RNTPC Paper No. A/NE-KLH/553-555 For Consideration by the Rural and New Town Planning

Committee on 21.9.2018

<u>APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION</u> UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE

APPLICATION NO. A/NE-KLH/553-555

Applicants Mr. CHAN Ho Tai (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/553)

> Mr. LI Tze Lung (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/554) Mr. CHAN Ho Yeen (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/555)

All represented by Mr. HUI Kwan Yee

Lot 315 S.E Sites (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/553)

Lot 315 S.F (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/554) Lot 315 S.G (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/555)

All in D.D. 9, Kau Lung Hang, Tai Po, N.T.

About 167.1 m² Site Areas (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/553)

About 194.2 m² (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/554) About 156.5 m² (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/555)

Lease Block Government Lease (demised for agricultural use)

Approved Kau Lung Hang Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/NE-KLH/11 Plan

"Agriculture" ("AGR") Zonings (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/553)

> "Village Type Development" ("V") (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/554)

(about 1% of the site)

"AGR" (about 99% of the site)

"V" (about 23.5% of the site) (Application No.: A/NE-KLH/555)

"AGR" (about 76.5% of the site)

Applications Proposed House (New Territories Exempted House (NTEH) - Small House) at

each of the application sites

1. The Proposal

1.1 The applicants, indigenous villagers of Kau Lung Hang as confirmed by the Indigenous Inhabitant Representative (IIR) of the concerned village, seek planning permission to build a NTEH (Small House) on each of the application sites (the Sites) (Plan A-1). According to the Notes of the OZP, whilst 'House (NTEH only)' is always permitted within the "V" zone, 'House (other than rebuilding of NTEH or replacement of existing domestic building by NTEH permitted under the covering Notes)' within "AGR" zone requires planning permission from the Town Planning Board (the Board).

1.2 Details of each of the proposed NTEHs (Small Houses) are as follows:

Total floor area : 195.09m²

Number of storeys : 3
Building height : 8.23m
Roofed over area : 65.03m²

- 1.3 The uncovered areas of each application sites are proposed for garden use. The sites are accessible by footpath. No parking space or vehicular access is proposed.
- 1.4 Layouts of the proposed Small Houses including the sewerage connection proposals are shown on **Drawings A-1**, **A-2** and **A-3** respectively.
- 1.5 The Sites are the subject of a previous application (No. A/NE-KLH/397) for 3 proposed Small House developments submitted by the same applicants, which was approved with conditions by the Rural and New Town Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Board on 23.4.2010. The planning permission lapsed on 24.4.2014. Parts of the Sites are also the subject of 3 previous applications No. A/NE-KLH/471, 472 and 473 for the same use submitted by the same applicants, which were approved with conditions by the Committee on 11.7.2014. These planning permissions lapsed on 12.7.2018 as the approved developments did not commence within the validity period. Compared with the latest previous applications, there is no change in the overall site area and major development parameters.
- 1.6 In support of the applications, the applicants have submitted application forms and attachments (**Appendices Ia** to **Ic**).

2. <u>Justifications from the Applicants</u>

The justifications put forth by the applicants in support of the applications are detailed in Part 9 of the respective application forms at **Appendices Ia to Ic**. They can be summarized as follows:

- (a) the proposed Small Houses are on vacant agricultural land;
- (b) there is no other land available for development of the proposed Small Houses:
- (c) there are similar Small Houses built in the vicinity of the application sites; and
- (d) previous applications (No. A/NE-KLH/471 to 473) covering the Sites were approved on 11.7.2014 and the planning permissions lapsed due to misunderstanding.

3. Compliance with the "Owner's Consent/Notification" Requirements

The applicants are the sole "current land owners". Detailed information would be deposited at the meeting for Members' inspection.

4. Assessment Criteria

The set of Interim Criteria for Consideration of Application for NTEH/Small House in New Territories (the Interim Criteria) was first promulgated on 24.11.2000 and had been amended four times on 30.3.2001, 23.8.2002, 21.3.2003 and 7.9.2007. On 23.8.2002, criterion (i) which requires that the application site, if located within water gathering grounds (WGGs), should be able to be connected to the existing or planned sewerage system in the area was incorporated. The latest set of Interim Criteria with criterion (i) remained unchanged was promulgated on 7.9.2007 and is at **Appendix II**.

