will be provided to ensure the users will not be subject to unsatisfactory air quality. Besides, the building mass maintains a 1.5-2.3m setback from the site boundary at the northern, western and southern sides for prescribed windows. Most of the dormitory units face southeast instead of directly to village houses at the south while sufficient buffer is allowed between the proposed development and the nearby village houses to ensure privacy of both the proposed RCHE and neighbouring residents.



4. PLANNING JUSTIFICATIONS

4.1 SIMILAR PLANNING APPROVALS IN V ZONE

As shown in **Table 4.1**, those approved planning cases for RCHE and non-NTEH uses in “V” zone are mainly in compliance with a prevailing policy to achieve various good planning and policy objectives. Those cases are also considered to be related to social welfare facilities or educational uses. It is to justify that approval of the subject application would not set an undesirable precedent and encourage more non-NETH uses within the same “V” zone.

Table 4.1 – Selected Planning Approvals for Non-NTEH uses in “V” Zone

Case No.	Applied Use	Planning Justifications
Residential Care Home for the Elderly (RCHE)		
A/YL-PH/715 (05/06/2015)	Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) in Various Lots, D.D. 111 and adjoining Government Land, Wang Toi Shan Shan Tsuen, Pat Heung, Yuen Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applied development could nevertheless <u>provide residential care home services to the elderly in the local community.</u> • <u>Not incompatible with the surrounding developments</u> which included mainly village houses. • No. of storeys: 3
A/FSS/270 (06/09/2019) & A/FSS/276 (06/11/2020)	Proposed House and Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) and Minor Relaxation of Building Height Restriction in Various Lots in D.D. 51, Fanling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed RCHE were in low-rise and low-density character which were <u>not incompatible with the adjacent residential use.</u> • Based on the HKPSG, there was <u>a deficit of about 530 RCHE subsidized beds</u> in the Fanling/Sheung Shui area. • The proposed RCHE could <u>help address the shortfall for elderly facilities and meet the demand of ageing population in the community.</u> • The site fell within “V” zone but not covered by village ‘environ’ of any recognized village. • No. of storeys: 3
A/YL/263 (05/02/2021)	Proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) in “Village Type Development” Zone and an area shown as ‘Road’ in Various Lots in D.D. 120, Yuen Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was <u>sufficient land in the concerned “V” zone</u> to meet the Small House demand. • The proposed development could nevertheless <u>help address the shortfall in elderly facilities and meet the demand of ageing population in the community.</u> • <u>The Director of Social Welfare also supported</u> the application from social welfare perspective. • The proposed development was <u>not incompatible with the surrounding area.</u> • No. of storeys: 6

A/FSS/279 (29/10/2021)	Proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) and Flat and Minor Relaxation of Building Height (BH) Restriction in D.D. 52, Tin Ping Road, Sheung Shui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the application site was neither covered by ‘VE’ of any recognised village nor the VEA, and Small House application within the subject “V” zone would not be considered under the current Small House Policy, there was <u>still scope to utilise the land for other developments.</u> • The proposed RCHE could <u>help address the shortfall for elderly facilities and meet the demand of ageing population in the community</u> as there is a general deficit of residential care services for elderly in the Fanling/Sheung Shui area. • The proposed development would not cause significant visual impact on the surrounding environment. • No. of storeys: 4
A/SK-TMT/74 (01/04/2022)	Proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) in D.D. 257, Tsam Chuk Wan, Sai Kung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite that the bulk of the 6-storey building for the proposed RCHE was relatively large in a rural context, it was considered <u>not entirely incompatible with the landscape character of the surrounding area.</u> • It is estimated that there are <u>deficits of 30 and 1,448 RCHE subsidised beds</u> for the planned population in the Tai Mong Tsai and Tsam Chuk Wan areas within the OZP and the Sai Kung District respectively according to the requirements under the HKPSG. • The proposed RCHE will provide about 110 beds which could <u>help address the shortfall for elderly facilities and meet the demand of ageing population in the community.</u> • <u>DSW has no objection</u> to the proposed development from social welfare perspective. • No. of storeys: 6
A/FSS/288 (23/12/2022)	Proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) and Flat with Minor Relaxation of Building Height Restriction in Lots 834 and 838 RP in D.D. 52, Tin Ping Road, Sheung Shui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As advised by DLO/N, there is <u>no Small House application approved or currently being processed</u> in the Site or within the subject “V” zone. As such, approval of the current application would <u>not affect Small House development in the area.</u> • The proposed development with low to medium-rise (four to seven storeys) and medium-density (total PR of 2.38) character is considered <u>not incompatible with the adjacent existing residential and GIC uses</u> across Tin Pin Road. • No. of storeys: 7

