

Attachment 3

Replacement Pages of the Visual Impact Assessment

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 SCENIC Landscape Studio Limited have been commissioned to undertake the Visual Impact Assessment for the Section 12A Planning Application for Proposed Religious Institution (the Supreme Kwan Ti Temple), at Various Lots in D.D. 117 and Adjoining Government Land, Tai Tong, Yuen Long, New Territories (hereinafter referred to as the Application Site).
- 1.2 The visual impact assessment (VIA) is required to assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Scheme which is the subject of the S12A application. The VIA will demonstrate that the proposals can be accommodated within the existing landscape and visual context without significant impacts to the semi-rural / urban fringe area.
- 1.3 The VIA assesses the source and magnitude of the Proposed Scheme on the existing visual character and amenity within the context of the site and its environs. The report concludes by making specific recommendations for alleviating any potential visual impact caused by the Proposed Scheme. The report is prepared in accordance with TPB PG-No. 41A 'Guidelines on submissions of Visual Impact Assessment for Planning Applications to the Town Planning Board'.

2.0 Existing Site Description

- 2.1 The Application Site has a total site area of about 18,325 m² and comprises a Development Area, where the proposed Temple is to be located, and the existing Kwan Ti Square, where compensatory planting shall also be proposed. The Application Site falls within an area zoned "Recreation" ("REC") and "Green Belt" ("GB") on the Approved Tai Tong Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/YL-TT/20. Outside the Application site some works are also proposed to upgrade an existing access road connecting the Application Site with Tai Tong Shan Road to the north.
- 2.2 The site is located at the south-eastern edge of the broad valley plain which extends north towards Yuen Long and is contained by uplands of the Tai Lam County Park to the South, East and West. The lower slopes of these uplands are typically wooded, with more open grassland / scrubland evident towards the ridgeline formed by Kun Um Shan and Sacred Eagle rock in the west. There are numerous grave sites on the hillsides on the lower hill slopes to the west of the Application Site. The immediate vicinity of the site is dominated by commercial leisure and recreation facilities, including eco parks, horse riding facilities, camping grounds and motor sport circuits. Further north, there are village development and warehouses associated with light industrial premises predominate across the valley floor.
- 2.3 The Development Area is currently vacant, with Kwan Ti Square, an open-air religious facility located to the immediate north. The existing Development Area levels range from around +23.75 to +34.74 mPD in the west to between +27.57 to +39.20 mPD in the east with these existing slopes supporting several existing trees and open areas of rough grassland. The access road that forms part of the proposed works outside the Application Site Boundary is around one kilometer in length and has intermittent tree planting at both sides of the road.

3.0 Description of the Proposed Scheme

- 3.1 The Proposed Scheme consists of a several buildings and associated courtyards in a formal arrangement along a west to east axis, rising up the valley side slope. The development works with the natural hilly terrain of the Development Area, rising from the West from approximately 24.75mPD to around 38mPD to the East, where the Grand Hall of the "Supreme Kwan Ti" is located. At the lower slopes, which are mainly located in the area currently zoned "REC", excavation is proposed to create buildings at L/G, G/F and 1/F which are set into the existing slope and accommodate a Hall of Manifestations. To the North and South of this central axis, smaller scale-built structures are proposed within the "REC" Zone, including a Hall of Enlightenment to the South and an Exhibition and Tea Galley to the North. At the Upper Parts of the Slopes, which largely correspond with the existing "GB" Zone, unexcavated land is proposed supporting the proposed buildings. The complex is entered from the lower, western area through a sequence steps, ornamental gate structures and courtyards / formed as a stepped building platforms and terraces at levels +24.75mPD, +30.5mPD, and +38.00mPD, addressing the arrival to the main temple building; the Supreme Kwan Ti Temple located near the upper portion of the site. Behind this building to the north lies a Scripture library, connected to the main temple building via a courtyard.
- 3.2 The "Supreme Kwan Ti Temple" is a stand-alone Religious Facility comprising several built elements. The primary religious building blocks cluster around the central East to West axis and adopts the traditional Chinese architectural order of "Three Courts Three Halls". The three courts comprise, the Court of Harmony, the Ceremonial Main Court, and the Inner Court. These are integrated with buildings and connected to adjacent facilities via walkways and gateways. The tallest building (+67.999mPD), the Grand Hall of the "Supreme Kwan Ti", is based on a nine-column bay formation with trussed gables and a pitched roof. An 18m high Kwan Tai Statue will be housed inside the Grand Hall which has an overall height of 29.999m. The Grand Hall is 45m wide, 25m deep, with eaves overhanging to 5m.
- 3.3 The existing access road is to be upgraded to connect to a proposed vehicular drop of at the lower western portion of the site, adjacent to the pedestrian entrance gateways (Gate of Unity and Gate of Harmony). The site is currently accessed from the north via an existing access road with a junction connecting to Tai Tong Shan Road. This access road serves the site and adjacent lots, including visitor attractions and associated car parking facilities.

