



LCH Planning and Development
Consultants Limited

Section 16 Application for Proposed Temporary Mountain Search and Rescue Training Centre and Ancillary Facilities and Associated Filling of Land for a Period of 3 Years at Lot Nos. 611 (Part) and 682 (Part) in Demarcation District No. 84, Hung Lung Hang, New Territories

Planning Statement Report

Prepared by
Planning Consultant : LCH Planning & Development
Consultants Limited

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Executive Summary

(in case of discrepancy between English and Chinese versions, English version shall prevail)

This Application is submitted to the Town Planning Board ("**the Board**") under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance ("**the Ordinance**") for a proposed temporary mountain search and rescue training centre and ancillary facilities with ancillary solar panels, and proposed utility installation for private project (underground power cable and poles) and associated filling of land for a period of 3 years ("**the Proposed Development**") at Demarcation District No. 84 Lot Nos. 611 (Part) and 682 (Part), Hung Lung Hang, N.T. ("**the Application Site**").

The Application Site falls within an area of "Agriculture" ("**AGR**") zone on the Approved Hung Lung Hang Outline Zoning Plan No. S/NE-HLH/11 ("**the OZP**"). According to the Notes of the OZP for "**AGR**" zone, 'Agricultural Use' is a Column 1 use which do not require planning permission from the Board, while Utility Installation for Private Project is a Column 2 use which requires planning permission from the Board. Besides, Training Centre is neither Column 1 nor Column 2 uses under "**AGR**" zoning. Nevertheless, temporary use or development not exceeding a period of three years requires permission from the Town Planning Board. Notwithstanding that the use or development is not provided for in terms of the Plan, the Town Planning Board may grant permission, with or without conditions, for a maximum period of three years, or refuse to grant permission.

It is proposed to have a filling of land for an area of about 2,890 sq.m by not more than 0.3m concrete in height for the sake of commencing the proposed agricultural use and operational use on the Subject Site, which planning permission from the Town Planning Board for the Proposed Development is required. CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) will be responsible for the construction of the underground cable trench and the related maintenance works, whereas ten cable ducts and 4 draw pits will be provided by the Applicant according to CLP's standards to supplement the power supply of the Proposed Development. Upon approval of the Proposed Development, the Application Site comprises 5 parking spaces for private cars (2.5 m x 5 m each) and 2 parking spaces for light bus/LGV (3.5 m x 8 m each); 14 one-storey enclosed greenhouses with ancillary solar panels on the rooftop, 5 one-storey structures for storing training equipment, activity hall for daily training programme, staff offices and a toilet facility. Poles with 11kV switchgear will be provided as required by CLP. There will be 21 structures in total. All structures are in height of not more than 3 m and the total built over area is about 1,540 sq.m.

The Application is critical to support and enhance its capacity to deliver life-saving services in Hong Kong. It aligns with the Government's direction of "**Tourism is Everywhere in Hong Kong**" and echoes Northern Metropolis Action Agenda to support eco-tourism opportunities while promoting responsible tourism and community participation in sustainable outdoor recreation and agriculture. The Proposed Development ensures safer access to country parks and trails, while the greenhouses support sustainable farming and educational programs, contributing to the Northern Metropolis's vision of integrating urban-rural development and eco-tourism. Thus, the Proposed Development supports the long-term planning intention of "**AGR**". Similar applications in the "**AGR**" zone have also been considered and approved. There will be no adverse traffic, visual, landscape, drainage and environmental impacts.

In view of the above justifications, we would sincerely seek the favourable consideration of the Board to approve this Application.



內容摘要

(如內文與其英文版本有差異，則以英文版本為準)

本規劃申請根據城市規劃條例第 16 條，就新界恐龍坑丈量約份第 84 約地段第 611 號（部分）及第 682 號（部分）（「**申請地點**」）的用地，向城市規劃委員會（「**城規會**」）申請作擬議臨時山嶺搜救訓練中心及輔助設施及輔助太陽能板和擬議私人發展計劃的公用設施裝置（地底電纜及電線杆），以及相關填土工程，為期 3 年（「**擬議發展**」）。

申請地點現時於《恐龍坑分區計劃大綱核准圖編號 S/NE-HLH/11》（下稱「**大綱圖**」）劃作「農業」地帶。根據大綱圖有關「農業」地帶的註釋，第一欄中的「農業用途」無須獲得城規會的規劃許可，而訓練中心既不屬於第一欄用途，也不屬於第二欄用途。私人發展計劃中的公用設施裝置屬第二欄用途，須獲城規會規劃許可；惟不超過三年的臨時發展用途，亦須獲城規會規劃許可。即使該發展用途未在規劃圖則中列明，城規會仍會在有附帶條件或無條件下授予規劃許可（最長為三年），或拒絕授予規劃許可。申請地點的農業和營運用途需要填土，需要獲得城規會的規劃許可才能進行擬議發展。擬議發展開發的土地填土將不超過 0.3m 混凝土厚度，面積約 2,890 平方米，用於溫室建設和種植及貯存與山嶺搜救相關的培訓設備。中華電力有限公司（下稱「**中電**」）將負責建造地下電纜管道及進行相關維修工程，而申請人則會按照中電的標準安裝裝置例如 10 條電纜管道和 4 個沙井等以提供擬議發展所需的電力供應。在擬議發展獲批准後，申請地點將包括 5 個私家車泊車位（每個 2.5 米 x 5 米）和 2 個小型巴士/輕型貨車泊車位（每個 3.5 米 x 8 米）；14 座 1 層屋頂裝有輔助太陽能板的封閉式溫室，以及 5 座用於存放培訓設備的構築物、活動室、和辦公室的構築物和一個流動廁所。申請人將按照中電的要求提供 11 千伏配電裝置的電線杆，總共會有 21 個構築物。所有構築物的高度不超過 3 米，總覆蓋面積約為 1,540 平方米，合乎大綱圖的相關要求。

是次申請對於支持和提升其在香港提供山野搜索和救援的能力至關重要。它符合政府“無處不旅遊”的發展方向，並呼應了“北部都會行動議程”，旨在支持生態旅遊機會，同時促進負責任旅遊和社區參與可持續的戶外休閒和農業活動。擬議發展項目確保了更安全使用郊野公園和步道，而擬議溫室則支持永續農業和教育項目，有助於實現「北部都會區」融合城鄉發展和生態旅遊的願景。因此，擬議發展項目支持「農業」的長遠規劃意向。「農業」的類似申請亦已獲得審議和批准。擬議發展亦不會對交通、視覺、景觀、排水系統和環境造成不利影響。

鑒於以上提出的依據，我們真誠地尋求城規會批准該申請。



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Application

- 1.1.1 We are commissioned by the Applicant to prepare and submit on its behalf this planning application for a proposed temporary mountain search and rescue training centre and ancillary facilities with ancillary solar panels, and proposed utility installation for private project (underground power cable and poles) and associated filling of land for a period of 3 years (hereinafter referred to as the “**Proposed Development**”) at Lot Nos. 611 (Part) and 682 (Part) in Demarcation District No. 84, Hung Lung Hang, N.T. (hereinafter referred to as the “**Application Site**”) to the Town Planning Board (“**the Board**”) under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (“**the Ordinance**”).
- 1.1.2 The Application Site falls within an area designated as “Agriculture” (“**AGR**”) zone on the Approved Hung Lung Hang Outline Zoning Plan No. S/NE-HLH/11 (“**the OZP**”) (**Figure 4**). According to the Notes of the OZP for “**AGR**” zone, ‘Agricultural Use’ is a Column 1 use that is always permitted by the Board. Utility Installation for Private Project is a Column 2 use which requires planning permission from the Board. Besides, Training Centre is neither Column 1 nor Column 2 uses under (“**AGR**”) zoning.
- 1.1.3 Nevertheless, temporary use or development not exceeding a period of three years requires permission from the Town Planning Board. Notwithstanding that the use or development is not provided for in terms of the Plan, the Town Planning Board may grant permission, with or without conditions, for a maximum period of three years, or refuse to grant permission.
- 1.1.4 The Notes also state that any filling of land, including that to effect a change of use to any of those specified in Columns 1 and 2 above or the uses or developments always permitted under the covering Notes shall not be undertaken without the permission from the Town Planning Board under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance, except laying of soil not exceeding 1.2 m in thickness for cultivation or construction of any agricultural structure with prior written approval issued by the Lands Department.