A/ST/1008 (05/05/2023)	Proposed Public Vehicle Park (excluding container vehicle) cum Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for Elderly) Development, and proposed minor relaxation of Building Height Restriction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the latest estimation by PlanD, about 0.68ha (equivalent to 27 Small House sites) of land is available within the subject “V” zone excluding the subject site. <u>The land available is sufficient to meet the outstanding Small House applications.</u> • DSW has indicated that in view of the ageing population and ongoing demand for residential care services for the elderly, she has <u>no in-principle objection</u> to the proposed RCHE development from the service perspective. • The proposed PVP cum RCHE development is considered <u>not incompatible</u> with the urban residential setting in the surroundings. • No. of storeys: 7
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Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (RCHD)

A/YL-HT/975 (22/04/2016)	Proposed Social Welfare Facility (Rehabilitation Home for Persons with Mental Disabilities) in D.D. 124, Shek Po Tsuen, Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the development is not entirely in line with the planning intention of the “V” zone, it could provide RCHE services to persons with disabilities and may <u>warrant sympathetic consideration.</u> • Adverse environmental, traffic, drainage, hygiene and landscape impacts from the RCHD on the surrounding areas were not envisaged. • No. of storeys: 3
A/NE-KTS/446 (03/02/2017)	Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for Persons with Disabilities) in D.D. 94, Hang Tau Village, Sheung Shui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the development was not entirely in line with the planning intention of the “Village Type Development” (“V”) zone and there was insufficient land within the “V” zone to meet the Small House demand in Hang Tau Village, the applied development could <u>provide residential care home services to person with disabilities.</u> • The residential nature of the RCHD within the subject New Territories Exempted Houses was <u>not incompatible with the surrounding developments which were mainly village houses.</u> • No. of storeys: 3

A/YL-TT/391 (03/02/2017)	Proposed Social Welfare Facility (Residential Home for Persons with Disabilities) in D.D. 118, Nam Hang Tsuen, Yuen Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the RCHD was not entirely in line with the planning intention of the “Village Type Development” zone, it could provide residential care home services to person with disabilities and might <u>warrant sympathetic consideration</u>. • The subject RCHD, involving conversion of 5 existing 3-storey New Territories Exempted Houses, was considered <u>not incompatible with the surrounding areas which were mainly village houses</u>. • No. of storeys: 3
A/KTN/73 (05/02/2021)	Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for Disabled and Ex-mental Illness Persons) in “Village Type Development” Zone in Various Lots in D.D. 95, Sheung Shui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the applied use was not entirely in line with the planning intention of the “Village Type Development” (“V”) zone, there was <u>sufficient land within the “V” zone to meet the outstanding Small House applications</u> of Ho Sheung Heung and the applied use could provide residential care home services to person with disabilities. • The applied use was <u>not incompatible with the surrounding developments</u>. • No. of storeys: 3
Day Care Centre for Elderly, Early Education and Training Centre		
A/YL-PS/465 (19/06/2015)	Proposed Religious Institution (Church) and Social Welfare Facility (Day Care Centre for Elderly, Early Education and Training Centre, and Parents Resource Centre) in D.D. 124, Ping Shan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant had applied for the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses and the Director of Social Welfare supported the provision of the social welfare facilities at the site in principle. • <u>SWD supports the application</u> for the provision of the proposed day care centre for the elderly, early education and training centre and parents resource centre on the site in principle from the welfare point of view. • No. of storeys: 5
School		
A/YL-MP/245 (22/01/2016)	Proposed School (Kindergarten) in Various Lots in D.D. 104, Yuen Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed kindergarten would help to <u>serve the need of the local community</u>. • It was considered <u>not incompatible with the surrounding land uses</u> which comprised village houses, vehicle parks and repair workshop. • No. of storey: 1

A/YL-MP/286 (15/11/2019) Proposed School in Government Land in D.D. 105, Mai Po San Tsuen, Mai Po, Yuen Long, New Territories

- According to DLO/YL, LandsD, there is no Small House application being processed/ approved at the Site.
- The proposed school, located within the village setting of Mai Po San Tsuen and Mai Po Lo Wai, is considered not incompatible with the surrounding areas which comprise mainly village houses, agricultural land, vehicle parks, ponds etc.
- It would help to serve the need of the local community and was considered not incompatible with the surrounding land uses.
- No. of storeys: 2

Seminary

A/HSK/15 (17/08/2018) Proposed Religious Institution (Redevelopment of Seminary) in Various lot in D.D. 121, 130 Hung Uk, Yuen Long

- The applicant had no intention to develop the site into New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs) and the owner of the remaining portion of the site had given consent to the applicant to use that portion of the site for the proposed use.
- The land available in the “V” zone can accommodate the outstanding Small House application of 76 houses and the 10-Year Small House demand of Kiu Tai Wai and Hung Uk Tsuen.
- No. of storeys: 2

A/YL-ST/560 (20/03/2020) Proposed Religious Institution (Church) in “Village Type Development” Zone, Lot 3355 in D.D. 102, San Tin, Yuen Long

- Although the proposed use is not entirely in line with the planning intention of the “V” zone, according to the applicant, the previous church on the Site which the applicant owns has served the local community since 1962.
- Its scale and nature, which is to provide religious and community services to the neighbourhood, are considered not incompatible with the surrounding areas which are predominantly rural in character intermixed with residential dwellings and vehicle parks.
- No. of storey: 1

To summarize, key planning considerations on non-NTEH uses in “V” zone are observed as follows:

Key Planning Considerations	Proposed RCHE	
i. Land use compatibility	The proposed RCHE is residential in nature which is not incompatible with the adjacent residential use.	Satisfied ✓
ii. Development intensity	The proposed 8-storey high building is compatible with the YLS planned residential development (i.e. Residential – Zone 3) with a BHR of 60 mPD in the vicinity.	Satisfied ✓
iii. V zone demand and supply	While the proposed RCHE was not entirely in line with the planning intention of “V” zone, it could provide residential care home services to the elderly. The Applicant has no intention to develop the site into NTEHs.	Satisfied ✓
iv. No in-principle objection from SWD	The Applicant will request SWD for supporting the proposed RCHE under the Incentive Scheme which encourages private developers to self-finance to build quality RCHE premises on their own land, and design to comply with the statutory and licensing requirements of the participation in the Incentive Scheme.	

4.2 IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON RCHE PROVISION

With reference to the Chief Executive's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" to the Legislative Council on 25th October 2023, *"in the face of an ageing population, the Government formulates cross-sectoral policies and initiatives to cater for the needs of the elderly. Over the past year, the Government has strengthened support for ageing in place and lifted the quality and quantity of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs). Examples include expanding the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients, regularising the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly, enhancing the Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Home for the Elderly Premises in New Private Developments, providing more residential care places for the elderly, importing care workers from outside Hong Kong, commencing the Review of Manpower for Healthcare Services in Residential Care Homes, etc. Considerable achievements have been made."*

The proposed RCHE is in line with the Government's policy to support and encourage the provision of RCHE to meet the pressing demand of the community. Approval of the application will contribute additional RCHE bed spaces to the community by 2028.

4.3 ALLEVIATING THE LONG PRESSING DEMAND FOR RCHE PLACES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

With reference to the official statistics of SWD, as at the end of January 2024, the Government could only provide 38,626 subvented or contract RCHE places and those on the waiting list amounted to 16,756 applicants. There are concerns about the shortfall in RCHE places particularly in districts with a higher proportion of elderly people but relatively fewer available RCHE places. The Government's current projections estimated a shortfall of approximately 5,000 to 10,000 services places were based on service statistics of SWD and the waitlisting situation of subsidized long-term care services from 2012 to 2015. While more updated projection data are lacking, a 10-year projection of demand for RCS places and different types of community care services has been requested by members of the Legislative Council.⁸