4.0 Baseline Conditions

Visual Envelope

- 4.1 The extent of the Visual Envelope (VE), the zones of visual influence (ZVI) are presented as **Figures 4.4 and 4.5 – Visual Envelope and Visually Sensitive Receivers**. The VE, the area from which the Proposed Scheme will be seen, is shaped primarily by a combination of the existing landform, mature tree growth, and elements of built development infrastructure.
- 4.2 Although the Assessment Area for the VIA is normally delineated according to the TPB PG No. 41A, as being around three times the overall Building Height of the Proposed Development Scheme, it is instructive to map the actual VE and ZVI to get a more accurate picture of the locations which will have a view of the proposals and how much of the Proposed Scheme can be seen.
- 4.3 To the east, west and south the VE is formed by the wooded hill slopes of Tai Lam Country Park. Within the ridgelines defining the extent of the VE, the intricacies of the terrain surrounding the site and the patterns of tree growth function to then determine the visibility of the application site.

5.0 Visual Impact Assessment

Sources of Visual Impact

- 5.1 The primary source of visual impact in the operational stage will be due to the introduction of a new development within a relatively rural location.
- 5.2 The key issues to be addressed by the visual impact assessment will include:
- The introduction of new development within a sub-urban landscape, although the proposal will be adjacent to existing leisure related development and set within existing landform (wooded ridges) at the valley edge.
 - Development of a responsive architectural design and the associated mitigation measures to minimise potential visual impacts as far as possible which responds to both the existing context and the future planning context. This includes the creation of boundary setbacks and buffer areas along key facades of the development and the adoption of stepped height profiles to respond to the visual context.
 - Landscape and visual mitigation for the vehicular access from Tai Tong Shan Road.
 - Sensitive design of the site formation works and design of structures along the site boundary.
- 5.3 The predicted visual impact for each of the VPs is described in section 7.0 together with the proposed mitigation measures (section 6.0) in accordance with TPB PG-No. 41A.

6.0 Visual Mitigation Measures

- 6.1 The proposed mitigation measures during the operational phase of the project are described below and shown on **Figure 3.1 - Proposed Scheme: Urban Design Considerations**.
- 6.2 Operational stage landscape and visual mitigation measures include two key levels of approach, the primary and secondary mitigation. The primary mitigation measures are based on the location and overall form of the Proposed Scheme whilst the secondary mitigation measures look to how the Proposed Scheme can be treated to mitigate any potential impacts. It is the primary mitigation measures which shape the form of the architectural scheme and have the biggest effect on the mitigation of the potential visual impacts. The proposed mitigation measures include the following:

Primary Mitigation Measures

- Setting the development at the valley edge where it is flanked by wooded ridges forming the lower slopes of the hillside backdrop. As illustrated on **Figure 3.2**, the development is flanked by wooded ridges at the edge of the valley which help accommodate the development within its landscape context. The larger components of the development (including the main temple building and Gate of Divinity) are set towards the eastern side of the site where they are in closer proximity to this embracing wooded landform backdrop.
- Creation of a responsive development platform design which aligns to the existing site contours to create a more visually complex development form and ensure better integration with the immediate landscape and visual context. Development platforms are created at levels +24.75mPD, +30.5mPD, and +38.00mPD, which relate to range of existing site levels from west to east (approx. +23.75 mPD to +39.20 mPD). This approach also serves to reduce the scale of the proposed site formation works.
- Adoption of stepped building height profile with lower height buildings of the temple complex located to north and south of the main temple building (Grand Hall of the Supreme Kwan Ti), creating a more subtle transition between the existing landscape and the development. As illustrated on **Figure 3.1**, lower structures are located towards the site boundary. This includes the south-western and northern edge of the site where the Hall of Enlightenment and Exhibition / Tea Gallery are typically 38 - 40mPD and structures at the western edges of the site

7.9 *Effect on Visual Resources:* Not affected

The resources which comprise this view include Tai Tong Shan Road, the grassland at the edge of the road, the mature tree growth in the middle ground and the upper wooded hillslopes and ridgeline formed by Kun Um Shan and Sacred Eagle Rock and Chuk Ko Yan Leng (+422 mPD) in the background. The upland landscape and mature vegetation form an important visual resource contributing to an overall quality of the existing view. However, there will be no effect on visual resources as views of the Proposed Scheme from this location will be obscured by the intervening mature landform vegetation.