5. Previous Applications

- 5.1 The Sites are the subject of a previous application (No. A/NE-KLH/397) for 3 proposed Small House developments submitted by the same applicants, which was approved with conditions by the Rural and New Town Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Board on 23.4.2010. The planning permission lapsed on 24.4.2014. Parts of the Sites are also the subject of 3 previous applications No. A/NE-KLH/471, 472 and 473 for the same use submitted by the same applicants, which were approved with conditions by the Committee on 11.7.2014 mainly on the considerations of being generally in compliance with the Interim Criteria in that more than 50% of the Small House footprints fell within the 'VE'; there was a general shortage of land in meeting the demand for Small House development in the V" zone of the concerned village at the time of consideration; they were not incompatible with the surrounding area; the proposed Small Houses were able to be connected to the planned sewerage system in the area; and they are the subject of previous approval. These planning permissions lapsed on 12.7.2018 as the approved developments did not commence within the validity period. Compared with the latest previous applications, there is no change in the overall site area and major development parameters.
- 5.2 Details of the previous application are summarized at **Appendix III** and its location is shown on **Plans A-1** and **A-2a**.

6. Similar Applications

6.1 There are 93 similar applications for Small House development within the same "AGR" zone since the first promulgation of the Interim Criteria on 24.11.2000 (Plan A-1). Among them, eight applications (No. A/NE-KLH/245, 259, 273, 277, 279, 281, 283 and 284) were approved before criterion (i) of the Interim Criteria came into effect on 23.8.2002. Since then, 58 applications were approved (including one partially approved application) and 27 applications were rejected.

- There are 44 applications (No. A/NE-KLH/304, 310, 311, 328, 339, 341, 343 347, 351, 352, 368, 370, 372, 375, 378, 379, 400, 403, 406, 407, 409, 410, 415 417, 426, 432, 433, 438, 442, 450, 459, 467, 469 470, 481, 482, 487, 488, 491 and 494) approved between 2003 and 2015 before the adoption of a more cautious approach by the Board. These applications were approved mainly on the considerations of being generally in line with the Interim Criteria in that more than 50% of the Small House footprint was located within the 'VE'; there was a general shortage of land in meeting the demand for Small House development in the "V" zone at the time of consideration; the proposed development was able to be connected to the planned sewerage system; the application site was the subject of a previously approved case; and/or the proposed house was considered as an infill development.
- 6.3 For the remaining 12 applications (No. A/NE-KLH/503, 504, 519, 523, 529 531, 533, 535 and 540 542), they were approved with conditions by the Committee between 2016 and 2018. While land was still available within the "V" zone for Small House development, applications No. A/NE-KLH/503, 504, 523, 529, 530, 531, 535, 541 and 542 were approved mainly because there was previous approval whereas applications No. A/NE-KLH/519, 533, 540 were approved mainly because the proposed house was considered as an infill development.
- Application No. A/NE-KLH/358 for four Small Houses was partially approved with conditions by the Committee on 23.3.2007. Two proposed Small Houses were approved for being in compliance with the Interim Criteria in that more than 50% of the footprint of proposed Small Houses locating within the 'VE'; there was a general shortage of land in meeting the demand for Small House development in the "V" zone; and being able to be connected to the planned sewerage system. The other two proposed Small Houses were rejected mainly because they were not able to be connected to the existing or planned sewerage system in the area. Subsequently, application No. A/NE-KLH/527 being the subject of the approved portion of application No. A/NE-KLH/358, was approved by the Committee on 12.5.2017 mainly on sympathetic consideration as there was previous approval from the same applicant.
- 6.5 There are 27 applications (No. A/NE-KLH/300, 303, 312, 314, 315, 333, 334, 361, 380, 430, 439 – 441, 443, 444, 455, 478, 479, 483, 484, 521, 526, 537, 538, 544, 546 and 549) rejected by the Committee or the Board on review between 2002 and 2018 mainly on the grounds of not being able to be connected to the planned sewerage system in the area as there was no fixed programme for implementation of such system at that juncture. Applications No. A/NE-KLH/440 and 441 were also rejected on the grounds that the applicant failed to demonstrate that the proposed development would have no adverse drainage and sewerage impacts on the surrounding areas. applications No. A/NE-KLH/521, 526, 537, 538, 544, 546 and 549 rejected by the Committee or the Board on review between 2017 and 2018, one of the rejection reasons was that land was still available within "V" zone for Small House development and it was considered more appropriate to concentrate the proposed Small House within "V" zone. In addition, application No. A/NE-KLH/483, being the subject of Town Planning Appeal No. 8 of 2015, was dismissed by the Town Planning Appeal Board on 1.9.2016 mainly on the same