As a matter of fact, about half of the residents of RCHEs and scheduled nursing homes in Hong Kong are recipients of subsidised residential care services, with about 90% of their accommodation and care expenses subsidised by the Government, while the other half are non-subsidised residents.⁹ Though the waiting time for different needy elderly would vary because of their different preferences or choice of homes, the average waiting time for a subvented or contract RCHE place is 16 months, whereas an EBPS (Enhanced Bought Place Scheme) placement does not come within short notice and the average waiting time is 4 months, which is still a long time for those who have urgent needs to live in an institution.¹⁰ In fact, the occupancy rate of subvented homes remains high all the time, as the expenditures basically are all shouldered by the Government. Thus, the only option for the elderly is to live in private RCHEs either for long or as a transitional measure before their chances for subvented or contract RCHEs come.

⁸ Source: LC Paper No. CB(2)535/2023(05)

⁹ Source: LC Paper No. CB(2)859/2022(02)

¹⁰ Source: Social Welfare Department (last revision date: 09 February 2024):

https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvic/elderly/elderly_info/elderly_ah_sps/elderlysp/rcse/index.html

The private sector plays an important role in the supply of RCHE places in Hong Kong. As at end of June 2023, nearly 60% of the provision of residential care services for the elderly comes from private homes and self-financing homes and contract homes (non-subsidized places). Yet, since the introduction of the Incentive Scheme in 2003, LandsD has only received 7 applications, and out of them 6 obtained SWD's support and the remaining one is temporarily put on hold due to a lawsuit over the title of the site. Among the applications obtained SWD's support, 4 have executed the land lease and were exempted from land premium payment.¹¹ The market response to the Incentive Scheme appears to be limited to a few projects. In view of the pressing demand for residential care services for the elderly over the territory, especially for quality ones in the private sector, the Applicant's proposal for the construction of purpose-built private RCHE could contribute to address the shortfall of RCHE places.

4.4 PROVISION OF A QUALITY RCHE IN THE DISTRICT

As at 31 December 2023, there are 42 private homes providing 994 and 3,055 subsidized and non-subsidized care-and-attention home places respectively in Yuen Long.¹² Please refer to **Figure 3** for the location of the private RCHEs in Yuen Long. It is noteworthy that most of the private RCHEs (i.e. 31 out of 42) are clustered in Yuen Long town centre. Four homes are located along Castle Peak Road at Ping Shan and Hung Shui Kiu while another three homes are at Kam Tin. As a matter of fact, most of the private RCHEs in Yuen Long are situated in shopping arcades, ground floor shops, podium floor of residential developments or village houses with very limited common areas or greenery open space, let alone purpose-built design for an RCHE.

There are three private RCHEs, namely Pui Hong Kui, On Hong Home For Aged Limited and United Sanatorium, located to the south of Yuen Long Highway in Tai Tong which are relatively close to the Site. Nevertheless, within the catchment of Tai Tong, the three RCHEs could only cater for 168 elders at most. These three private RCHEs do not belong to those with good quality and only On Hong Home for the Aged is an Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) Home.

Worse still, most of the current private RCHEs have been operating for years and the built environment is dilapidated. Some are unable to meet the service requirements in terms of staffing and space standard. Yet, large-scale renovation is not feasible because of the difficulty in relocating the live-in elderly, leaving them no choice but to stay at the low-quality homes. It is a hard fact that Yuen Long is having limited supply of high-quality private RCHE at present.

The proposed RCHE, on the contrary, is a purpose-built premises with sufficient landscaping opportunities and user-friendly design. Having all licensing requirements and the "Best Practices in Design and Operation of Residential Care Home for the Elderly" developed by the SWD to be duly complied with, in addition to the fulfilment of the standard provision of individual facilities derived from the SoA as recommended by SWD, the proposed RCHE will have a better quality in terms of services, living space per residents and living environment, etc.

¹¹ Source: LC Paper No. CB(2)535/2023(05)

¹² Source: Social Welfare Department (last revision date: 9 February 2024): https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/elderly/elderly_info/elderly_ah_sps/elderlysp/rcse/

Moreover, the proposed RCHE could offer a specialized service in a niche market. Due to the statutory requirement of providing accommodation within shared rooms, subvented and contract homes could only provide 4 to 8-person rooms within the premises. For those who want privacy, the proposed RCHE would be a suitable option for them because all accommodation in the premises is designed as single cubicles with partitions, while 1 to 2-person rooms are purposely designed on the upper dormitory levels to cater different market needs.