7.10 *Overall visual Impact:* **Negligible**

Views of the proposed scheme will be obscured by the intervening landform and mature vegetation and as such there will be no noticeable effects or insignificant visual effects caused by the project.

Vantage Point 02: View looking south-west from Tai Tong Shan Road near Po Leung Kuk Jockey Club Tai Tong Holiday Camp (VSR 2) (Figures 7.3 refers).

7.11 This vantage point, at an elevation of +82.0 mPD, located at approximately 500m from the Development Area, is available to visitors of the Po Leung Kuk jockey club Tai Tong Holiday Camp and leisure users of Tai Lam Country Park. The existing view is framed to the south and north-west by the margins of Tai Tong Shan Road and vegetated slope (6NW-D/C 74). The location is selected as it is the only location near the entrance to Tai Tong Holiday Camp where there is a break in the dense roadside vegetation allowing views out to the wider landscape, including a section of the ridgeline of Kung Um Shan. The foreground is characterised by the hard surface of the carriageway and vegetation on the slopes bordering Tai Tong Shan Road. There is a narrow view out towards the valley floor, with most such areas largely obscured by vegetation and landform in the foreground, which also serves to obscure views of the Proposed Scheme.

7.12 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers:* Medium

This vantage point is available to visitors accessing the Po Leung Kuk jockey club Tai Tong Holiday Camp and leisure users of the Tai Lam Country Park, and in particular those accessing the nearby Yuen Tsuen Ancient Trail. As this location is a road/ footpath with low traffic density, the sensitivity of this view from a public perspective is likely to be medium.

7.13 *Visual Composition:* Not affected

Owing to the screening effect of intervening landform, the vegetation in the middle ground and the relatively far distance and low elevation of the proposals, the visual composition would not be apparent in views from this location.

7.14 *Visual Obstruction:* Not affected

The proposals would not cause any visual obstruction in views from this location due the screening effect of the intervening landform and vegetation.

7.15 *Effect on Public Viewers:* Negligible

There will be no impact on the public viewers at this location owing to the intervening landform and vegetation which screens the development and its associated impacts from view.

7.16 *Effect on Visual Resources:* Not affected

The visual resources which comprise this view include Tai Tong Shan Road, the vegetated slopes at the edge of the road, the mature tree growth in the background and the portion of visible ridgeline formed by Kun Um Shan in the background. The mature vegetation in the valley forms an important visual resource contributing to an overall quality of the existing view. However, there will be no effect on visual resources as views of the Proposed Scheme from this location will be obscured by the intervening landform and vegetation on the slope.

7.17 *Overall visual Impact: **Negligible***

Views of the proposed scheme will be obscured by the intervening landform and vegetation, and as such there will be no noticeable effects or insignificant visual effects caused by the project.

Vantage Point 03: View looking east from service road below Sacred Eagle Rock (VSR 3) (Figures 7.4 refers).

7.18 This vantage point at an elevation of approximately +265mPD and approximately some 1960m distance from the Application Site offers an open view to the valley floor towards Yuen Long and the mountain backdrop to the east. This view will be available to hikers or trail walkers traversing the mid slopes below Sacred Eagle rock. The components of the view are similar to vantage point 02, however the more elevated and southerly viewpoint demonstrates the visual relationship between the proposed development and the wooded slopes at the valley edge where the existing low-rise development across the valley floor. From this distant location the Application Site is a very small component of the view which is partially obscured by a wooded ridgeline extending from the uplands at the southern end of the Tai Tong Valley.

7.19 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Medium*

This vantage point is only available to a relatively few hikers on the Service Road at an elevated location. Owing to the screening effect of intervening wooded ridges the degree of visibility towards the Application Site is partial, being limited to the upper portions and the main roof of the building. Given a combination of the wide panoramic nature of the existing view, the distance to the Proposed Scheme (1960m) and that there are alternative views to the north and northeast the sensitivity of the public view is considered to be medium.

7.20 *Visual Composition: Apparent*

Despite the relatively open nature of the view towards the Application Site views of the Proposed Scheme would be partially obscured by intervening ridgelines and wooded slopes. Although very distant the visual composition would be apparent with the creation of a building mass with a scale which is similar to other developments in the wider area but a relatively large-scale built structure within its more immediate surroundings. The use of a terraced or stepped development platform (following the existing contours); the use of a stepped building height profile rising from west to east and south to north, the creation of a visual corridor between the blocks and the use of vertical greenery on parts of the western building facades contribute to enhancing the integration of this visual composition with the existing landscape setting.