- rejection reasons of the application by the Board on review.
- 6.6 Details of the similar applications are summarized at **Appendix IV** and their locations are shown on **Plan A-1**.

7. The Site and Its Surrounding Areas (Plans A-1, A-2a and photos on Plans A-3 and A-4)

- 7.1 The Sites are:
 - (a) located on flat land with some grass and weeds;
 - (b) entirely within the 'VE' of Yuen Leng, Kau Lung Hang Lo Wai and San Wai;
 - (c) within the upper indirect WGG; and
 - (d) accessible by a footpath and local track.
- 7.2 The surrounding areas are predominantly rural in character occupied by village houses and fallow agriculture land. There are villages houses to the east and south of the Sites. A streamcourse flowing from northeast to southwest is located about 30m to the west of the Sites.

8. Planning Intentions

- 8.1 The planning intention of the "V" zone is to reflect existing recognized and other villages, and to provide land considered suitable for village expansion and reprovisioning of village houses affected by Government projects. Land within this zone is primarily intended for development of Small Houses by indigenous villagers. It is also intended to concentrate village type development within this zone for a more orderly development pattern, efficient use of land and provision of infrastructures and services.
- 8.2 The planning intention of the "AGR" zone is primarily to retain and safeguard good quality agricultural land/farm/fish ponds for agricultural purposes. It is also intended to retain fallow arable land with good potential for rehabilitation for cultivation and other agricultural purposes.

9. Comments from Relevant Government Departments

9.1 The applications have been assessed against the assessment criteria in **Appendix II**. The assessment is summarized in the following table:

	<u>Criteria</u>	Yes	<u>No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1.	Within "V" zone? Application No. A/NE- KLH/553 - Application site	-	100%	- The Site and the proposed Small House footprint is entirely within the "AGR" zone.
	- Footprint of the Small House	_	100%	
	Application No. A/NE- KLH/554 - Application site	1%	99%	- The remaining area of the Site (99%) is within the "AGR" zone.
	- Footprint of the Small House	-	100%	- The footprint of the proposed Small House falls entirely within the "AGR" zone.
	Application No. A/NE- KLH/555 - Application site	23.5%	76.5%	- The remaining area of the Site (76.5%) is within the "AGR" zone.
	- Footprint of the Small House	7.2%	92.8%	- The remaining area of the footprint of the proposed Small House (92.8%) is within the "AGR" zone.
2.	Within 'VE'? - Footprint of the Small Houses - Application sites	100% 100%	-	- The Sites and the footprints of the proposed Small Houses fall entirely within the 'VE' of Yuen Leng and Kau Lung Hang.
		;		- District Lands Officer/ Tai Po, Lands Department (DLO/TP, LandsD) has no objection to the applications.
3.	Sufficient land in "V" zone to satisfy outstanding Small		√	- Land required to meet Small House demand: about 12.18 ha (equivalent to 487 Small House sites). The