2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Increasing Mountain Accidents

2.1.1 An increasing trend of mountain accidents and demand for emergency rescue service is observed in recent statistics provided by relevant government departments (i.e. Civil Aid Service (CAS) and Government Flying Service (GFS)) between 2020 and 2025. Particularly in 2020, a significant surge with 885 GFS flights and 602 Fire Services Department (FSD) call-outs is observed, indicating that an increased recreational activity driving the need for mountain search and rescue operations. Casualties rose sharply in from 129 to 323 between 2018 and 2020, and remained high with 424 in 2023 and 345 in 2024, also implying an alarming need for improved safety measures.¹²³ This trend demonstrates that ongoing government efforts in resource allocation and training enhancements are vital to address such a growing demand. Thus, the establishment of a non-profit, volunteer-based organisation like the VMST which offers mountain rescue and hiking safety education is essential to strengthening the capability of handling emergency incidents, as well as alleviate the government's resource burden in maintaining the quality and efficiency of related emergency services and rescue operations.

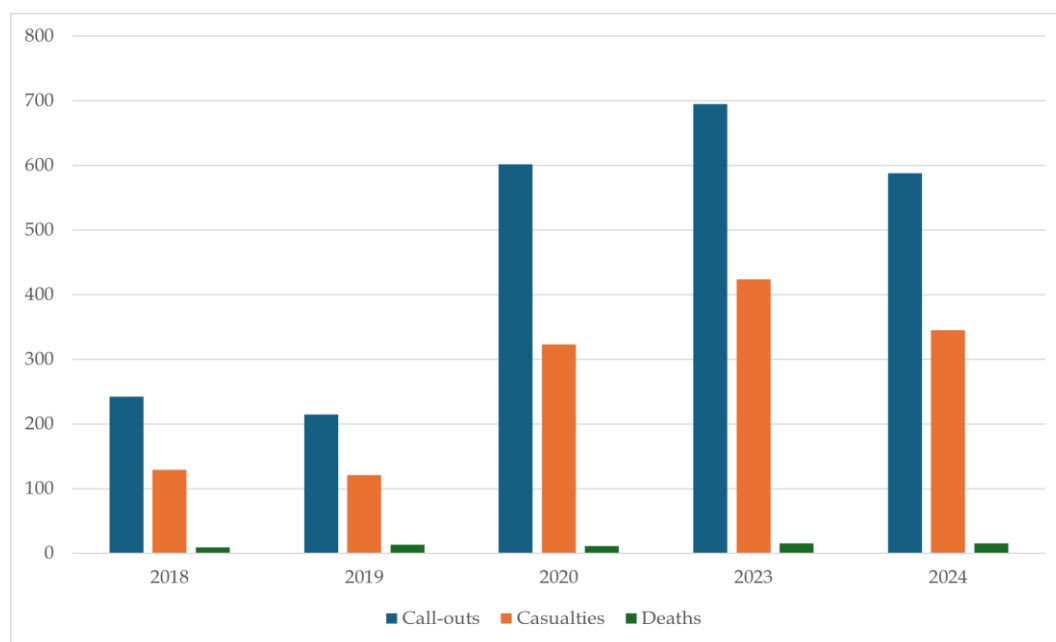


Diagram 1 Number of Call-outs, Causalities and Deaths Related to Mountain Accidents between 2018 and 2024

¹ [LCQ11: Search and rescue and patrol work in the countryside](#)

² [Head 27 – CIVIL AID SERVICE](#)

³ <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202505/14/P2025051400217.htm?fontSize=1>



2.2 Voluntary Mount Search Team

2.2.1 The Applicant, Voluntary Mount Search Team Hong Kong Limited (VMST), is a non-profit, volunteer-based organisation in Hong Kong committed to enhancing hiking safety awareness, training volunteer search-and-rescue teams, and supporting government efforts in response to the surging number of hiking-related incidents and missing persons cases since 2021. This increasing trend has been particularly significant during the COVID-19 pandemic, when borders shut and travel restrictions led to increased local hiking activity.

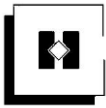
2.2.2 Their vision and goals are:

- Actively search for missing hikers, coordinating with family members and, when suitable, assisting official rescue teams;
- Promote hiking safety and awareness proactively to minimise accidents and incidents;
- Educate students and the public on mountain safety while training volunteers from diverse backgrounds to build a skilled search and rescue workforce capable of responding to emergencies;
- Foster community involvement and support for mount search operations through social media and donations; and
- Develop innovative and smart tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of search operations.

2.2.3 VMST is a highly skilled and professional mountain search and rescue team with a proven track record of operational excellence. Since its operation in 2021, it has actively participated in more than 70 rescue missions, successfully navigating complex and hazardous environments to locate and assist lost, injured or stranded individuals. These operations have spanned Hong Kong's mountainous regions, including popular trails like Lion Rock, Sai Kung and Lantau Peak, often under adverse weather conditions and time-critical circumstances. Their expertise, commitment to public safety, and informal collaboration with local authorities underscore its readiness to lead this transformative initiative, ensuring enhanced preparedness and response capabilities for future emergencies.

2.2.4 Despite the often-tragic outcomes of search missions, VMST emphasises the importance of the process, offering hope and support to families during uncertain times. The team comprises diverse members, including students, professionals, and disciplined forces personnel, all united by a commitment to saving lives and valuing human life.

Past Track Records



- 2.2.5 Over the past decade, VMST has gained recognition through news reports for supporting government agencies in mountain search and rescue operations between 2021 and 2024.⁴⁵ Moreover, VMST is developing a pioneering drone device that connects to mobile phone signals to enhance search efficiency. In the paragliding accident of Mr Chung dated back in 2018, the jury recommended that government departments collaborate with IT experts to improve rescue operations⁶, a view echoed by VMST's team leader, also known as the Applicant, who advocates for greater government investment in search and rescue technology.

Expansion

- 2.2.6 With growing public awareness through social media and an increasing demand for volunteer search and rescue teams, VMST has initiated training programmes at their Yuen Long training center to recruit more volunteers since 2025. They offer educational programmes for participants aged ranging from high school to tertiary institutions to raise mountain safety awareness over the years. The number of volunteers has been increased to more than 200 persons currently.

Limitations

- 2.2.7 With the urging needs for having more experienced volunteers and more space for training them as well as developing advanced search and rescue technology for future operations, VMST is facing the following difficulties for further expansion:
- Lack of space to accommodate more new team members;
 - Lack of space to store advanced search-and-rescue related equipment;
 - Lack of space to provide sufficient training to the team members.