4.5 BETTER UTILIZATION OF LAND & IMPROVING EXISTING DEGRADED LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Situated within “V” zone under the OZP where village type development is presumed, the Site is currently left vacant and vegetated because the Applicant has no intention to release it for Small House development nor use it for temporary purposes under a short-term waiver. Instead, to be in line with the Government policies to lift the supply of RCHE places and to ensure the scarce land resource is better utilized, the Applicant intends to provide a much-needed community facility (i.e. an RCHE) in a timely manner for the benefit of all parties concerned including the elderly with their family members in the local community and associated workers.

Besides, the existing living environment surrounding the Site is degraded. Predominantly rural residential in nature, there are intermixing of brownfield operations including open storage yards, warehouses, rural industrial uses, agricultural land and livestock farms. Most of them are housed in temporary structures. The land is under-utilized and problems such as pollution and industrial/ residential interface problems are observed. Thanks to the impetus of YLS development, the use of brownfield sites will be optimized for housing and other uses, infrastructure will be provided to cater for the future development, the existing rural environment will be improved and a sustainable and liveable neighbourhood will be created. The proposed development which is situated at the fringe of YLS development will also act as an important social welfare facility to serve the future community. Overall, the proposed development and the YLS development will totally improve the existing degraded living environment of the local community.

4.6 HIGH COMPATIBILITY WITH YLS DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned above, the Site is located right next to but outside of the boundary of YLS development. Referring to the “Planning and Engineering Study for Housing Sites in Yuen Long South – Investigation” commissioned by PlanD and CEDD, the proposed development is considered highly compatible with YLS development with the following reasons:

- i. YLS will be an extension of Yuen Long New Town. Through the proposed transport infrastructure, the Site is more directly and conveniently connected to the town centre as well as Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area. As such, the service catchment of the proposed RCHE will not only be the adjacent village communities and new population in YLS, but also be cross-district.

- ii. The comprehensive housing development in YLS is estimated to bring about a total population of about 101,200 to the area after year 2030. Associated with a large influx of new population in the vicinity, the proposed RCHE the Site with hundreds of bed space is anticipated to provide the community with quality elderly services and alleviate the pressing local RCHE demand pressure.
- iii. Being adjacent to “Residential – Zone 3” with a BHR of 60 mPD and PR of 2.4-4 under the Revised RODP, the proposed 8-storey high building (i.e. 46.75 mPD) with a PR of 4 is compatible with the YLS development in terms of development intensity.
- iv. From urban design perspectives, the proposed development possesses people-oriented designs including a terraced building frontage descending gradually from R/F to 1/F with landscaping opportunities. It echoes harmoniously with the visual backdrop of the medium-intensity residential developments in “Residential – Zone 3” all the way to the low-density and low-rise (2-3 storeys) buildings and village housing. Building setback and buffer are also proposed near villages. In this connection, instead of an urban-rural segregation, the proposed development successfully acts as a connector to blend in and strengthen the connectivity of Yuen Long South with the surroundings.
- v. Since the YLS development will provide different housing types, different social classes are anticipated to be living in the same community. The proposed RCHE could support all walks of life by providing a variety of room types ranging from affordable single cubicles to single/double-person rooms.

5. TECHNICAL JUSTIFICATIONS

5.1 NO ADVERSE TRAFFIC IMPACT

Since the proposed RCHE is tentatively scheduled for the completion in 2028, a Traffic Impact Assessment (“TIA”) for the design year 2031 has been carried out to assess the possible traffic impacts to the surrounding road networks. It shows the operational performance of the critical junctions would all operate with ample capacities during AM off-peak and PM off-peak hours in both 2031 reference and design year. Please refer to **Appendix 5** for the TIA.

There are no parking standards for RCHE as stipulated in HKPSG. Sufficient internal transport facilities will be provided within the Site in satisfying the operational needs of the RCHE development. All in all, a maximum of 360 RCHE places will be provided within the Site as proposed. The induced traffic is minimal and not excessive. Hence, no adverse traffic impact to the surrounding road network is anticipated and that the proposed development is considered as acceptable from traffic perspective.