	<u>Criteria</u>	Yes	<u>No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
	House applications and 10-year Small House demand?			outstanding Small House applications are 130 ¹ while the 10-year Small House demand forecast for the same villages is 357.
				- Land available to meet Small House demand within the "V" zone of the villages concerned: about 6.67 ha (equivalent to 266 Small House sites) (Plan A-2b).
4.	Compatible with the planning intention of "AGR" zone?		~	- The Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (DAFC) does not support the applications from agricultural development point of view as there are active agricultural activities in the vicinity and agricultural infrastructure such as road access and water source is available; and the Sites possess potential for agricultural rehabilitation.
5.	Compatible with surrounding area/ development?	✓		- The surrounding areas are predominantly rural in character occupied by village houses and fallow agricultural land.
6.	Within WGG?	✓		 Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department (CE/C, WSD) has no objection to the applications as the proposed Small Houses are able to be connected to the existing public sewerage system in the area. Approval conditions on connection to public sewers and provision of protective measures to WGG are required.

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¹ Among the 130 outstanding Small House applications, 79 of them fall within the "V" zone and 51 straddle or outside the "V" zone. For those 51 applications straddling or being outside the "V" zone, 12 of them have obtained valid planning approval from the Board.

	<u>Criteria</u>	Yes	No.	<u>Remarks</u>
7.	Encroachment onto planned road networks and public works boundaries?		*	
8.	Need for provision of fire services installations and emergency vehicular access (EVA)?		✓	- Director of Fire Services (D of FS) has no in-principle objection to the applications.
9.	Traffic impact?		✓	- Commissioner for Transport (C for T) has no in-principle objection to the applications from traffic engineering point of view.
10.	Drainage impact?	~		- Chief Engineer/Mainland North, Drainage Services Department (CE/MN, DSD) has no in-principle objection to the applications from public drainage viewpoint.
11.	Sewerage impact?	✓		- Chief Engineer / Consultant Management, Drainage Services Department (CE/CM, DSD) advises that new public sewerage network at Kau Lung Hang was completed and is available for connection.
				- Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) has no objection to the applications as the applicants have proposed to connect the Small Houses to the newly constructed public sewer in Kau Lung Hang San Wai (Plan A-2a), and sewer connection is feasible and capacity is available for the proposed Small Houses.

	<u>Criteria</u>	Yes	<u>No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
12.	Landscape impact?	✓		 Chief Town Planner/Urban Design and Landscape, Planning Department (CTP/UD&L, PlanD) has no objection to the applications from the landscape planning perspective. As no existing trees are found within the Sites, adverse impact to significant landscape resources is not anticipated. Should the applications be approved by the Board, an approval condition on submission and implementation of landscape proposal is recommended.
13.	Geotechnical impact?		✓	
14.	Local objections conveyed by DO?		✓	

- 9.2 Comments from the following Government departments have been incorporated in paragraph 9.1 above. Detailed comments from Government departments are at **Appendix V**.
 - (a) District Lands Officer/Tai Po, Lands Department;
 - (b) Commissioner for Transport;
 - (c) Director of Environmental Protection;
 - (d) Chief Town Planner/Urban Design & Landscape, Planning Department;
 - (e) Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation;
 - (f) Chief Engineer/Mainland North, Drainage Services Department;
 - (g) Chief Engineer/Consultants Management, Drainage Services Department;
 - (h) Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department;
 - (i) Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services; and
 - (j) Director of Fire Services.
- 9.3 The following Government departments have no objection to/ comment on the application:
 - (a) Chief Highway Engineer/New Territories East, Highways Department;
 - (b) Project Manager/North, Civil Engineering and Development Department;
 - (c) Head of the Geotechnical Engineering Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department; and
 - (d) District Officer (Tai Po), Home Affairs Department.

10. Public Comments Received During Statutory Publication Period

On 10.8.2018, the applications were published for public inspection. During the first three weeks of the statutory public inspection period, three public comments for each application were received from MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), Designing Hong Kong and an individual (Appendix VI). While MTRCL raises concerns on operational railway noise, other commenters object to the applications mainly for the reasons of being not in line with the planning intention of "AGR" zone, no shortage of land in "V" zone and setting of undesirable precedent.

11. Planning Considerations and Assessments

- 11.1 The site of Application No. A/NE-KLH/553 falls entirely within the "AGR" zone whereas the sites of Applications No. A/NE-KLH/554 and 555 fall within an area partly zoned "V" (about 1% and 23.5% respectively) and partly zoned "AGR" (about 99% and 76.5% respectively). The proposed Small House developments are not in line with the planning intention of the "AGR" zone which is primarily to retain and safeguard good quality agricultural land/farm/fish ponds for agricultural purposes. It is also intended to retain fallow arable land with good potential for rehabilitation for cultivation and other agricultural purposes. DAFC does not support the applications from the agricultural development point of view as there are active agricultural activities in the vicinity; agricultural infrastructure such as road access and water source are available; and the Sites possess potential for agricultural rehabilitation.
- 11.2 According to DLO/TP, LandsD's records, the total number of outstanding Small House applications for Yuen Leng and Kau Lung Hang villages is 130 while the 10-year Small House demand forecast is 357. Based on the latest estimate by the Planning Department, about 6.67 ha of land (or equivalent to about 266 Small House sites) are available within the "V" zones of Yuen Leng, Kau Lung Hang San Wai and Kau Lung Hang Lo Wai (Plan A-2b). As the proposed Small House footprints fall entirely within the 'VE' of the concerned villages, DLO/TP of LandsD has no objection to the applications.
- 11.3 The Sites are located on flat land with some grass and weeds. The proposed developments are not incompatible with the surrounding area which is predominantly rural in character occupied by village houses and fallow agricultural land (Plans A-2a and A-3). CTP/UD&L of PlanD has no objection to the applications from the landscape planning perspective as no existing trees are found within the Sites and adverse impact to significant landscape resources arising from the proposed developments is not anticipated.
- 11.4 The Sites fall within the upper indirect WGG. The applicants have proposed to connect the proposed Small Houses to the existing public sewerage system at Kau Lung Hang San Wai, which is located adjacent to the Sites (Plan A-2a). Both DEP and CE/C of WSD have no objection to the applications provided that the applicants shall connect the proposed Small Houses to the public sewer at their own cost, and adequate space within the Sites will be reserved for connection. Besides, DEP advises that as the proposed Small Houses are located more than 150 m and 260 m from the East Rail Line and Fanling

Highway respectively and are partially shielded from the said noise sources by existing village houses, no insurmountable noise impact is anticipated. Other relevant Government departments including C for T, CE/MN and CE/CM of DSD, CHE/NTE of HyD, H(GEO) of CEDD and D of FS have no objection to or no adverse comment on the applications.

- 11.5 Regarding the Interim Criteria (Appendix II), more than 50% of the footprints of the proposed Small Houses fall within the 'VE' of Yuen Leng and Kau Lung Hang and the proposed developments within WGG would be able to be connected to the public sewerage system (Plan A-2a). While land available within the "V" zone (about 6.67 ha or equivalent to about 266 Small House sites) is insufficient to fully meet the Small House demand, it is capable to meet the 130 outstanding Small House applications (Plan A-2b). It should be noted that the Board has adopted a more cautious approach in approving applications for Small House development in recent years. It is considered more appropriate to concentrate the proposed Small House development within the "V" zone for more orderly development pattern, efficient use of land and provision of infrastructures and services. Nonetheless, the Sites are the subject of previously approved applications (No. A/NE-KLH/471 to 473) submitted by the same applicants without any change to the Small House footprints and the development parameters. DLO/TP, LandsD also advises that the Small House grant applications have been approved pending execution. Hence, sympathetic consideration could be given to the current applications.
- 11.6 There are 93 similar applications for Small House development within the same "AGR" zone, of which 28 cases are in close proximity to the Sites (Plan A-2a). Out of these 28 applications, three of them (Applications No. A/NE-KLH/259, 283 and 284) were approved before criterion (i) of the Interim Criteria came into effect on 3.8.2002; and 13 applications (No. A/NE-KLH/343, 344, 370, 372, 375, 406, 407, 442, 450, 469, 470, 481 and 494) were approved between 2006 and 2015 before the adoption of a more cautious approach by the Board in recent years. After that, there were six applications (No. A/NE-KLH/519, 523, 533, 535, 540 and 541) approved between 2016 and 2018 mainly on sympathetic consideration as the application site was the subject of previously approved case and/or the proposed house was considered as an infill development. For the six rejected applications (No. A/NE-KLH/440, 441, 521, 537, 538 and 546), they were rejected between 2013 and 2018 mainly on the grounds of not being able to be connected to the planned sewerage system in the area as there was no fixed programme for implementation of such system at that juncture. Applications No. A/NE-KLH/440 and 441 were also rejected as the applicant failed to demonstrate that the proposed development would have no adverse drainage and sewerage impacts on the surrounding areas. For Applications No. A/NE-KLH/521, 537, 538 and 546 rejected between 2017 and 2018, one of the rejection reasons was that land was still available within "V" zone for Small House development and it was considered more appropriate to concentrate the proposed Small House within "V" zone. The planning circumstances of the current applications are similar to Applications No. A/NE-KLH/523, 535 and 541, which were approved on sympathetic consideration as the site was the subject of previous approval from the same applicant.