7.21 *Visual Obstruction: Partially blocked but not significant*

The Proposed Scheme will lead to some minor visual obstruction in views from this location however owing to the distant nature of the view this is largely limited to a small portion of the vegetation immediately to the east of the Application Site. For the most part visual access to the upland and valley landscapes are unaffected and so this minor blockage forms a very small part of the overall panoramic view available from this location.

7.22 *Effect on Public Viewers: Slight*

Given the viewing distance, the panoramic nature of the existing view and the relatively small scale of the visible portion of the Proposed Scheme the effect on the public viewers is considered to be slight. Secondary mitigation measures including vertical greening at the façade of the Hall of Manifestations help to blend the peripheral parts of development into the backdrop of wooded slopes.

7.23 *Effect on Visual Resources: Small*

Despite the significant portion of the view comprising existing urban development on the valley the quality of the existing visual resources apparent in this view are considered to be good owing to the low-rise, semi-rural character and the scale and enclosure formed by the surrounding mountain landscape. The visible section of the Proposed Scheme will lead to a very small loss of view of the

hillside vegetation however this is a small proportion of the landscape resources which comprise this view. As such the impact on visual resources is not considered to be significant.

7.24 *Overall visual Impact: **Slight***

Given the viewing distance, the panoramic nature of the existing view, the adoption of a responsive architectural and landscape design and the scale of existing visible development on the valley floor relative to the scale of the visible portion of the Proposed Scheme the predicted visual impacts will be slight. Whilst from a similar distance and direction as compared to VP2, this vantage point is from a much higher elevation, where the screening effect of low wooded ridges is diminished. However, from this vantage point the development visually forms part of the developed valley floor area, and its massing is compatible with some of the larger warehouse type structures within this view.

Vantage Point 04: View looking north from picnic spot along Tai Lam Nature Trail (VSR 4) (VSR 4) (Figures 7.5 refers).

7.25 This vantage point from the Tai Lam Nature Trail is located to the south of the Application Site at an elevation of approximately +140mPD and at some 1360m distance. It offers a panoramic view of the landscape to the north, west and east over the wooded uplands of Tai Lam Country Park. This is also one of the few locations along this trail where the opening of the woodland canopy allows views into the valley below. Views looking north towards the Application Site are wholly obscured by the wooded topography. The main characteristics of the view are the wooded hillslopes with distant views of power transmission lines, the only evident component of development.

7.26 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Medium*

This vantage point is only available to a relatively few hikers on the Tai Lam Nature Trail at an elevated location. Given a combination of the viewing distance to the Application Site (1360m), the size of the panorama available, and the screening effect of the existing vegetation the sensitivity of the public view is considered to be medium.

7.27 *Visual Composition: Not affected*

Owing to the screening effect of intervening landform and wooded vegetation and the relatively small scale of the proposals when viewed from this distant vantage point their visual composition would not be apparent in views from this location.

7.28 *Visual Obstruction: Not affected*

The proposals would not cause any visual obstruction in views from this location due the screening effect of the intervening landform and vegetation.

7.29 *Effect on Public Viewers: Negligible*

There will be no impact on the public viewers at this location owing to the screening effect of the intervening landform and mature vegetation which screens the development and its associated impacts from view.

7.30 *Effect on Visual Resources: Not affected*

The upland landscape clothed in woodland vegetation form an attractive visual resource contributing to an overall quality of the existing view. However, there will be no effect on visual resources as views of the Proposed Scheme from this location will be obscured by the intervening mature landform and vegetation.

7.31 *Overall visual Impact: **Negligible***

Views of the proposed scheme will be obscured by the intervening landform and mature vegetation and as such there will be no noticeable effects or insignificant visual effects caused by the project.

Vantage Point 05: View looking south from active play area at Tai Tong Tsuen (VSR 5) (Figures 7.6 refers).