5.2 NO ADVERSE VISUAL IMPACT

Please refer to the Visual Impact Assessment (“VIA”) in **Appendix 6**. The Applicant intends to develop an 8-storey RCHE building at the Site. The public viewers in the vicinity are likely to be the surrounding local villagers, pedestrian and car drivers on Wong Ngai Tun Tsuen Road and Kiu Hing Road. The Site mostly lies within “V” zone with rural fringe character, surrounded by low-rise village houses and intermixed with car parks, vacant land, open storage and agricultural land. Considering the planned “Residential – Zone 3” with a BHR of 60 mPD and PR of 2.4-4 under the Revised RODP, the proposed building height of 8 storeys is considered compatible with the surrounding context where visual penetration and an open sky view are allowed. The proposed development would not block the view corridor and breezeway running north-south along the existing nullah.

In fact, the terraced building frontage design of the proposed RCHE development comprises stacks of cubes arranged in a terraced and undulated form that creates a series of “peaks and valleys” descending gradually from R/F to 1/F. With the landscaping opportunities being maximized at the terraced building frontage, hard edges are softened and the building mass seamlessly blends in with the surrounding. The building echoes harmoniously with visual backdrop of the medium-intensity residential developments in “Residential – Zone 3” all the way to the low-density and low-rise (2-3 storeys) buildings and village housing which enhances urban-rural integration.

Hence, there is no significant adverse visual impact arising from the proposed development. Instead of creating adverse visual impact, the proposed RCHE will enhance the visual quality and add visual interests. The selection of materials and colour schemes of the building can be further explored in the detail design stage to ensure the building can be perfectly blended in with the natural landscape. The applicant will also keep exploring the opportunities for further improvement in terms of visuality at the detailed design stage, such as Innovative design of building form; quality outdoor spaces; sufficient landscape treatment and outdoor greenery and furniture; and material and colour.

5.3 NO ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

5.3.1 Air Quality

Please refer to **Appendix 7** for the Environmental Assessment. During construction phase, the proposed development will involve relatively small-scale demolition, site formation, foundation and superstructure works which are expected to generate insignificant air quality impact to the surrounding area. Those impacts could be minimised by implementation of general mitigation measures for construction sites. Hence, no adverse impact on air quality to the surrounding area is envisaged.

During operation phase, air quality impact arising from the operation of carpark and kitchen within the proposed development is not expected. The carpark is for private use only and minimal traffic volume along the internal roads is anticipated. The exhaust outlet of the kitchen will be located away from the nearby sensitive uses and the best practical control measures recommended in EPD's Guideline "Control of Oily Fume and Cooking Odour from Restaurants and Food Business" will be adopted to minimize the gaseous and odour emissions from kitchen operation. On the other hand, the proposed development will be located away from the nearby major roads with sufficient buffer distance provided in between the proposed development and major roads nearby in accordance with the requirements stipulated in Chapter 9 of the HKPSG to ensure the users will not be subject to unsatisfactory air quality.

5.3.2 Noise

Please refer to **Appendix 7** for the Environmental Assessment. During the construction phase, with the implementation of practical mitigation measures including good site management practices, use of quieter construction methods and equipment, and use of movable noise barriers and noise enclosures, construction noise impact to the surrounding area would be minimized.

During the operation phase, mitigation measures in the form of acoustic window (baffle type) have been proposed to mitigate the road traffic noise impact to the proposed development. Potential fixed noise sources within the proposed development shall be properly designed to meet the relevant noise criteria as stipulated in Chapter 9 of the HKPSG. Provisions shall be made to control the fixed noise sources by suitable at source noise control measures such as silencers and acoustic linings when necessary.

5.3.3 Water Quality

Please refer to **Appendix 7** for the Environmental Assessment. During the construction phase, appropriate water pollution control measures (e.g. use of sedimentation tank and provision of chemical toilets) will be implemented on site to handle the construction site runoff and wastewater generated to prevent water pollution. Discharge license will be applied and followed by the Contractors. No adverse impact on water quality impact to the surrounding area is expected.