11.7 Regarding the public comments raising concerns on operational railway noise and objection to the applications mainly on the grounds of being not in line with the planning intention of "AGR" zone, land being still available within the "V" zone and setting of undesirable precedent, the planning assessments and comments of concerned Government departments in above paragraphs are relevant.

12. Planning Department's Views

- 12.1 Based on the assessments made in paragraph 11 and having taken into account the public comments mentioned in paragraph 10, the Planning Department <u>has no objection</u> to the applications.
- 12.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the applications, it is suggested that each of the permissions shall be valid until <u>21.9.2022</u>, and after the said date, the permission shall cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted is commenced or the permission is renewed. The following conditions of approval and advisory clauses are also suggested for Members' reference:

Approval Conditions

- (a) the submission and implementation of landscape proposal to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning or of the Town Planning Board;
- (b) the connection of the foul water drainage system to the public sewers to the satisfaction of the Director of Water Supplies or of the Town Planning Board; and
- (c) the provision of protective measures to ensure no pollution or siltation occurs to the water gathering grounds to the satisfaction of the Director of Water Supplies or of the Town Planning Board.

Advisory Clauses

The recommended advisory clauses for each of the permissions are attached at **Appendix VII**.

- 12.3 Alternatively, should the Committee decide to reject the applications, the following reasons for rejection are suggested for Members' reference:
 - (a) the proposed development is not in line with the planning intention of the "AGR" zone for the area which is primarily to retain and safeguard good quality agricultural land/farm/fish ponds for agricultural purposes. It is also intended to retain fallow arable land with good potential for rehabilitation for cultivation and other agricultural purposes. There is no strong justification in the current submission for a departure from this planning intention; and
 - (b) land is still available within the "V" zone of Yuen Leng and Kau Lung Hang which is primarily intended for Small House development. It is

considered more appropriate to concentrate the proposed Small House development within the "V" zone for a more orderly development pattern, efficient use of land and provision of infrastructure and services.

13. <u>Decision Sought</u>

- 13.1 The Committee is invited to consider the applications and decide whether to grant or refuse to grant permission.
- 13.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the applications, Members are invited to consider the approval conditions and advisory clauses to be attached to the permission, and the date when the validity of the permission should expire.
- 13.3 Alternatively, should the Committee decide to reject the applications, Members are invited to advise what reason(s) for rejection should be given to the applicant.

14. Attachments

Appendices Ia to Ic	Application forms and attachments received on 3.8.2018
Appendix II	Interim Criteria for Consideration of application for NTEH/Small House is New Territories
Appendix III	Previous applications
Appendix IV	Similar applications
Appendix V	Detailed comments from relevant Government departments
Appendix VI	Public comments
Appendix VII	Recommended advisory clauses
Drawings A-1 to A-3	Site plans submitted by the applicant

Plan A-1	Location plan
Plan A-2a	Site plan
Plan A-2b	Estimated amount of land available for Small House development within "V" zone
Plan A-3	Aerial photo
Plan A-4	Site photo

PLANNING DEPARTMENT SEPTEMBER 2018