- 7.32 Views looking south from this location at an elevation of approximately +14mPD and a distance of 1100m extend across sports court and concrete hard stand in the foreground towards the urban area of Tai Tong Tsuen. This is a low-rise urban area typically comprising 3-4 storey housing blocks interspersed with mature tree groups. Beyond this the ridgeline formed by Kun Um Shan and Sacred Eagle Rock are background elements towards the east side of the view.
- 7.33 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Low*
This vantage point is available to recreational users of the sports courts and residents from the nearby villages. The existing view is characterised by a combination low rise buildings and tree groups associated with the village area, with limited distant views of the naturalistic hillside landscapes that surround the valley floor. The view is degraded to an extent by the large expanse of concrete and given that the view is only likely to be experienced periodically short the sensitivity of this view towards the Application Site is considered to be low.
- 7.34 *Visual Composition: Not affected*
Owing to the screening effect of intervening low-rise development and tree clusters and the relatively small scale of the proposals when viewed from this distant vantage point the visual composition of the proposed development would not be apparent in views from this location.
- 7.35 *Visual Obstruction: Not affected*
The proposals would not cause any visual obstruction in views from this location due the screening effect of the intervening urban area.
- 7.36 *Effect on Public Viewers: Negligible*
There will be no impact on the public viewers at this location owing to the screening effect of the intervening existing development which screens the proposed development and its associated impacts from view.
- 7.37 *Effect on Visual Resources: Not affected*
There will be no effect on visual resources as views of the Proposed Scheme from this location will be obscured by the intervening trees and built structures within the existing landscape.
- 7.38 *Overall visual Impact: **Negligible***
Views of the proposed scheme will be obscured by the intervening valley floor development and as such there will be no noticeable effects or insignificant visual effects caused by the project. This vantage point demonstrates the screening effect of the close-nit village development in screening the temple from such areas of the developed valley floor.

Vantage Point 06: View looking northeast from a footpath beside a playground in Tai Tong Organic Eco Park (VSR 6) (Figures 7.7 refers).

- 7.39 The vantage point is located at a footpath beside a playground in Tai Tong Organic Eco Park. It is at an elevation of +22mPD and located at a distance of approximately 100m from the proposed scheme. Tai Tong Organic Eco Park is a popular theme park offering education, recreation, and farming related activities. This view looks northeast towards the site, which occupies an elevated position in the view. The view is framed to the left by a row of trees next to the children play facilities and a two-storey temporary structure to the right. In the midground of the view, there are mature tree groups growing along a stream course which form a buffer between the playground and the temple site.

7.40 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers: High*

The vantage point is available to the recreation visitors to the Tai Tong Organic Eco Park, including children and their families. Whilst the foreground of the view is dominated by built elements including paved surfaces, play structures and a building, the background of the view is composed of dense tree groups along aligned to a stream and valley slopes, presenting a relatively naturalistic appearance. Owing to the close proximity of this view and its leisure and recreational nature, the sensitivity of the public view is considered to be high.

7.41 *Visual Composition: Apparent*

Given that the trees growing on the temple site will be removed, the built development would be apparent. However, with the adoption of primary mitigation measures such as block separation, stepped building height profile and the terraced or stepped development platform (following the existing contours), the scale and the prominence of the proposed building will be reduced. The lower portions of the development would be obscured by the retained dense tree growth outside the site and new tree planting within. Given these factors the visual composition of the visible portion of the proposals is considered to be apparent.

7.42 *Visual Obstruction: Medium*

The Proposed Scheme would occupy part of the middle of the future view from this location, replacing a view towards a wooded slope. It should be noted that only middle and upper portions of the Proposed Scheme would be visible, with views of the lower part of the proposals being obscured by the existing landform and retained existing tree growth, and existing foreground development. Nevertheless, in addition to this partial visual obstruction of the wooded slope, the proposed development would also reduce visual openness, which is reflected in rating the visual obstruction as Medium.

7.43 *Effect on Public Viewers: Moderate*

Although the Proposed Scheme will occupy the middle ground of the existing view, the proposed landscape buffer planting of trees and shrubs will contribute to its mitigation. This together with the scale of the visible proportion of the proposals, the high sensitivity of public viewers and the close distance will result in the effect on the public viewers being moderate.

7.44 *Effect on Visual Resources: Medium*

The implementation of the development proposals would lead to the loss of views of part of the wooded landscape at the western side of the Application Site, and a small portion of sky view. However visual access to the wooded land to the northwest would be maintained. The establishment of the setback and landscape buffer at the western end of the Proposed Scheme and the growth to maturity of the proposed trees would address the loss of greenery. As such the effect on visual resources is considered to be medium.

7.45 *Overall visual Impact: **Moderate***

The Proposed Scheme is relatively close to this vantage point. The adoption of the proposed mitigation measures including the terraced building platform from west to east, setbacks and adoption of a stepped height profile, in combination with landscape buffer planting, would serve to lower the perceived height and obscure views of the Proposed Scheme to help mitigate the visual impact. Other mitigation measures include the use of colour and finishes of façade for the temple structures will let the development integrate better with the surrounding environs and create visual interest from this vantage point. However, factoring in the High sensitivity of public views and the magnitude of change in the composition of the view the overall visual impact is considered Moderate.