⁴ <https://www.scmp.com/video/scmp-originals/3186586/hong-kong-volunteer-rescue-team-formed-help-search-missing-hikers>

⁵ <https://news.mingpao.com/pns/%E5%89%AF%E5%88%8A/article/20230305/s00005/1677949246911/%E7%84%A1%E5%AE%9A%E5%90%91%E5%AD%B8%E5%A0%82-%E4%B8%80%E7%B5%B2%E5%B8%8C%E6%9C%9B%E4%B8%AD%E5%B0%8B%E4%BA%BA-%E6%99%AE%E5%8F%8A%E8%A1%8C%E5%B1%B1%E6%95%99%E8%82%B2-%E6%B0%91%E9%96%93%E7%B5%84%E9%9A%8A-%E7%BE%A9%E5%8A%A9%E5%B1%B1%E9%87%8E%E6%90%9C%E7%B4%A2>

⁶ https://www.hk01.com/%E7%A4%BE%E6%9C%83%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E/863410/%E6%BB%91%E7%BF%94%E5%82%98%E5%A5%BD%E6%89%8B%E9%8D%BE%E6%97%AD%E8%8F%AF%E6%AD%BB%E5%9B%A0-%E9%99%AA%E5%AF%A9%E5%9C%98%E8%A3%81%E5%AE%9A%E9%8D%BE%E6%AD%BB%E6%96%BC%E6%84%8F%E5%A4%96-%E5%BB%BA%E8%AD%B0%E6%8F%90%E5%8D%87%E6%90%9C%E6%95%91%E6%8A%80%E8%A1%93#google_vignette



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- 2.2.8 Hence, the Applicant is seeking a larger site for a new training centre and is applying for planning approval to expand its operations in this application.
- 2.2.9 **Diagram 2** shows the routine training activities of VMST while **Diagram 3** illustrates the storage arrangements for search-and-rescue training equipment at the existing Yuen Long training centre are inadequate for reference. The Applicant also acknowledged that the centre's limited space has constrained the quantity of equipment acquired for operational use.

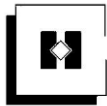


Diagram 2 Highlights of VMST Training Programmes in Current Premises





Diagram 3 Current Training Centre in Yuen Long and Their Search-and-Rescue Equipment (i.e. stretchers and self-invented drones)



3 THE APPLICATION SITE AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

3.1 Current Condition of the Application Site

- 3.1.1 The Application Site covers a total of about 5,430 square metres (“sq. m.”). The Application Site is currently vacant and accessible from Ping Che Road via a local track. It is mainly surrounded by open storage yard, temporary domestic and storage structures, tree clusters and graves.
- 3.1.2 The Site is attached to a local access road on its west which eventually connects to Ping Che Road on the east and Kong Nga Po Road on the further north-west. The Site is situated at the south west of Ping Che Road and east of ACO Racing Track. Besides, it is located at the southeast of Man Kam To Boundary Control Point (BCP).
- 3.1.3 **Figure 1** illustrates the location of the Application Site and its immediate vicinity, with **Figure 2** illustrates the site plan.

3.2 Land Status

- 3.2.1 The Application Site falls within the boundaries of Lot Nos. 611 (Part) and 682 (Part) in Demarcation District No. 84, Hung Lung Hang, N.T. (“**the Lots**”) (**Figure 3**).
- 3.2.2 The Lots are subject to a Block Government Lease. Upon permission with or without conditions of this planning application, the Applicant shall apply for a short-term waiver from the Lands Department for the respective lots, in order to temporarily relax user restriction of the Government Lease of the Subject Lots for the erection of temporary structure in different forms.
- 3.2.3 Lands Department previously approved the construction of 29 agricultural structures (greenhouses) on Lot Nos. 611 and 682 in D.D. 84 (the Application Site) under Letter of Approval No. 6585. The development parameters proposed in this application are less than half of those previously approved by the Lands Department. The following table compares the development parameters of the previously approved and proposed developments:

Development Parameter	Previously Approved Parameters under Approval No. 6585	Proposed Parameters under this Application	Difference
Site Area	About 6,385 sq.m	About 5,430 sq.m	-955 sq.m
Built Over Area	About 3,740 sq.m	About 1,540 sq.m	-2200 sq.m
Plot Ratio	0.58	0.28	-0.30

Therefore, the proposed development is not incompatible with the surrounding area and fully utilises the land's potential to support high-quality mountain search and rescue services for the Hong Kong community.

- 3.2.4 The Applicant will also follow the procedures of acquiring “Letter of Approval for Agricultural Structures” and “Certificate of Exemptions” from

the Lands Department¹ will be followed once the Proposed Development application is approved to align with the official standard of greenhouse farming operation.

3.3 Surrounding Context

- 3.3.1 Hung Lung Hang is a sub-urban area located northern area in the New Territories which is comprised of multiple villages. The predominant land uses are open storage, warehouses, workshops, active/fallow agricultural land and temporary and domestic structures, as well as vacant land. Hung Lung Hang forms part of New Territories North New Town (NTN NT) which is currently being planned for North District, in parallel with Fanling North and Kwu Tung North. Hung Lung Hang is positioned to the south east of Man Kam To BCP. The area is accessible via Ping Che Road in Ta Kwu Ling West, which is a major road in Ping Che and Ta Kwu Ling connecting Lin Ma Hang Road on the north and Sha Tau Kok Road (Ma Mei Ha) on the south. The major transportation mode is by bus or minibus, connecting Fanling North to several MTR stations and public minibus terminal.
- 3.3.2 The Application Site is located at the western edge of Ta Kwu Ling, with open storages, village houses and temporary structures surrounding the site. It is situated in the middle of Ping Che Road. Going south along the Ping Che Road is Fanling North, and further north is Heung Yuen Wai BCP.



Diagram 4 Surrounding Context of the Application Site
(Source: Geoinfo Map, HKSAR Government)

3.4 Proposed Development

Temporary Mountain Search and Rescue Training Centre and Ancillary Facilities with Ancillary Solar Panels, and Associated Filling of Land



- 3.4.1 In response to the significant increase in mountain rescue incidents across Hong Kong's country parks following the COVID-19 pandemic, VMST proposes to establish a comprehensive training facility to enhance emergency response capabilities and public safety. This temporary development addresses critical capacity constraints at the existing Yuen Long training centre while providing essential infrastructure for expanded volunteer training programs and community education initiatives.
- 3.4.2 The proposed facility adopts a three-zone functional layout designed to optimize operational efficiency while minimizing environmental impact and maintaining compatibility with the surrounding landscape. The strategic zoning separates logistical functions from training activities, creating an effective learning environment supported by sustainable energy generation.

Western Operational Support Area

Equipment Storage and Logistics Hub

- 3.4.3 The western zone establishes a centralized equipment management facility addressing the specialized storage requirements of modern search and rescue operations. A purpose-built storage structure (9m x 18m, total 160 sq.m.) will accommodate bulky specialized equipment including casualty evacuation stretchers designed for rugged mountain terrain, professional-grade search drones equipped with thermal imaging and mobile signal detection capabilities, rope rescue systems, and comprehensive first-aid supplies.
- 3.4.4 The storage facility incorporate climate-controlled environments essential for maintaining drone electronics and medical supplies, with dedicated charging stations, maintenance areas and pre-deployment preparation zones. The consolidation of equipment storage addresses current spatial limitations while ensuring rapid deployment capabilities during both training exercises and actual emergency responses.

Vehicular Access and Transportation Infrastructure

- 3.4.5 Strategic positioning of parking facilities provides for five private vehicles and two light buses/LGV, supporting efficient personnel and equipment transportation. Positioned at the edge of the Site, the location at the site perimeter facilitates seamless access for volunteers, instructors, and trainees while maintaining separation from core training activities. This configuration minimises traffic disruption within the facility and provides direct emergency vehicle access when required.
- 3.4.6 Proposed temporary storage would accommodate essential search-and-rescue equipment used in training, including rescue stretchers and drones which require substantial space due to their size and specialised nature.



Rescue stretchers, critical for casualty evacuation in rugged mountain terrains, are bulky and need dedicated storage to ensure they remain accessible and in good condition for training exercises. Similarly, the drones utilised by the Applicant for search-and-rescue operations are professional-grade, large-scale aircraft equipped with advanced features like mobile signal detection and high-resolution cameras. These drones demand significant space for secure storage, routine maintenance, calibration and pre-deployment preparation. The proposed storage facility will address the spatial limitations of the Applicant's current Yuen Long training centre, enabling efficient organisation and rapid access to equipment during training sessions and simulated rescue scenarios.

Central Sustainable Agriculture and Energy Zone

Agricultural Training and Biodiversity Education Facility

- 3.4.7 The central zone features 14 controlled-environment greenhouses (total floor area 1,250 sq.m, building height 2.5m) serving dual functions as agricultural training facilities and biodiversity conservation education centers. These structures support cultivation of native Hong Kong flora species relevant to mountain rescue operations, including medicinal plants for wilderness first-aid training, hardy indicator species that signal environmental conditions and terrain stability, and sustainable food crops for survival skills education.
- 3.4.8 The concept of integrating greenhouse into the mountain search and rescue training centre enhances trainees' environmental awareness and survival skills, which are indispensable for search and rescue operations in mountains. Knowledge of local flora facilitates navigation, foraging and hazard identification such as poisonous plants can be the important part of training which directly applicable to field operations.
- 3.4.9 The greenhouse design incorporates fully enclosed, climate-controlled environments with precision humidity and temperature control essential for cultivating sensitive species such as native berries and medicinal fungi. This controlled cultivation enables year-round training programs while supporting research into Hong Kong's mountain ecosystem biodiversity. It also enhances the natural environment within the rural context of Hung Lung Hang.

Integrated Solar Energy System

- 3.4.10 Ancillary solar panels (2.3 m x 1.1 m each) integrated into the greenhouse roofing system will generate renewable electricity primarily to supplement



the power supply of the proposed development, including the greenhouse. The system is designed to be directly related and commensurate in scale with the permitted use of the development. Approximately 205 panels are proposed. This sustainable energy approach demonstrates environmental stewardship while providing energy independence for critical training operations. The solar installation includes grid-connection capabilities and battery storage systems ensuring continuous power supply for emergency communications and equipment charging.

Acoustic and Visual Buffer Function

- 3.4.11 The central greenhouse zone creates an effective buffer between operational activities in the western zone and intensive training programs in the eastern zone. This spatial arrangement minimizes noise transmission and visual distractions, ensuring optimal learning environments while maintaining site cohesion.

Eastern Intensive Training Zone

Specialized Training Infrastructure

- 3.4.12 The eastern zone accommodates intensive hands-on training through four purpose-built structures (12m x 2.35m each) for indoor instruction, simulated rescue scenarios, drone operation training and first-aid workshops; and administrative office supporting training coordination, volunteer management, and operational logistics.

Overnight Training and Camping Facilities

- 3.4.13 Designated grassland areas support weekend overnight training programs essential for developing extended rescue operation capabilities. This camping ground, restricted to participating team members, enables realistic training scenarios including night operations, extended search patterns, and multi-day rescue simulations. A toilet facility (5.9m x 2.35m) will be provided for daily operational use.

Administrative and Coordination Center

- 3.4.14 The dedicated office facility (12m x 2.35m) centralizes training schedule coordination, volunteer recruitment activities, equipment management logistics, and liaison with government emergency services. This administrative hub ensures efficient resource allocation and maintains communication networks essential for both training operations and actual emergency response coordination.

Internal Transport Provision

- 3.4.15 In total, the Proposed Development provides 7 parking spaces. While two are for light bus/LGV (3.5m x 8m each), the rest are for private cars (2.5m x 5m



each) within the Application Site to ensuring convenient access for team members, staff, and authorised visitors while maintaining efficient site management.

- 3.4.16 Internal transport within the application site will mainly rely on trolleys and manual handling for the transport of materials and supplies over short distances.

Proposal Land Filling

- 3.4.17 The proposed land filling, with an area of about 2,890 sq.m and a height of less than 0.3 meters, would prevent flooding in the storage area designated for valuable search-and-rescue equipment, including rescue stretchers and professional-grade drones. These items, essential for mountain search-and-rescue operations, are costly and sensitive to water damage. Besides, the proposed filling of land is essential to form the foundation of the greenhouse, as well as to provide an insulation layer to the greenhouse to ensure the greenhouse is fully enclosed and provide a suitable environment for cultivation. The Proposed Land Filling Plan is presented in **Figure 7**.

- 3.4.18 The following table shows the proposed development parameters:

Development Parameters	Proposed Development
Site Area	About 5,430 sq.m.
Total Number of Structure	21
Total Built Over Area	About 1,540 sq.m. of built over area
Maximum Height of Structure	Not exceeding 3m or 1 storey
Maximum Total Site Coverage	About 28%
Maximum Plot Ratio	About 0.28
Maximum Number of Users	60
Parking Provision	5 private car parking spaces for staff only; 2 light bus/LGV parking space for participants/visitor (upon registration only) ^

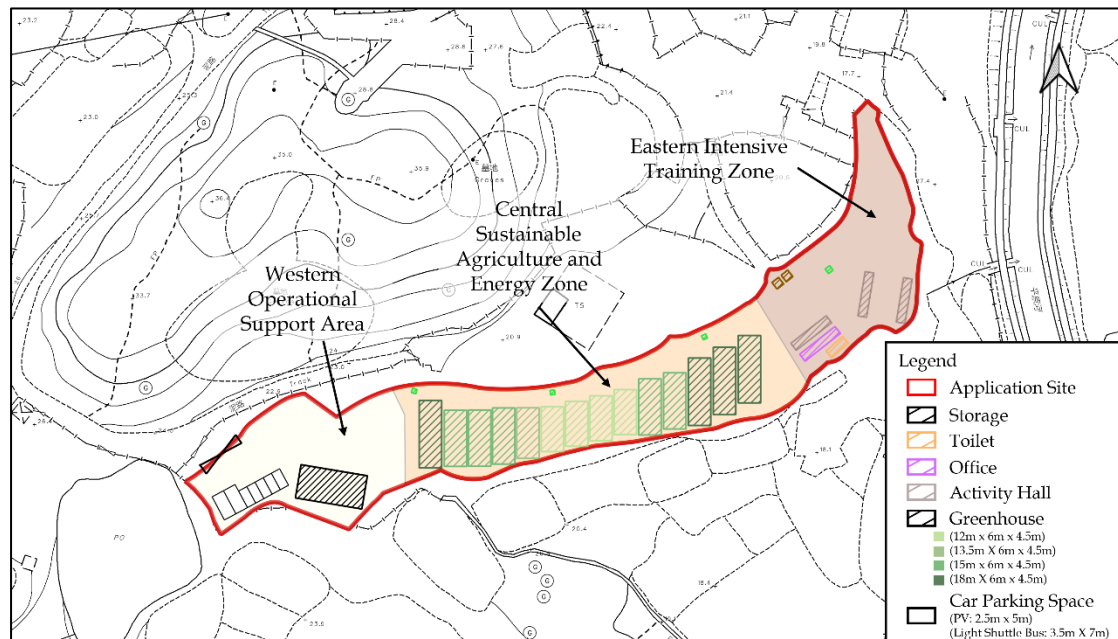
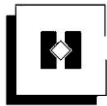


Diagram 5 Proposed Layout Plan
(Source: HK GEODATA STORE, HKSAR Government)

3.5 Existing Transport Services

3.5.1 Existing public transport services to the vicinity are shown below:

Mode	Route No.	Origin - Destination	Frequency
Scheduled Green Minibus	52K	Fanling Station - Ping Che	30 minutes
	59S	Sheung Shui Station Public Minibus Terminus -Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (HYWBCP)	25 - 35 minutes
Franchised Bus	79K	Sheung Shui - Ta Kwu Ling (Tsung Yuen Ha)	15-35 minutes

3.5.2 Given that it would take about 20 minutes to walk from the Application site to the nearby minibuses and bus stops along Ping Che Road which may not be feasible. Parking spaces for private vehicles and light bus/LGV are proposed for better access to the Site.