During the operation phase, proper drainage and sewerage systems will be designed and installed to connect with the existing public drains and sewers. Hence, site runoff and wastewater discharged from the site will be handled properly. No insurmountable water quality impact is anticipated.

5.3.4 Waste Management

Please refer to **Appendix 7** for the Environmental Assessment. Construction and demolition (C&D) materials, general refuse and chemical waste are expected to be generated during construction phase while general refuse, chemical waste and clinical waste are expected to be generated during operation phase. The amount of the above-mentioned wastes is expected to be small. All wastes will be properly handled and recycled in accordance with relevant waste management regulations and guidelines. Practice of avoiding and minimizing waste generation and waste recycling will be adopted to be in line with Government's policy on waste minimisation. Hence, no adverse environmental impact due to waste management is envisaged.

5.4 NO ADVERSE SEWERAGE IMPACT

Please refer to **Appendix 8** for the Sewerage Impact Assessment. Assessment results revealed that the existing sewerage system has sufficient capacity to cater for the sewage generation from the Proposed Development and the surrounding catchment areas. The closest manhole of the public sewerage system which is located approximately 27m away from the Project Site boundary across the existing nullah. A 2.4m headroom (above the nullah) will be reserved for the sewerage connection across the existing nullah to avoid impact on the nullah's drainage capacity. Adverse sewerage impact is not expected, and thus no upgrading or improvement works are required.

5.5 NO ADVERSE DRAINAGE IMPACT

The proposed development has a site area of approximately 2,244m² and is an 8-storey building consisting of car parks, kitchen, rehabilitation areas, dormitories, multi-purpose rooms, and utility rooms. 24% of the Site is paved before development and about 80% (i.e. being the site coverage) of the Site will be paved after development. The flow characteristics before and after development will be the same, where the runoff will be discharged to the nullah to the West of the Site via existing village drainage. In view of the change in the surface characteristics being minimal with no significant change in the flow characteristics after development, adverse drainage impact is expected to be negligible.

5.6 NO ADVERSE LANDSCAPE IMPACT

The Site is currently hard-paved by concrete and is covered by patchy wild grasses and weedy vegetation. No tree is identified within the Site while some existing trees and shrubs are found outside the eastern edge of the Site on the government land. Felling of any tree within the Site is not involved. It is confirmed that no Old and Valuable Trees (“OVT”) and protected species can be identified as per the DEVB TC(W) No. 5/2020.

In order to improve the environmental quality of the Site with no existing tree, there is a good intention to take an integrated landscape design framework in the proposed development by providing sufficient greening with active and passive recreation at open spaces on G/F, 4/F and R/F. Please refer to the Landscape Master Plan in **Appendix 4**.

On ground level, making good use of the 1.5-2.3m building setback from the site boundary, landscaping opportunity is taken for edge treatment. Along the southern edge of the Site, shrub planting is proposed to soften the hard edge of the proposed development and minimize the visual impact to the pedestrian and residents to the immediate south of the Site. Besides, outdoor seating facilities with suitable paving materials will be chosen for the enjoyment of the residents at the common and private gardens along the western, northern and eastern boundary on G/F. Grass paving is formed at both sides of the entrance. No tree or shrub planting is proposed here in avoidance of any blockage of traffic sightline.

On 4/F, sky garden and horticulture green area are purposefully designed to provide the elderly with raised planters located at the southern and northern ends. They can grow crops on their own and enjoy an all-round horticultural experience to see, study, touch and smell the plants. Ornamental shrubs are planted and bench seatings are designated along the edge of the sky garden for passive recreation. There are also open lawns at the centre of the sky garden for active recreation such as tai chi, jogging and morning walk. The flooring materials and footpath dimensions are carefully designed to allow wheelchair users.

On R/F, shrubs and ornamental plantings are proposed along the whole edge of this floor plate. This could further soften the building edge and enhance the streetscape amenity to the benefit of the general public.

All in all, ornamental plantings, flowering shrubs, foliage plants and open lawns are to be planted where practicable. Visual amenity of the proposed development is expected to be enhanced. Landscaping provided along the site boundary could further form soft edges which could blend in well with the surrounding environment. All plantings will be maintained with due care by the management office of the proposed RCHE.

