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The Conservancy Association

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26th October 2010

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

By Fax: 28770245/25228426

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Comments on the Section 16 Application No. A/YL-NSW/197

The Conservancy Association (CA) OBJECTS to Section 16 Application A/YL-NSW/197.

While the supplementary information mentions that the proposal would be compatible with the development context in district level, it seems to be merely a means to divert spotlights elsewhere but fails to take account of landscape characteristics in the northern part which comprise fishponds. The newly proposed trivial reduction in development density would not meet the explanatory statement for “U” zone which specifies that *“the development intensity should take into account the urban type developments immediately to the west of the “U” zone and the rural characteristics of the area to its north”*. Meanwhile, such residential development in large scale will not be compatible with the surrounding landscape comprising rural housings in Tung Shing Lei, even though the proposal claims to drive away industrial industries which are often regarded as eyesores.

The application still lacks supplementary information to address ecological concerns raised by AFCD. It should be reiterated that the water feature suggested by the applicant could not be considered as ecological mitigation measures because it appears to be a private landscaped pool rather than a mitigation area with detailed conservation management plan. It deviates the planning intention of Nam Sang Wai Outline Zoning

Plan (OZP) which states that “*the planning intention of the area further away from the fish ponds is to protect the ecological integrity of the wetland ecosystem, and prevent development that would have a negative off-site disturbance impact on the ecological value of fish ponds*”. CA still sticks to our previous suggestion that a detailed ecological impact assessment (EcoIA) equipped with ecological baseline is definitely necessary.

Reducing the residential blocks from 149 to 143 can hardly prevent obstruction of major bird flight which falls exactly on the northern site as the development density remains large in scale. Providing additional 6 gaps for birds’ flight is merely applicant’s wishful thinking as birds might not necessarily enable to identify such flight corridor. More importantly, the applicant still fails to respond to the comment from AFCD as the building height with no more than 24mPD did conflict with flight paths which is 15-20m above ground according to the applicant.

CA should reiterate that the proposal would continue to pose threat to the adjacent active egretty at Tung Shing Lei according to AFCD research¹. Local studies² have shown that the location of bird nesting habitat and foraging ground, like fishponds, is closely related, with the average distance of 2km³. Simply filling the existing ponds for development without realizing this important ecological linkage would pose the adjacent Tung Shing Lei egretty into vulnerable condition.

Witnessing various development plans in Nam Sang Wai area, CA would like to add that this project would generate cumulative wetland loss. Town Planning Board should not approve more wetland loss Nam Sang Wai area.

Yours faithfully
Ng Hei Man
Campaign Officer

¹ Lee W. H. E., Wong, Y.H., Chow, K.L.G. & Lai, C.C. (2007). Review of egrettries in Hong Kong. *AFCD Hong Kong Biodiversity 13*. http://www.afcd.gov.hk/tc_chi/publications/publications_con/files/IssueNo14.pdf

² Wong, L.C., Corlett, R.T., Young, L. and Lee, J.S.Y. (1999). Foraging flights of nestling egrets and herons at a Hong Kong Egretty, South China. *Waterbirds 22*: 424-434.
<http://www.hku.hk/ecology/staffhp rtc/corlett-pdf/Captain-foraging-1999.pdf>

³ Wong, L.C., Lam, W.Y. and Ades, W.J. (2009). *Ecology of the birds in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden.