

Justifications for Temporary Use as Hobby Farm for 3 Years

Background

This application is a renewal of application no. **A/YL-KTS/981**, which was approved on 22 December 2023. All required conditions have been met and fulfilled. Now we would like to apply the renewal for temporary use as hobby farm for 3 years.

History

(a) Established in May 2010, **Go Green (有機薈低碳農莊)** aims to promote green living, organic farming, low-carbon lifestyles, and environmental conservation. We achieve this through various educational programs, including organic seminars, guided tours, planting classes, farming experiences, and parent-child activities.

(b) The site was abandoned for over 30 years, consisting mainly of overgrown grass, weeds, and broken or burned structures. Over time, we successfully rehabilitated this neglected land into productive agricultural use (Appendix 1: Abandoned land for over 20 years).

(c) Initially, we focused purely on vegetable cultivation, transitioning from traditional farming methods to organic practices. Our produce was supplied to the **Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO) 蔬菜統營處** under the **Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)**. We have also participated in and sold our produce at various organic markets, such as Whole City Organic Day 全城有機日, the Western District Wet Market Organic Day, and the Mongkok Organic Market (Appendix 2: Turning Abandoned Land into Agricultural Farm).

(d) As part of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, we partner with NGOs (e.g., 震社會服務處), schools (e.g., 雷蔡群樂幼稚園), and corporations (e.g., Towngas) to organize low-cost educational organic tours, vegetable harvesting opportunities for minority groups, and organic vegetable donations to local elderly homes in collaboration with Towngas every Saturday for the past three consecutive years (Appendix 3: CSR Programs – Give Away Free Organic Vegetables to Elderly Home with Towngas).

(e) Recently, additional schools, NGOs, and corporate organizations have reached out to collaborate with us in designing customized organic educational programs for their students, members, and staff.

(f) We are seeking and have already secured strong endorsement from our partners for this application. We hold official Supporting Letters from **Prof. C.Y. Jim (詹志勇教授)** of The Education University of Hong Kong and **Towngas** (Appendix 4: Support Letters from Prof. C.Y. Jim and Towngas).

The Farm

(a) The farm operator holds a **Farmer Identity Certificate (農民證)** issued by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), officially recognizing him as an organic farmer. Furthermore, the AFCD has issued a formal letter confirming that we operate an active organic vegetable farm (Appendix 5: Letter from AFCD to prove the applicant is operating an organic farm).

(b) The farm is supported by the **Organic Farming Support Service (有機耕作支援服務)** under the AFCD. AFCD staff regularly collect soil and water samples from various parts of the farm for testing to ensure the environment remains unpolluted and fully suitable for organic farming. A recent testing report dated **21 September 2021** confirmed that our farm meets all necessary standards (Appendix 6: AFCD Soil and Water Testing Report). Additionally, we are registered under the AFCD Leisure Farm category, allowing visitors to experience harvesting vegetables directly on-site.

(c) To support our organic vegetable cultivation, we employ eight experienced farmers from Mainland China whose entry and employment were approved by the Labour Department and the Immigration Department. They have successfully worked on the farm for over six years.

(d) To further our educational mission and support organic farming practices, we utilize organic animal fertilizer. We hold an **Animal Display Licence (動物展示牌照)** issued by the AFCD on 21 September 2021 (Appendix 7: Animal Display Licence) and feature animal educational boards on-site to promote animal welfare awareness. Additionally, the farm features educational displays detailing the pineapple-growing process and solar energy systems (Appendix 8: Educational Messages).

(e) To ensure the safety of all visitors, we have maintained third-party liability insurance for the past eight years—a proactive safety measure rarely found in typical hobby farms (Appendix 9: Copy of Third-Party Insurance).

Proposal

General Information

- (a) The site is conveniently located near the **Kam Sheung Road MTR Station** (Appendix 10: Location Plan).
- (b) The hobby farm operates daily from **10:00 AM to 6:00 PM** (opening one hour later than standard organic farms to minimize any disturbance to the surrounding areas), including public holidays. As all activities are primarily farming-related, no events are held at night, ensuring that no nuisance is caused to neighboring communities.
- (c) To maintain a quiet and sustainable environment, the estimated number of visitors is kept low: fewer than **50 visitors on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays**, and fewer than **10 visitors on weekdays**.

(1) Agriculture

- (a) Over **90% of the land** is dedicated to agriculture, trees, or grassland (Appendix 11: Layout Plan; Appendix 12: Proposed structures and their use; Appendix 13 & 14: Existing Farm Photos – Agricultural Land and Trees).
- (b) The farm is registered under the **Organic Support Service (有機耕作支援服務)** of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). AFCD staff regularly collect soil and water samples from various parts of the farm for testing to guarantee that the site remains unpolluted and fully suitable for organic farming.
- (c) Strictly organic farming methods are employed, including crop rotation, the use of organic fertilizers and animal waste (sourced from our farm's goats), and the cultivation of green manure (such as organic green beans) to maintain continuous soil fertility and richness.