6. CONCLUSION

This section 16 planning application is submitted to seek support from Town Planning Board for the proposed development of a Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) of 8 storeys in “Village Type Development” and “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Rural Use” zones within the Approved Tai Tong Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL-TT/20 at Lot 669 S.A ss.2 RP (part) and Lot 669 S.B RP (part) in D.D. 117, Wong Nai Tun Tsuen, Yuen Long.

This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed development of RCHE would help meet the growing residential care service demand of the aging population in Yuen Long as well as other districts in echo with the prevailing government policy support for elderly care services. It could also help to shorten the waiting time for quality RCHE places. The proposed development is fully justified on the following grounds: -

- i. A planning merit to provide more residential care services in territorial and district levels to meet the genuine need and to shorten the waiting time for quality RCHE places;
- ii. Fulfilment of the recommended guiding principles in developing a Liveable, Sustainable, and Quality RCHE with a view to meeting the present and future social, environmental and economic needs and aspirations of the community (see table below);
- iii. Various design features/merits such as sufficient provision of multi-purpose area and open space in a purpose-built RCHE;
- iv. The unique design merits of Barrier-free Leisure Green Path, Terraced Building Frontage & Individual Private Gardens, Sky Garden & Horticulture Green Area, and Building Disposition further enhancing the service quality;
- v. Not incompatible in terms of land use nature, development scale and intensity but enhancing the connectivity between the adjacent YLS development and rural setting of Tai Tong; and
- vi. No adverse environmental, landscape, sewerage, drainage, visual and traffic impacts.

To conclude, the proposed development is fully justified in terms of planning, visual and traffic considerations and various planning and design merits. In view of the above, members of the TPB are respectfully requested to favourably consider the present application in support of the additional social welfare facility in form of RCHE by the Applicant in Hong Kong.

LIVEABLE

Healthy Ageing

The proposed RCHE not only provides the elderly with basic residential care services, but also cares about their mental health and social life. The proposed innovative Barrier-free Leisure Green Path, Individual Private Gardens, Sky Garden and Horticulture Green Area together with sufficient multi-purpose area will encourage the elderly to go out for exercise and social activities, promoting their **overall well-being**.

Client-focused Care Setting

The proposed RCHE possesses the design of single cubicles and single/double-person dormitory rooms (many with Individual Private Gardens) which create **safe, supportive, comfortable and home-like (non-clinical) environment** with individualized and personalized space for each resident. The **privacy, autonomy, dignity, independence** etc. of the residents are maintained.

SUSTAINABLE

Green Environment

Greening opportunities are maximized in the proposed RCHE in the forms of **podium gardens, soft and hard landscaped areas and edge planters**, etc. A Sky Garden & Horticulture Green Area is designed on 4/F for horticultural therapy while the Individual Private Gardens at multiple levels provide enough greening opportunities.

Social Wellbeing & Integration

Different social spaces are designed in the RCHE for small group socialization among residents, such as the Sky Garden & Horticulture Green Area on 4/F, and the Barrier-free Leisure Green Path interlinking the multi-purpose area and open space. Families and volunteers are more encouraged to visit the elderly.

Economic Opportunities

Taking the advantage of **economic incentives** including the premium exemption and GFA exemption under the Incentive Scheme, the Applicant makes good use of the land resources and provides a quality RCHE with **planning and design merits**.

QUALITY

Due Respect to Statutory Requirements & Best Practices

The design, construction and basic provisions for the proposed RCHE will comply with all relevant **statutory requirements**, including the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Person), and will follow the Guidance Note for Enhanced Incentive Scheme; Best Practice in Design and Operation of RCHE; and Best Practices Guideline: Basic Provision Schedule – Specific Requirements for RCHE.

Planning & Design Merits

Under the Incentive Scheme, more **design flexibility** of the **purpose-built RCHE premises** in new private developments can be enjoyed. The Applicant makes use of the innovation and market sense to provide more planning and design merits to genuinely benefit the residents and local community.

Space Allocation

The Applicant considers the characteristics of elderly residents and daily routines when designing the **personal/private, semi-private and communal areas** in the proposed RCHE. **Sufficient area of floor space** for each resident is also provided.