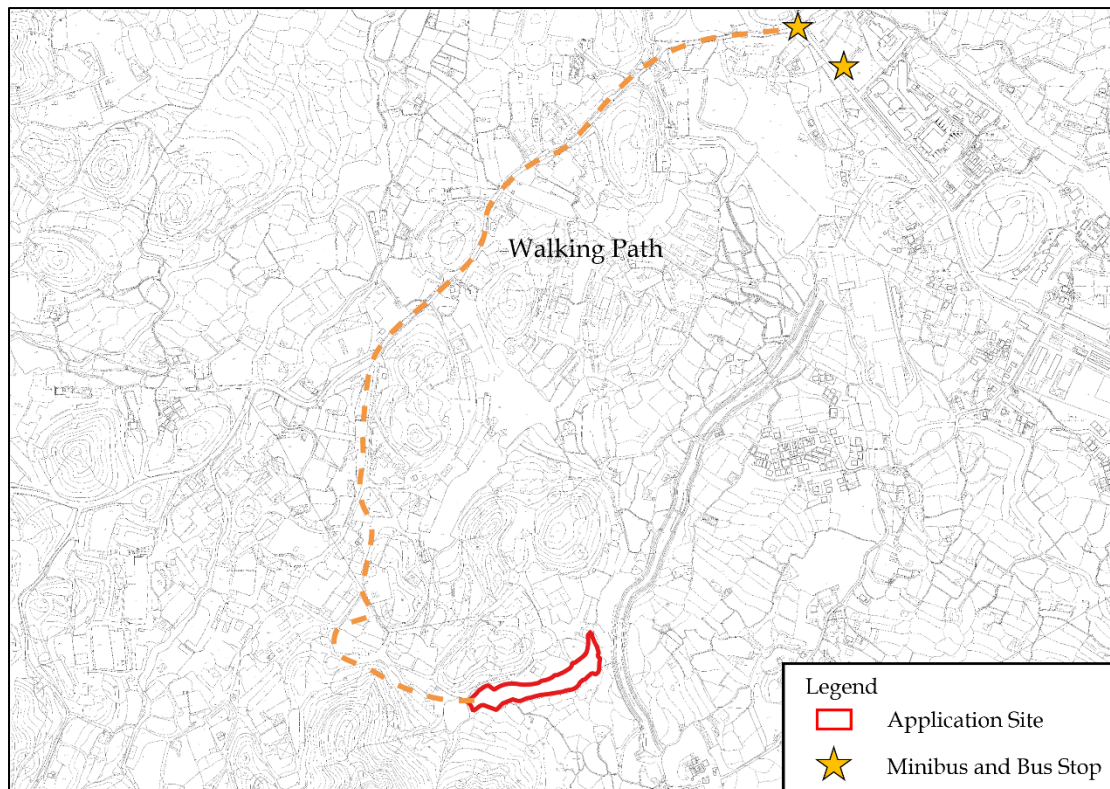


Diagram 6 Walking Path to Public Transport

(Source: Town Planning Board & HK GEODATA STORE, HKSAR Government)

3.6 Operation Arrangement of the Training Centre

- 3.6.1 The proposed mountain search-and-rescue training centre will operate 24 hours, particularly on weekends and public holiday for the overnight training. Fencing will be provided around the boundary of the Proposed Development.
- 3.6.2 The follow-up procedures of the acquiring short-term waiver, "Letter of Approval for Agricultural Structures" and "Certificate of Exemption" from the Lands Department will be followed.
- 3.6.3 The users of the site, primarily VMST members, will consume the cultivated edible plants, which will also serve as educational tools for rescue programmes. Excess supply of edible plants may be supplied to local vegetable vendors in the vicinity or Fanling District. No on-site sale of edible plants will be provided.
- 3.6.4 Electricity generated from the associated solar panels will be mainly for the use of the Application Site.



4 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

4.1 Statutory Planning Context

- 4.1.1 The Application Site falls within an area designated as “Agriculture” (“AGR”) zone on the Approved Hung Lung Hang Outline Zoning Plan No. S/NE-HLH/11 (**Figure 4**) (also known as the “OZP”).
- 4.1.2 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”*.
- 4.1.3 **According to Notes of “AGR” zone of OZP, ‘Agriculture’ is a Column 1 use under “AGR” zone which is always permitted by the Board and thus no additional planning approval is to be sought under this Application.** According to the Notes of the OZP, temporary use not exceeding a period of three years within “AGR” zone requires planning permission from the Town Planning Board notwithstanding that the use is not provided for in terms of the Plan.
- 4.1.4 According to the Notes of OZP, any filling of land, including that to effect a change of use to any of those specified in Columns 1 and 2 above or the uses or developments always permitted under the covering Notes, shall not be undertaken without the permission from the Board under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance.
- 4.1.5 To enable storage facilities and agricultural use (greenhouse) for the proposed temporary mountain and rescue training centre, a filling of land is proposed for an area of about 2890 sq.m by not more than 0.3 m thick of concrete in height. Hence, planning permission from the Town Planning Board is required to proceed with the Proposed Development.
- 4.1.6 CLP will oversee the construction and maintenance of the underground cable trench, while ten cable ducts will be provided by the Applicant in accordance with CLP’s standards.
- 4.1.7 Approval of this application on a temporary basis for a period of 3 years would follow the long-term planning intention of the “AGR” zone, indeed, would retain and safeguard arable land for cultivation and other agricultural purposes, ensuring its potential for future rehabilitation through active use. By integrating agricultural training into rescue operations, the Proposed Development would continue contributes to the intention of “AGR” zone, enhancing the site’s value without detracting from its long-term arable potential.



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S/NE-HLH/11

AGRICULTURE

Column 1 Uses always permitted	Column 2 Uses that may be permitted with or without conditions on application to the Town Planning Board
Agricultural Use Government Use (Police Reporting Centre only) On-Farm Domestic Structure Public Convenience Religious Institution (Ancestral Hall only) Rural Committee/Village Office	Animal Boarding Establishment Barbecue Spot Burial Ground Field Study/Education/Visitor Centre Government Refuse Collection Point Government Use (not elsewhere specified) House (New Territories Exempted House only, other than rebuilding of New Territories Exempted House or replacement of existing domestic building by New Territories Exempted House permitted under the covering Notes) Picnic Area Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture (Horse Riding School, Hobby Farm, Fishing Ground only) Public Utility Installation Religious Institution (not elsewhere specified) School Utility Installation for Private Project

Planning Intention

This zone is intended 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.

(Please see next page)

(Source: Town Planning Board, HKSAR Government)



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S/NE-HLH/11

AGRICULTURE (Cont'd)

Remarks

- (a) Any filling of pond, including that to effect a change of use to any of those specified in Columns 1 and 2 above or the uses or developments always permitted under the covering Notes (except public works co-ordinated or implemented by Government, and maintenance, repair or rebuilding works), shall not be undertaken or continued on or after the date of first publication in the Gazette of the notice of the draft development permission area plan without the permission from the Town Planning Board under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance.
- (b) Any filling of land, including that to effect a change of use to any of those specified in Columns 1 and 2 above or the uses or developments always permitted under the covering Notes (except public works co-ordinated or implemented by Government, and maintenance, repair or rebuilding works), shall not be undertaken or continued on or after the date of the first publication in the Gazette of the notice of the draft Hung Lung Hang Outline Zoning Plan No. S/NE-HLH/5 without the permission from the Town Planning Board under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance. This restriction does not apply to filling of land specifically required under prior written instructions of Government department(s) or for the purposes specified below:
 - (i) laying of soil not exceeding 1.2 m in thickness for cultivation; or
 - (ii) construction of any agricultural structure with prior written approval issued by the Lands Department.

(Source: Town Planning Board, HKSAR Government)

4.2 Not Falling within the Proposed Agricultural Priority Area (APA)

4.2.1 The Application Site does not fall within any of the Agricultural Priority Areas (APAs) as proposed by Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), indicating no adverse impacts on the goal of developing agricultural areas, and it provides supporting measures to promote active development in the district. Although the Site falls within an "AGR" zoning, which aims to retain and safeguard high-quality agricultural land for cultivation and other agricultural purposes, the Proposed delineation of quality farmland as Agricultural Priority Areas under LC Paper No. CB(2)1591/2024(01) states that AFCD typically does not raise objections to non-agricultural use of farmland outside APAs from an agricultural perspective.

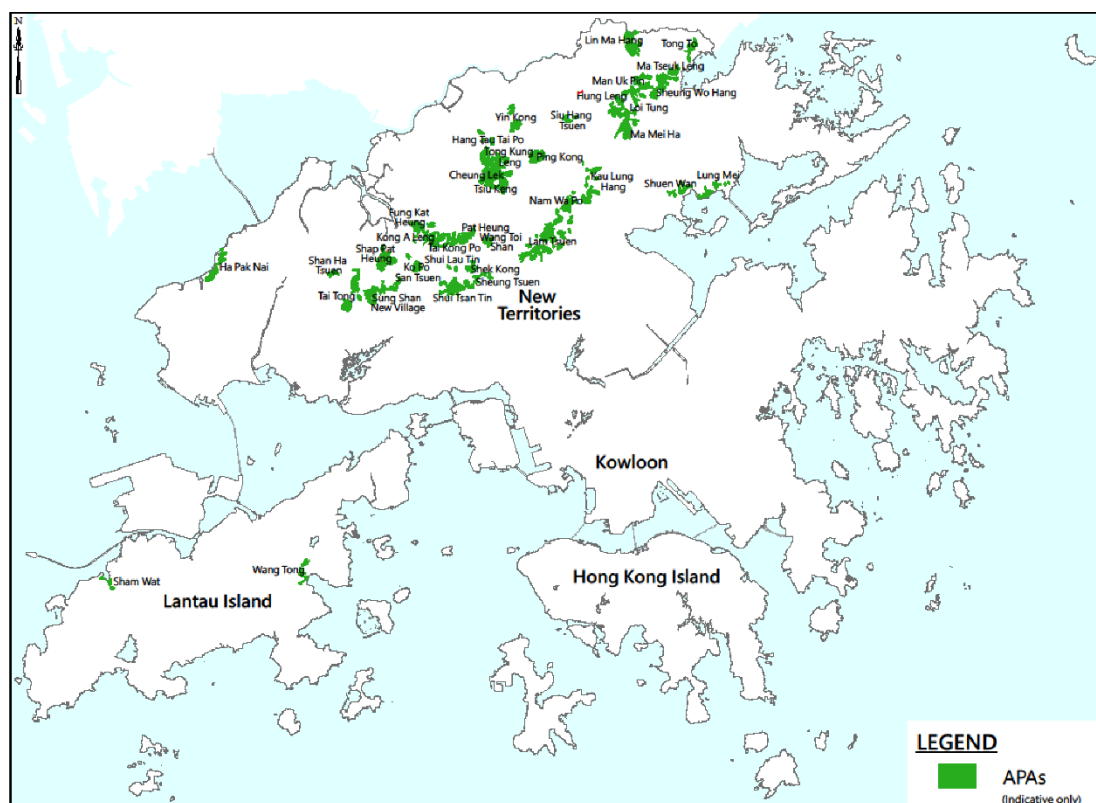


Diagram 7 Proposed APAs by AFCD in Hong Kong
(Source: Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, HKSAR Government)

4.3 Approved Application in the Vicinity

4.3.1 There is an approved application of similar land use within the "AGR" zone, planning application no. A/NE-TKL/774, which was approved by the Town Planning Board on 25 October 2024.



Application No.	A/NE-TKL/774
Decision Date	25/10/2024
Applied Use	Proposed Temporary Training Centre for Construction Industry with Ancillary Office for a Period of 3 Years
Site Area	About 940.5 sq. m.
Maximum Building Height	Not more than 3 m
Decision	Approved with condition(s) on a temporary basis

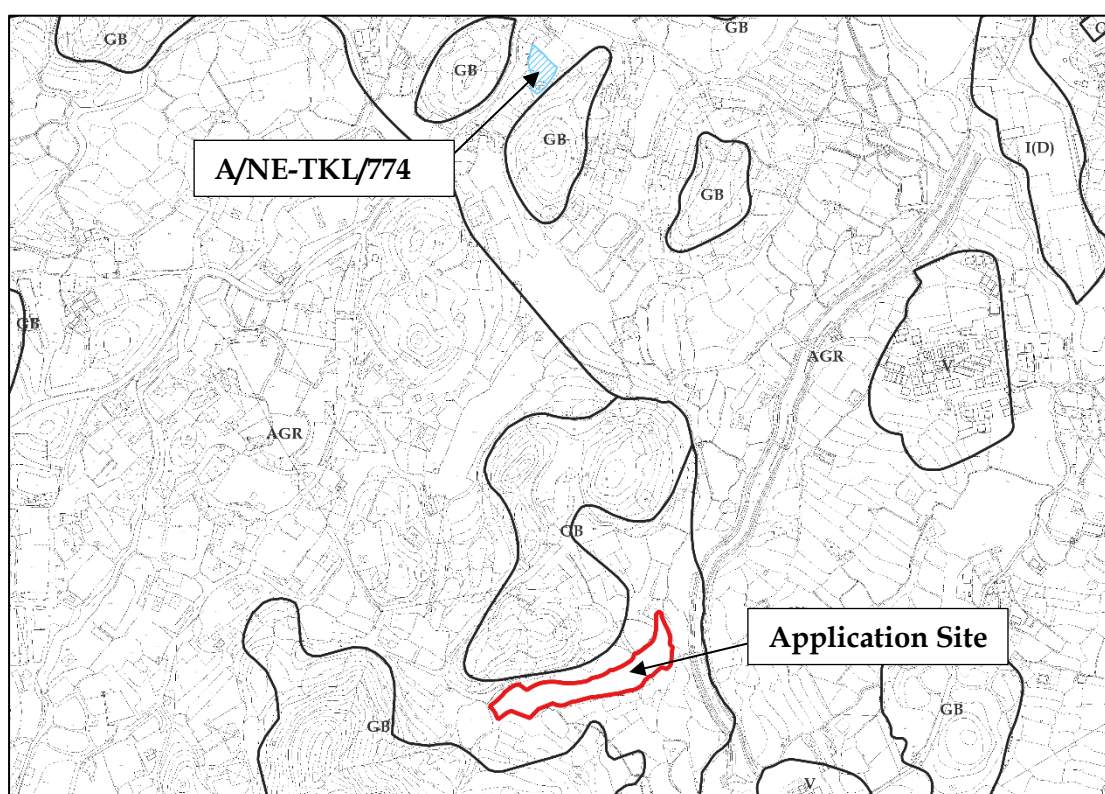


Diagram 8 Approved Application in Close Proximity to the Application Site
(Source: Town Planning Board & HK GEODATA STORE, HKSAR Government)

4.4 Similar Approved Applications for Training Centre

- 4.4.1 There are three applications with similar land use (including renewal of planning approval) in Kam Tin North and South and Lung Yeuk Tau for temporary training centre which falls within “AGR” zones approved by the Town Planning Board in 2025. The details of the application are summarized as follows:



Application No.	A/YL-KTS/1011	A/YL-KTN/1103	A/NE-LYT/848
Decision Date	28 February 2025	23 May 2025	6 June 2025
Applied Use	Temporary Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture (Hobby Farm and Fishing Ground), Barbecue Site and Education Centre with Ancillary Eating Place for a Period of 3 Years and Associated Filling of Land	Proposed Temporary Training Centre for Construction Industry and Associated Filling of Land for a Period of 3 Years	Renewal of Planning Approval for Temporary Training Centre (Adventure Training Centre) for a Period of 3 Years
Site Area	5,381 sq. m	680 sq. m	1,600 sq. m
Maximum Building Height	3 – 6m; 1 -2 storey(s)	Not more than 7m; not more than one storey	Not more than 8m; not more than 2 storey(s)
Decision	Approved with condition(s) on a temporary basis	Approved with condition(s) on a temporary basis	Approved with condition(s) on a temporary basis

4.5 Environmental Consideration

- 4.5.1 The Applicant will follow the relevant mitigation measures and requirements in the latest “*Code of Practice on Handling Environmental Aspects of Temporary Uses and Open Storage Sites*” to minimize any potential environmental impact. No adverse environmental impact is anticipated.
- 4.5.2 The Applicant will try to avoid to use audio amplification system for the Proposed Development. In case there is no alternative means, it is proposed that the audio amplification system is only available for use during day time, i.e., 9a.m. to 7p.m. in limited extent and on occasional periods only. When the audio amplification system is applied, there will be some noise mitigation measures adopted, including:
- to orientate stage to point away from the nearby noise sensitive receivers;
 - to use a cluster of small power loudspeakers instead of a few large power loudspeakers;
 - to use directional loudspeakers and orientate them to point towards the audience and away from the nearby noise sensitive receivers; and etc.
- 4.5.3 Besides, there will be a manned complaint hotline directly connect to the training centre operation team so that action can be taken to reduce the noise in response to complaints raised.
- 4.5.4 The Applicant will follow the Noise Control Ordinance and adopt relevant noise control guidelines available from the Environment Protection Department including the Noise Control Guidelines for Music, Singing and



Instrument Performing Activities and etc.

