

## Detailed Justifications

### The Application Site and Zoning

1. The Application Site (the Site) is located at Tai Lung, Fanling (**Plan 1**). It falls within an area zoned “Agriculture” (“AGR”) on the Ping Kong Outline Zoning Plan (OZP). According to the covering Notes of the OZP, temporary use or development of any land or building not exceeding a period of three years requires planning permission from the Town Planning Board (the Board). Moreover, planning permission is also required for filling of land within “AGR” zone. The Site is a piece of fallow agricultural land and currently vacant. The Site is gently sloping down from south to north in general. The existing ground levels of the southern end and northern end are about 22.6mPD and 20.6mPD respectively. The southern portion has a gradient of about 1:27, whilst further north in the farming area is also flat with gradients between 1:25 and 1:100.

### The Proposal

2. The applicant seeks planning permission to use the Site for proposed temporary ‘place of recreation, sports or culture (hobby farm) for a period of 3 years and associated filling of land. The major development parameters of the current application are as follows:

<b>Site Area</b>	About 3,550m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Floor Area</b>	About 300m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site Coverage</b>	About 4.79%
<b>No. and Height of Structures (Plan 3A)</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 temporary structure (B1) for ancillary office and reception (3.0m high, 1 storey)</li> <li>- 1 temporary structure (B2) for ancillary storage including farm tools, farming materials, seed storage and farm products (6.0m high, 2 storey), and products handling area</li> <li>- 1 temporary structure (B3) for agricultural education room and activities room (6.0m high, 2 storey)</li> <li>- 1 temporary structure (B4) for toilet and changing room (2.5m high, 1 storey)</li> <li>- 1 temporary structure with canopy (B5) for pantry and staff resting room (6.0m high, 2 storey)</li> </ul>
<b>No. of Parking Space</b>	3 for private car (5m x 2.5m) (1 for staff and 2 for visitors)
<b>Loading/unloading Bay</b>	1 for van-type LGV (5m x 2.5m)
<b>Operation Hours</b>	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, including Sundays and public holidays

The applicant also proposes to carry out land filling works at the southern part of the Site for site formation of structures and to meet the operational need of the hobby farm, such as parking and vehicle manoeuvring. The hard paved area would involve about 645m<sup>2</sup> (about 18% of site) of filling of concrete of not more than 0.2m (i.e. to about 21.3mPD - 22.8mPD) (**Plan 3B**).

### Types of Agricultural Products

(a) The proposed development is a hobby farm related to healthcare and the types/species to be planted on the fruit planting and Chinese herbal medicines areas would be subject to participants' preference. Nevertheless, the hobby farm would recommend suitable species and provide guidance/advice with examples as shown in the following table:

Type	No. (about)	Spacing (about)	Height (about)	Remark/Other Requirements
<b>Fruit tree planting area (about 1,058m<sup>2</sup>)</b>				
Lychee <sup>1</sup> (荔枝)	17	8m	Above 2.75m	Regular pruning required
Longan (龍眼)	16	5m	Above 2.75m	Regular pruning required
<i>Ziziphus jujube</i> (棗樹)	7	4.2m	Above 2.75m	Pruning to promote horizontal growth and prevent excessive height recommended
Pepino Melon (人參果)	4	2.0m	Above 2.75m	Top dressing in the form of decaying leaves recommended
<b>Chinese herbal medicines area (about 1,146m<sup>2</sup>)</b>				
Type	Row Spacing (about)	Line Spacing (about)	Ridge/furrow Height (about)	Remark/Other Requirements
Tienchi (田七)	15cm	20cm	18 - 20cm	Regular weeding required. Recommended to cover with straw and erect shade shed of 1.5m high
<i>Aloe vera</i> (蘆薈)	40cm	50cm	30cm	Regular weeding and good drainage required
<i>Artemisia argyi</i> (艾草)	20 – 25cm	30 – 35cm	10cm	Top dressing and frequent weeding recommended
<i>Perilla frutescens</i> (紫蘇)	45cm	60cm	30cm	Top dressing and frequent weeding recommended
<i>Chrysanthemum morifolium</i> Ramat (杭菊)	24cm	40cm	30cm	Top dressing and pinching required
<b>Fallow Zone (about 600m<sup>2</sup>)</b>				
<b>Total Farming Area = 1,058m<sup>2</sup> + 1,146m<sup>2</sup> = 2,204 m<sup>2</sup> (about 62%)</b>				

<sup>1</sup> The applicant has expertise in making wine and tea from lychees.

- (b) The proposed development aims to promote hobby organic farming, related to healthcare, among the applicant's relatives and friends. On weekends and public holidays it will also be opened to the public on payment of an entrance fee and advance booking. The hobby farm is non-profit making and farm products will be shared with the participants for free after harvesting. Hence, no marketing channel is required.
- (c) As the hobby farm is located in a secluded location, more time would be allowed for the visitors to arrive and depart. A shorter operation hour is therefore proposed (i.e. from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily). It is estimated to attract a maximum of 10 visitors per day. 2 nos. of staff will work at the Site. Office and reception will be provided at structure B1 to support the daily operation of the hobby farm.
- (d) Farm areas will be subdivided into smaller portions for visitors to practice organic farming. Basic farming knowledge is taught at structure B3 proposed for 'agriculture education room' where visitors would also be briefed about the importance of seed saving and the harm of GM food, pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Visitors will then be directed to the activities room or designated farm areas for hobby farming activities.
- (e) The vehicular access to the Site is via a local track leading from Fan Kam Road (**Plan 2**). There will be three parking spaces for private car (one for staff and two for visitors) and one loading/unloading bay for van-type light goods vehicle, all measured 5m x 2.5m (**Plan 3A**). The estimated traffic generation/attraction rate is at **Appendix 1**. No medium or heavy goods vehicles will be allowed to be parked or enter the Site. Besides, no vehicular traffic would take place during the morning and afternoon peak hours.