Vantage Point 07: View looking south-east from footpath near Yeung Ka Tsuen (VSR 7) (Figures 7.8 refers).

- 7.46 This vantage point is located at an elevation of approximately +17mPD and the views extend some 650m east towards the Application Site. The view is towards the edge of the urban area of the valley floor and characterised by rural farmland giving way to a wooded landscape of mature tree growth with the ridgeline of the Tai Lam Country Park forming the backdrop. This tree growth is arranged along low ridges extending from the uplands to the south and at this low elevation this existing landform and vegetation almost entirely screens the proposed development from view and demonstrates that even quite large structures can be accommodated within the landscape without detracting from its overall visual amenity.
- 7.47 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers:* Medium
This vantage point is experienced by a limited number of villagers and pedestrians at this relatively remote area at the southern edge of the valley plain. The rural scene is bucolic however its naturalistic and tranquil qualities are affected to some extent by the existing powerlines passing through the landscape and glimpsed views of low-rise built development in the middle ground of the view. As such it is considered to have a medium sensitivity to change.
- 7.48 *Visual Composition:* Not apparent
Despite the top of the main temple roof (Grand Hall of the Supreme Kwan Ti) being at a height of +69mPD the building profile does not break the outline of ridgeline when viewed from this vantage point. Owing to the screening effect of the mature tree growth to the east of the Application Site only a small part of the Proposed Scheme would be visible, with views being limited to a portion of the roof of the main temple building. As such the visual composition of the Proposed Scheme will not be apparent in views from this location.
- 7.49 *Visual Obstruction:* Small blockage of views
Given the limited visibility of the proposals from this location there would not be any significant visual obstruction.
- 7.50 *Effect on Public Viewers:* Slight
Only a part of the upper roof of one of built components which make up the Proposed Scheme would be visible and as this forms a small part of the panoramic view available from this location the overall the effect on public viewers will be small.
- 7.51 *Effect on Visual Resources:* Small
Owing to the small portion of the Proposed Scheme being visible from this location the loss of visual resources in terms of the backdrop of wooded slopes would be small.
- 7.52 *Overall visual Impact:* **Slight**
The screening effect of the intervening landform and dense tree growth obscure much of the view of the proposed scheme. The view demonstrates the beneficial screening effect of the local landform at the valley edges, where intervening wooded ridges help accommodate the development within the landscape. As described above only a part of the roof of Grand Hall would be visible above the canopies of the trees. As such the Proposed Scheme forms a small part of the overall panoramic view and so the predicted visual impact will be **slight**.

Vantage Point 08: View looking south from rest pavilion at Tai Tong Shan Road (VSR 8) (Figures 7.9 refers).

- 7.53 Views from this location at a distance of some 530m and at an elevation of +40mPD, looks south from a Rest Pavilion located at the junction of the access road to the site with Tai Tong Shan Road. The existing view is characterised by a combination of Tai Tong Shan with roadside trees in the fore and middle ground obscuring any views out to the uplands of the Tai Lam Country Park in the

background. The landscape is wooded and rural in character with the mature tree growth along Tai Tong Shan Road and the valley sides of the low hills of the Tai Lam Country Park. A combination of the existing mature tree growth and intervening landform obscures views of the Application Site.

7.54 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Medium*

This vantage point is available to the drivers on Tai Tong Shan Road and walkers using the pavilion located at the junction with the access road to the site. Given a combination of the nature of the existing view, with its attractive wooded character, the screening effect of the mature vegetation to the south and that drivers and walkers will have a transient experience of the view this view is considered have a medium sensitivity.

7.55 *Visual Composition: Not affected*

Owing to the screening effect of the mature vegetation and the relatively small scale of the proposals their visual composition would not be apparent in views from this location.

7.56 *Visual Obstruction: Not affected*

The proposals would not cause any visual obstruction in views from this location due the screening effect of the intervening mature vegetation and landform.

7.57 *Effect on Public Viewers: Negligible*

There will be no impact on the public viewers at this location owing to the screening effect of the intervening mature vegetation and landform.

7.58 *Effect on Visual Resources: Not affected*

There will be no effect on visual resources as views of the Proposed Scheme from this location will be obscured by the intervening trees and built structures within the existing landscape and none of the existing vegetation, including the existing trees along the access road that are visible from this location, will be affected by the proposed development scheme.

7.59 *Overall visual Impact: **Negligible***

Views of the proposed scheme will be obscured by the intervening mature vegetation at the road corridor and there will be no noticeable effects or insignificant visual effects caused by the project.

Vantage Point 09: View looking south from visitor car park entrance at Tai Tong Organic Eco Park (VSR 9) (Figures 7.10 refers).

7.60 This vantage point, at an elevation of +23mPD and at a distance of approximately 210m, looks south across the visitor's car park towards the Application Site. The existing view is characterised by a combination of the hardstand of the parking area in the foreground and the adjacent vegetation around its periphery, beyond which the view extends to a backdrop formed by the wooded hillslopes and ridgeline of the Tai Lam Country Park. From this close vantage point, the lower parts of the Proposed Scheme will be partially obscured by the existing foreground vegetation however the middle and upper portions of the development shall be visible against the ridgeline.

7.61 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Medium*

This vantage point is available to the vehicle travellers and visitors to the Tai Tong Organic Eco Park and adjacent leisure attractions. Whilst the foreground of the view is an extensive concrete hardstand / visitor car park the background of the view is of low wooded hills of Tai Lam Country Park, which, despite some power lines and low-level structures, present a relatively unified, naturalistic appearance. As such, the sensitivity of this view and the degree of visibility towards the Application Site are considered to be medium.

7.62 *Visual Composition: Apparent*

Despite the relatively open but framed nature of the view towards the Proposed Scheme, the

composition of the built development would be apparent with the use of separate blocks, stepped building height profile and the terraced or stepped development platform (following the existing contours) helping to reduce the scale and prominence of the proposed buildings. In addition, the lower portion of the proposals are partially obscured by the intervening tree growth. Whilst the development would be a taller structure than the existing one to two storey buildings in the vicinity, the setting of the development into the existing slopes at the valley edge, in combination with the aforementioned mitigation measures has enhanced the developments compatibility with its surroundings. Nevertheless, the proposed development would become a new built visual element set against the natural mountains in the background and low-rise rural structures in the foreground.

7.63 *Visual Obstruction: Medium*

The Proposed Scheme would occupy a portion of the middle ground of the future view from this location replacing part of the view of the wooded hillslopes, small portion of sky view and ridgeline of the mountain backdrop to the south. However, the view of the wooded hillslopes to the east and west of the valley would be unaffected. It should be noted that only middle and upper portions of the Proposed Scheme would be visible with views of the bottom part of the proposals being obscured by the existing landform and retained existing tree growth. Nevertheless, in addition to this partial visual obstruction of the mountain backdrop/ridgeline and open sky view, the proposed development would also reduce visual openness, which is reflected in rating the visual obstruction as Medium.

7.64 *Effect on Public Viewers: Moderate*

Although the Proposed Scheme will occupy the middle ground of the existing view the proposed landscape buffer planting of trees and shrubs will contribute to its mitigation. The nature of the view towards the Country Park backdrop will however be modified and this together with the scale of the visible proportion of the proposals will result in the effect on the public viewers being Moderate.

7.65 *Effect on Visual Resources: Medium*

The implementation of the development proposals would lead to the loss of views of part of the wooded hillslopes to the south of the Application Site, a small portion of sky view and the ridgeline which forms the distant backdrop. However visual access to the wooded hillslopes to the west and south of the valley and most of the sky view and part of the ridgeline in the background would be maintained. The establishment of the setback and landscape buffer at the northern end of the Proposed Scheme and the growth to maturity of the proposed trees would address the loss of greenery. As such the effect on visual resources is considered to be medium.

7.66 *Overall visual Impact: **Moderate***

The adoption of the proposed mitigation measures including the proposed setback from the northern boundary, adoption of stepped height profile and landscape buffer planting would serve to obscure views of the Proposed Scheme and help reduce the overall impact. Nevertheless, the scheme would partially obstruct views toward the background of ridgelines and wooded slopes of Tai Tam Country Park and reduce visual openness as viewed from this close vantage point. Overall, the residual impacts would therefore be graded as Moderate. Despite this finding, it should also be noted that the scheme is viewed across an open foreground which is an area of car parks and small-scale structures associated with existing leisure developments, of which the proposed development would form a functionally compatible part.

Vantage Point 10: View looking north from lotus pond at Tai Tong Lychee Valley (VSR 10) (Figures 7.11 refers).