- 4.5.5 Besides, no felling of recorded existing Old and Valuable Trees (OVTs), potentially registrable OVTs, and trees of rare or protected species will be incurred. No adverse environmental impact is anticipated.

4.6 Visual and Landscape Compatibility

- 4.6.1 The Subject Site is situated in area of rural village landscape character which are surrounded by village houses and temporary structures. The proposed field study, education, visitor centre with greenhouse use is compatible with the surrounding use and will not disturb the prevailing rural village landscape character.
- 4.6.2 The proposed filling of land and the proposed structure is not visually incompatible with the surrounding. The proposed storage, activity hall, staff office, toilet facilities and greenhouse with a maximum height of not more than 3 metres is visually compatible with the village houses of up to 3 storey in maximum in the south and east boundaries, and the temporary structures along the north and west boundaries.

4.7 Drainage Consideration

- 4.7.1 Four 600mm U-shape channels (SUP1022004, SUP1022010, SUP1022011 and SUP1022007) are currently running along the periphery of eastern site boundary and eventually connect to two circular pipes and one rectangular pipe directly to the stream spanning horizontally to the further north and west (XWP1002361). The existing drainage facilities are adequate in respect of the requirements under "Technical Note to prepare a Drainage Submission" as published by Drainage Services Department (DSD). The Application Site would be served by an existing drainage system running along the site. The existing drainage condition and pattern of the area will not be altered. The surface run-off of the Application Site will be discharged directly into the existing drainage including catch pits and U-channels of in the site.
- 4.7.2 Considering the intended use is solely for the intended purposes, the proposed development is not anticipated to have any detrimental effects on drainage. Thus, the Proposed Development will not cause any adverse drainage impact onto the area.

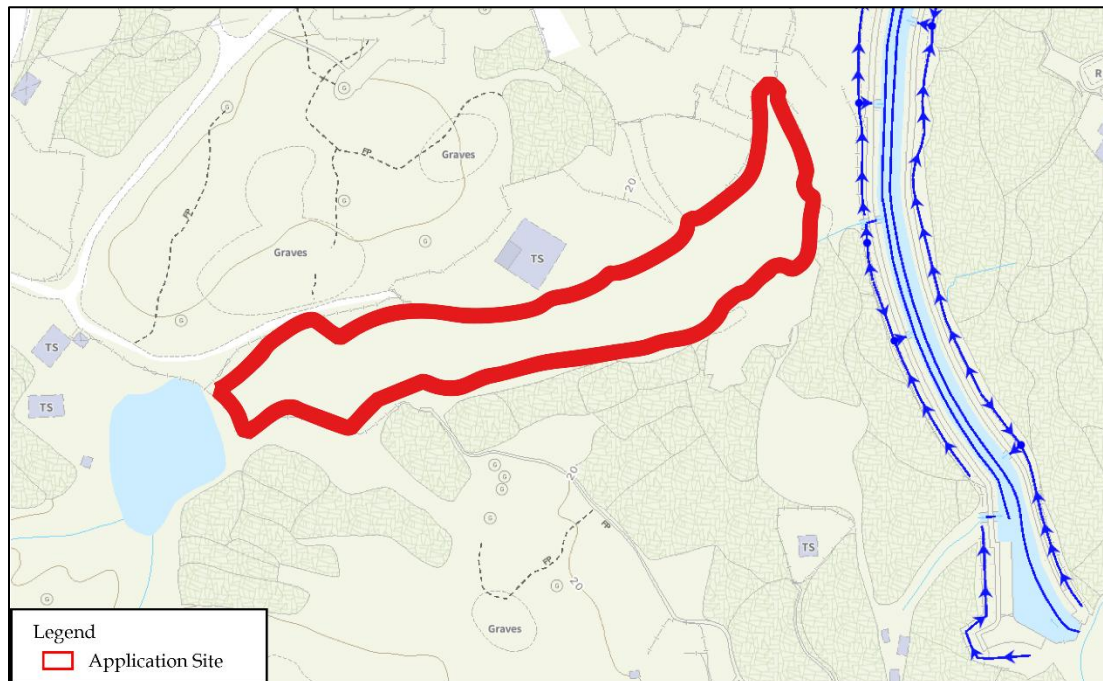


Diagram 9 Existing Drainage Facilities
(Source: Geoinfo Map, HKSAR Government)

4.8 Traffic Consideration

- 4.8.1 The Proposed Development comprises a total of 5 parking spaces for private car and 2 parking spaces for light bus/LGV. Sufficient manoeuvring space will be provided to ensure sufficient turning space for light bus/LGV. There will be 60 users in maximum, while in most of the time, only an average of 30 users including participants of training programme and staff members will be arriving at the Application Site for operation. Most of them will commute by public transport. There are bus and minibus stops on Ping Che Road, containing a total of 3 routes to Fanling Station, is within 20 minutes walking distance from the Application Site.
- 4.8.2 The ingress/egress (with a gate installed) located at the western area of the Application Site is about 12m wide, which allows the vehicles to access to/from the local access road at the west of the site. Queuing up of vehicles at the ingress/egress is not anticipated. Measures such as opening of the gate prior to the arrival of vehicles, shall be implemented to avoid queuing of vehicles outside the Application Site.
- 4.8.3 It is estimated that there will only be 2 roundtrips of Private Vehicles and one roundtrip of light bus/LGV per peak operation hour for the commuting and delivery of equipment purpose which will not cause a significant impact on trip generation and trip attraction within and around the site. As mentioned in the previous section, no individual can constitute one of the users of the Site without registration. Thus, it is not anticipated to have any adverse traffic impact to the existing roads.



Type of Vehicle	Generation (per peak hour)	Attraction (per peak hour)
Private Vehicle	2	2
Light Bus /LGV	1	1

Pedestrian Safety Measures

- 4.8.4 Appropriate road signs will be posted at the ingress/egress of the Application Site to remind drivers and road users to exercise extra caution and to be more attentive to surroundings, preventing potential traffic accidents.



5 PLANNING MERITS & JUSTIFICATIONS

5.1 Maintaining and Enhancing Quality and Efficient Emergency Services and Rescue Operations

5.1.1 According to statistics derived from FSD, casualties in hiking accidents rose sharply in from 129 to 323 between 2018 and 2020, and remained high with 424 in 2023 and 345 in 2024, also implying an alarming need for improved safety measures. The table below summarises the FSD data, including call-outs and casualties over the decade. Since the establishment of the volunteer rescue group in 2021, additional manpower from volunteer groups helps expedite search efforts, potentially reducing delays in reaching individuals in need of medical treatment. Collaboration between volunteer rescue groups and government forces such as police and fire services can also streamline communication and improve operational efficiency during search missions. the volunteers can supplement resources and expertise, allowing for more comprehensive search operations and better coverage of affected areas.