#### Drainage Consideration

The Site and the surrounding are largely unpaved farmlands which act as a natural drainage system. There are existing field drains within the Site to discharge the overland flow and there is no record of flooding at the Site. The field drain system includes proposed peripheral 375mm U-channels and an existing minimum 1,000mm wide open channel with connection to a drainage pipe discharging into an existing stream to the east of the Site (**Plan 3B**). The rainwater generated within the site catchment will be discharged effectively<sup>2</sup>.

### **3. Justifications**

- (a) Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in recent years, the demand for local recreational organic/hobby farming have increased and the proposed use can help meet the huge demand for such activities and promote sustainable organic farming in Hong Kong. It is also in line with the government policy on agriculture by encouraging members of the public to participate in agriculture and greening.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on channel requirement calculation, Total Peak Runoff for the Site including Catchments C1, C2 and External Catchment C3 is about 9289 liter/min (**Appendix 2**). According to Figure 8.7 – Chart for the Rapid Design of Channels, for gradients between 1:25 and 1:100, maximum 375UC will be sufficient. The existing and proposed field drain system has ample capacity to discharge the storm water passing through and generated at the Site. Detailed drainage proposal would be submitted to DSD upon approval of the application.

- (b) Ample space (about 62%) will be reserved as farmland for the use of visitors. The farming activity including planting of fruit trees and Chinese herbal medicines is similar to the always permitted agricultural use. The proposed development on a temporary basis would not jeopardize the long-term planning intention of the “AGR” zone.
- (c) The proposed development is generally not incompatible with the surrounding uses, including village houses, cultivated/fallow agricultural land and temporary structures.
- (d) Advanced booking is required for the visit and so traffic flow could be managed in an efficient manner. As the proposed hobby farm is mainly to serve residents in the locality, most of the customers would arrive on foot and traffic generated by the proposed development is not significant, as revealed in **Appendix 1**. Besides, sufficient manoeuvring space will be provided within the Site and no queuing and reverse movement of vehicles onto/from public roads is allowed. Hence, no adverse traffic impact is envisaged.
- (e) The proposed use is clean in nature. No advertisement boards with neon light devices would be installed. No public announcement system or any form of audio amplification system will be used at the Site. No recreational facilities such as karaoke room, game room, mahjong room and barbecue area will be provided. No night-time operation or workshop activities would take place during the planning approval period.
- (f) The applicant will follow the ‘Code of Practice on Handling Environmental Aspects of Temporary Uses and Open Storage Sites’ issued by EPD to minimize possible environmental impacts and nuisance to the surrounding area.
- (g) Sewage discharge from the Site would be directed to a proposed septic tank (**Plan 3A**), which will be designed and constructed with reference to the Practice Note for Professional Person (ProPECC). Besides, no herbicide, pesticide and chemical fertilizers will be applied in the farming areas. There will be insignificant environmental, drainage and sewage impacts arising from the development.
- (h) All existing trees (e.g. *Cleistocalyx nervosum* (Cn) (水翁) and *Ficus hispida* (Fh) (對葉榕)) and vegetation with landscape value like *Colocasia antiquorum* Schott (野芋) within the Site would be retained. Besides, peripheral fruit tree planting and *Chrysanthemum morifolium* Ramat (杭菊) would be provided to enhance the landscape setting (**Plan 3A**). Significant adverse landscape impact arising from the proposed development is not envisaged.
- (i) To avoid any possible environmental nuisance generated by the development, the applicant would agree to the imposition of approval conditions restricting the operation hours and workshop activities. Any non-compliance with the approval conditions would be subject to revocation of the planning permission. Besides, the applicant would follow the EPD’s Code of Practice.

- (j) Fire services installation (FSI) and detailed drainage proposals would be submitted and implemented should the application be approved by the Board. The applicant will also apply for a Short Term Waiver for the structures to DLO/N, LandsD.

#### Filling of Land

- (k) The proposed land filling works would involve filling of concrete of not more than 0.2m (about). Apart from the proposed 0.2m hard paving, excavation (max. 0.42m) and soil paving (max. 0.83m) using cultivable soil in-situ would be required. Such minor formation works are always permitted (**Plan 3B**). The hard paved area can provide a clean environment for visitors and avoid soil erosion. The paved area would also stabilize the structures, provide manoeuvring and parking spaces for vehicles and facilitate drainage works. The proposed structures are for the use of visitors and ancillary facilities such as office, reception, storage, agricultural education room, activities room, toilet/changing room, pantry/staff resting room and products handling area. The area for structure and paved area is kept to a minimum for operational need. The paving will be removed upon expiry of the planning approval and the Site will be reinstated to a condition suitable for agricultural use.
4. To conclude, the proposed development is compatible with adjoining land uses, and no traffic, environmental, drainage, visual and landscape impacts are envisaged. In view that it can promote sustainable organic farming in Hong Kong and is in line with the Government policy on agriculture, favourable consideration may be given to the application.