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The Conservancy Association

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29th November 2013

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

By e-mail: tpbpd@pland.gov.hk

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Comments on the Section 16 Application No. A/YL-NSW/225

The Conservancy Association (CA) OBJECTS to Section 16 Application A/YL-NSW/225.

According to Town Planning Board Guideline No. 12B, the application site falls within Wetland Buffer Area (WBA), but currently zoning the site as “Village Type Development” would defeat the intention of WBA to “*protect the ecological integrity of the fish ponds and wetland within the Wetland Conservation Area and prevent development that would have a negative off-site disturbance impact on the ecological impact on the ecological value of fish ponds*”. More stringent planning control should be enforced by rezoning the site to stress on planning intention on conservation purpose, thus protecting the area from adverse impacts of development.

CA worries that the proposal would result in direct loss of wetland habitat and particularly affect the ecological linkage between the site and the adjacent active egretty at Tung Shing Lei. Local studies¹ have shown that the location of bird nesting habitat and foraging

¹ 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.

ground, like fishponds, is closely related, with the average distance of 2km². Simply filling the existing ponds for development without realizing this important ecological linkage would pose the adjacent Tung Shing Lei egretty into vulnerable condition. Although small house application would be exempted for preparing an ecological impact assessment as mentioned in Town Planning Board Guideline No. 12B, CA still urges for a comprehensive ecological survey to address potential ecological concerns.

According to the aerial photo, land filling work has been already taken place since 2013 (Figure 1). Any “destroy first, build later” cases in attempt to get development projects approved should not be tolerated. We strongly recommend the Board to follow the approach to deter “destroy first, build later” activities by not approving this planning application³.

It should be noticed that there were another planning application in adjacent, such as A/YL-NSW/172 (approved with conditions in 2007), A/YL-NSW/223 and A/YL-NSW/224. No attempts in assessing potential cumulative impacts by various development projects in WBA would threaten the integrity of wetland ecosystem in this region.

Yours faithfully



Ng Hei Man
Assistant Campaign Manager

² Wong, L.C., Lam, W.Y. and Ades, W.J. (2009). *Ecology of the birds in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden.

³ TPB has issued a press release in 4 July 2011 in face of “destroy first, build later” activities. See the link:
<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201107/04/P201107040255.htm>

Figure 1 Land filling work can be spotted (circled in red) in the subject site since March 2013.