5.1.2 Recent data has indicated a decrease in reports of missing persons over the past decade. To illustrate, there were 1,014 hiking and mountaineering rescue accidents with 20 reported deaths in 2022, compared to 393 accidents with 11 fatalities in 2024.⁸ This trend highlights the significant efforts of volunteer rescue teams and their contributions to enhancing hiking safety. The proposed centre will formalise and expand VMST's capacity to train volunteers, emergency responders and community groups in critical skills such as navigation, first aid and drone-assisted search techniques.

Year	Number of mountain search and rescue calls received	Number of Injuries (Fatalities)
2018	242	129 (9)
2019	215	121 (13)
2020	602	323 (11)
2023	695	424 (15)
2024	588	345 (15)

5.2 Addressing Community Demand for Outdoor Safety Education

5.2.1 The popularity of hiking, amplified by Covid-19 pandemic has increased the demand for accessible safety education. The Applicant's extensive experience, including high-profile rescues under adverse conditions, positions it as a trusted leader to meet this demand. The Proposed Development will provide dedicated spaces for workshops, briefings, and scenario-based training, catering exclusively to programme participants such as hiking clubs, schools and emergency personnel. This controlled access ensures focused, high-quality training, building on the Applicant's proven

⁸ <https://www.wenweipo.com/a/202410/21/AP67156524e4b0bbd38799dad7.html>



track record of community engagement through rescue missions and safety advocacy over the past decade. Thus, it will not incur adverse traffic and environmental impacts onto the site and its surrounding areas.

5.3 Achieving Government's Prevailing Environmental Policies

- 5.3.1 The development of renewable energy is an important part of the government's response to climate change. Increasing the use of renewable energy will help decarbonise the power generation industry. Integrating solar panels in the proposed greenhouse operations at the Temporary Field Study, Education, and Visitor Centre will contribute to this goal by harnessing clean energy to support agricultural activities. This initiative not only promotes sustainable practices but also supports the government's broader objective of meeting carbon neutrality target by 2050 and advancing environmental sustainability.

5.4 Promoting Eco-Tourism and Blue and Green Recreation

- 5.4.1 As outlined in the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) promotes in-depth integration of Hong Kong's unique, world-class resources with tourism, focusing on projects with distinctive appeal to promote healthy lifestyles. A key strategy, "Ecology+Tourism," aims to attract visitors while enhancing Hong Kong's reputation as a premier eco-tourism destination.⁹ The city's country parks and iconic hiking trails, including Sai Kung, Lantau, and the MacLehose Trail, attract millions of local and international visitors each year for activities like hiking, trail running, and nature exploration. The Proposed Development supports this vision by providing specialised training in technical rope rescue, wilderness first aid, and plant identification. These programmes enhance safety for tourists and recreational users, encouraging broader participation in green recreation activities. By fostering safer and more sustainable engagement with Hong Kong's natural landscapes, the development strengthens the city's position as a safe, world-class eco-tourism destination.
- 5.4.2 Hong Kong's trails, while breathtaking, can be treacherous due to steep inclines, dense vegetation, and variable weather, including sudden rain or heatwaves. Recent data from the Hong Kong Fire Services Department (FSD) indicates over 300 search-and-rescue operations annually in country parks, with incidents often involving unprepared hikers facing dehydration, disorientation, or injuries.¹⁰ The Applicant, with its experience in over 70 rescue missions, highlights the necessity of equipping hikers with essential skills and knowledge. Thus, the Proposed Development could offer targeted workshops for hiking clubs, schools, and community groups, using its facilities (i.e. activity halls and simulated rescue scenarios) to teach safe hiking

⁹ https://www.cstb.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/consultation-and-publications/Tourism_Blueprint_2.0_English.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202302/15/P2023021500261.htm>



practices. Integrating these efforts with sustainable practices, such as solar-powered operations and greenhouse-based training, aligns with the government's policy support for eco-conscious outdoor recreation. This initiative would reduce rescue incidents and enhance public appreciation for the region's natural landscapes, ensuring hiking remains a safe and rewarding activity.

5.5 In Line with the Long-term Planning Intention of "AGR" Zone

5.5.1 The Proposed Development is designed to comply with the "AGR" zoning under the Town Planning Ordinance, which permits uses that support agricultural activities and compatible community facilities with minimal environmental impact.

5.5.2 Previously approved by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Lands department, the greenhouses with a smaller scale will be used for cultivating crops, such as vegetables or herbs, supporting local food production and aligning with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department's (AFCD) goals of sustaining agricultural activities in Hong Kong. The training centre, as a low-impact community facility, complements the agricultural use by providing a public service that supports the safety of rural and recreational areas. The combined development is analogous to existing agricultural sites in Hong Kong, such as those in Kam Tin, which integrate community uses with farming activities. The Applicant, therefore, seeks planning permission for non-agricultural uses (i.e. storage for training equipment and staff office), ensuring compliance with the Town Planning Board's guidelines.

5.6 Desirable and Efficient Land Use with Minimal Environmental Impact

5.6.1 The subject site, currently vacant and abandoned, is surrounded by open storage areas, creating an underutilised parcel of land with significant potential for transformation. The Proposed Development seeks to grasp such a unique opportunity to repurpose the site for a more productive, sustainable and community-oriented use. The centre will serve as a platform for training in critical skills such as technical rope rescue, wilderness first aid and plant identification, while the greenhouse will support the cultivation of edible plants for educational purposes and potential distribution to local markets. The temporary nature of the proposed centre ensures flexibility in land use, allowing for future adaptability while minimising long-term environmental or zoning impacts. By revitalising this abandoned site, the development will deliver immediate social, educational, and environmental benefits, aligning with broader goals of enhancing eco-tourism and promoting sustainable land use in the region.

5.7 Supported by Approvals of Similar Planning Applications

5.7.1 There were four similar applications of education and training centre uses within the "AGR" zone of Ping Che and Ta Kwu Ling, Kam Tin North and South, and Lung Yeuk Tau Outline Zoning Plans approved with conditions



on a temporary basis by the Rural and New Town Planning Committee in 2024 and 2025. With these planning approvals for similar education and training centre uses in the rural areas of North District, approval of this application is considered acceptable within the subject “AGR” zone and in line with previous decisions of the Board. The proposed temporary field study, education and visitor centre is not inconsistent with the surrounding land uses and it is unlikely to generate adverse impacts to the surrounding area.

5.8 Compatible with the Surrounding Development with No Adverse Visual and Landscape Impact

5.8.1 The proposed temporary field study, education, visitor centre, as a low-impact community facility with agricultural use within the Site, is visually compatible with the surrounding environment. No tree felling is anticipated. There is no change to the rural village landscape character as well. Therefore, no adverse visual and landscape impact is anticipated.

5.9 No Adverse Traffic Impact

5.9.1 The proposed temporary field study, education, visitor centre will not incur adverse traffic impact in the Site since it is solely opened to programme participants and it is located in the private lands. Therefore, it is expected that there will be insignificant negative impacts regarding the safety of road users and the traffic network of the area concerned.

5.10 No Adverse Environmental Impact

5.10.1 The proposed field study, education and visitor centre with greenhouses aligns with the sustainable environmental goals for the government to decarbonize the electricity generation sector and combating climate change in Hong Kong through community participation. It demonstrates as a pioneering development for combining agricultural education, community-focused training, and eco-friendly infrastructure, aligning with Hong Kong’s climate goals while leveraging the VMST’s decade-long expertise in sustainable rescue operations.

5.10.2 Moreover, the latest “Code of Practice on Handling Environmental Aspects of Open Storage and Temporary Uses” issued by Environmental Protection Department will also be followed. Therefore, there will not be adverse environment impacts including noise and air quality in the vicinity

5.11 No Adverse Drainage Impact

5.11.1 The Proposed Development in the Application will continue to use the existing drainage system. The existing drainage condition and pattern of the area will not be altered. Thus, no adverse drainage impact is anticipated



6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 In view of the above, we respectfully request the Board Members to give favourable consideration on this planning application.