(2) Environment

- (a) No public address system will be installed on-site to minimize noise impact on the surrounding area. A clear "**No loud speakers allowed**" sign is posted at the entrance to remind visitors not to use loudspeakers within the farm, ensuring zero noise disturbance to neighbors.
- (b) We strictly adhere to all relevant mitigation measures and requirements outlined in the latest "Code of Practice on Handling the Environmental Aspects of Temporary Uses and Open Storage Sites" issued by the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) to minimize any potential environmental nuisance.
- (c) Septic tanks are installed and utilized for the proper and hygienic disposal of all

generated waste and wastewater.

(3) Traffic

(a) Visitors primarily arrive via the MTR, as the farm is located just a 5-minute walking distance from the **Kam Sheung Road MTR Station**. We actively encourage the use of public transport to minimize carbon emissions (Appendix 15: Public Access Map).

(b) There are no car parking facilities or vehicular access routes to the site. In fact, vehicles cannot access the village itself, and all visitors must walk to the farm on foot.

(c) The site is exclusively accessible via a footpath from Kam Ho Road. Consequently, there are no traffic congestion or parking issues, ensuring zero adverse traffic impact on the surrounding areas.

(d) The site features a single, well-managed ingress/egress point.

(e) The farm generates very little freight; almost all harvested vegetables are sold directly on-site. Any necessary goods are transported to the farm by hand.

(f) Recent road widening works on Kam Po Road include a very large loading and unloading area nearby, providing robust support for any necessary goods transportation.

(4) Landscape

(a) The area is predominantly rural in character, with agricultural land use, trees, and grassland accounting for over 90% of the site (Appendix 16: Landscape Plan).

(b) The proposed use is fully compatible with the surrounding rural area, involving no land filling or excavation works.

(c) We are committed to retaining and safeguarding high-quality agricultural land strictly for agricultural purposes.

(d) All landscape plantings within the site will be properly and regularly maintained at all times.

(e) Existing trees and vegetation are preserved to the maximum extent possible to maintain environmental harmony and compatibility with the surrounding area.

(5) Drainage

(a) Our Drainage Plan and Implementation Plan have been officially approved by the Drainage Services Department. Existing watercourses are regularly cleared and maintained to ensure that the natural drainage system functions properly and prevents any flooding issues.

(b) Well water is used for irrigation, with careful management to avoid overuse during the autumn and winter months. We employ a rotational system across our three wells and one water pool. Furthermore, the AFCD regularly collects water samples from these sources for testing to guarantee that the water remains uncontaminated.

(c) Drainage maintenance works are performed every three months to clear dead leaves, branches, and debris, ensuring that the drainage system remains completely unblocked.

(d) We have not modified the natural topography of the site. Following traditional farming wisdom, we utilize existing drainage channels, rivers, and wells for irrigation, minimizing any disruption to the natural terrain (Appendix 17 & 18: Topography).

(e) By utilizing existing wells, ponds, and natural rivers as drainage facilities, we ensure there is no adverse impact on the surrounding environment.

(f) Site runoff patterns and pathways are clearly documented in Appendix 19.

(g) Please refer to Appendix 20, which indicates the stormwater discharged through the natural rivers into the main rivers and drainage systems managed by the Government, located directly adjacent to our farm. These Government drainage systems (please refer to Appendix 21 for photos) are highly effective in carrying water away from our farm to the main stream, which has sufficient capacity to handle heavy flows even during storms and typhoons.

(h) Because no extra drainage facilities are needed, there is no requirement to modify or coordinate with owners of external drainage infrastructure.

(i) Over 10 years of farm operation through various rainstorms and typhoons, the site has experienced no serious flooding or drainage issues. Because the farm is situated directly next to government main drainage channels with a massive hydraulic capacity far exceeding our water flow, there are no hydraulic capacity concerns.

(j) There are no solid hoardings or peripheral boundary walls within the farm. Instead, open steel fences are used (Appendix 22), allowing rainwater and surface runoff to flow freely into our natural watercourses and onward into the government's main drainage system.

(6) Fire Safety

(a) In our previous application (A/YL-KTS/981), we submitted an updated Layout Plan (Appendix 23: Layout Plan for FS) specifically designed to address all requirements raised by the Fire Services Department, which was subsequently approved. Since the farm remains in the same location—with only a minor portion of land reclaimed by the landlord—there are no significant changes to the overall application layout.

(b) In accordance with expert advice from our fire service consultant, we maintain eight fire extinguishers distributed strategically across various locations, along with emergency lighting and exit signs installed in the farmer and visitor rest areas. Please

refer to Appendix 24 for the Form FS251 (*Certificate of Fire Service Installations and Equipment*).

(c) Comprehensive third-party liability insurance is continuously maintained to ensure visitor safety, and two fully equipped first-aid kits are kept in the office for immediate use.

(7) Land Administration

(a) The farm includes a necessary ancillary office and storage rooms to support essential farm administration work and securely store agricultural tools and equipment.

(8) Food and Environmental Hygiene

(a) The site does not involve any commercial food business or entertainment establishment.

(b) Bottled water and soft drinks are provided for farmers and visitors. All empty bottles and cans are systematically collected and sorted for recycling purposes.

Conclusion

This application is a formal renewal of application no. **A/YL-KTS/981**, which was successfully approved on 22 December 2023. We sincerely hope the Town Planning Board will favorably consider and approve our application. We fully agree to abide by and comply with all conditions stipulated by the Committee upon approval. Thank you very much for your kind attention and consideration.

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