- 7.67 The vantage point is located at the valley floor within the Tai Tong Lychee Valley Visitor Facility. It is at an elevation of +20mPD, from a pedestrian bridge which crosses the lotus pond, and located at a distance of approximately 100m from the Proposed Scheme. The Lychee Valley is a popular visitor

attraction, and the view is available to multiple leisure visitors. This view looks north to towards the site, which occupies an elevated position above the lotus pond. The existing view is framed by mature tree growth on both sides which extends to form a green buffer between the pond and the Application Site.

7.68 *Sensitivity of Public Viewers: High*

This vantage point is available to many leisure users, with the location being a leisure attraction where thematic built elements are prevalent. The sensitivity of the view is further influenced by a combination of the existing landscape and visual amenity of the view, the viewing distance to the Application Site and the enclosure formed by the surrounding landform and mature tree growth, where views of the southern portion of the Application Site are obscured by existing tree growth. Owing to the close proximity of this view and its leisure and recreational nature, the sensitivity of the public view is considered to be high.

7.69 *Visual Composition: Apparent*

Despite the relatively screened and framed nature of the view towards the Proposed Scheme, the composition of the built development would be apparent with the use of separate blocks, stepped building height profile and the terraced or stepped development platform (following the existing contours) helping to reduce the scale and prominence of the proposed buildings. In addition, the lower portion of the proposals are partially obscured by the intervening tree growth. Whilst the development would be a taller structure than the existing one to two storey buildings in the vicinity, although its function is compatible with the leisure-oriented surroundings. Given these factors the visual composition of the visible portion of the proposals is appraised as apparent.

7.70 *Visual Obstruction: Small*

The Proposed Scheme would occupy a portion of the middle ground of the future view from this location replacing part of the view of a small portion of sky view and tree top areas. It should be noted that only middle and upper portions of the Proposed Scheme would be visible with views of the bottom part of the proposals being obscured by the existing landform and retained existing tree growth. There would also be a small reduction in visual openness, which is reflected in rating the visual obstruction as Small.

7.71 *Effect on Public Viewers: Slight*

Only a part of the upper roof which make up the Proposed Scheme would be visible. The nature of the development is compatible with the leisure function of the existing area and with the addition planting and vertical greening at the southern edge of the site will help mitigate the effects. Ne

7.72 *Effect on Visual Resources: Small*

Owing to the small portion of the Proposed Scheme being visible from this location the loss of visual resources in terms of the backdrop of sky and the tops of existing trees, which would be removed to facilitate construction, would be small.

7.73 *Overall visual Impact: **Slight***

The screening effect of the intervening dense tree growth obscure much of the view of the lower and middle portions of the proposed scheme. As described above only a part of the roof of Grand Hall would be visible above the canopies of the trees and as such the Proposed Scheme forms a small part of the overall view. Factoring in the slight rating of the effect on Public Viewers the predicted visual impact will be slight.

proposals. Full views of the temple complex are largely contained within the site and its immediate surroundings. In close views the scheme would partially obstruct views toward the background of ridgelines and wooded slopes of Tai Tam Country Park and tend to reduce visual openness. However, even in relatively close views retained trees and landform at either side of the site will help to blend the proposals with the existing landscape context.

- 8.6 The selection of vantage points has been comprehensive covering all the potential viewing angles from publicly accessible locations. As is clearly demonstrated by the photomontages there are few locations from where the Proposed Scheme can be seen in it's entirety. In most locations views of the proposals are largely obscured by the intervening landform, mature vegetation and built structures. In the few locations where there will be views of the proposals these are largely partial or glimpsed with only parts (often just the upper portion and roofs) of the scheme being visible.
- 8.7 The photomontages show a scheme which although located within a semi-rural environment is not incompatible with its context. The degree of 'contextual fit' is influenced by the architectural enhancement measures designed into the Proposed Scheme which have been described above and partly due to its setting, the scale of existing developments within the wider local area and the lack of visual access. It would be unrealistic to think that there would be no adverse impacts however this must also be considered in terms of the nature and extent of existing and future views. Most of the impacts are localised to the area immediately adjacent to the site, where the temple is not incompatible with the adjacent leisure and recreational facilities and will form a future component part of these local attractions. Generally, the predicted visual impacts from three vantage points with a view of the proposals will be slight, with the two nearby views from adjacent leisure areas rated as moderate due to the corresponding increased visibility and scale of the perceived development associated with such closer vantage points. The overall visual impacts of the other five vantage points will be negligible.
- 8.8 Given the factors described above together with the adoption of a responsive architectural design the implementation of the Proposed Scheme would not significantly detract from the existing landscape and visual amenity of the local area. In overall summary, a slight impact is predicted, where the proposed development will, with or without mitigation measures, result in overall term some negative visual effect to most of the identified key public viewpoints.