

RNTPC Paper No. A/NE-LK/153
For Consideration by the
Rural and New Town Planning
Committee on 8.9.2023

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION
UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE**

APPLICATION NO. A/NE-LK/153

- Applicant** : Mr. TSANG Michael Kai Wing represented by Mr. LAU Chee Sing
- Site** : Lot 1371 S.C in D.D. 39, Ma Tseuk Leng, Sha Tau Kok, New Territories
- Site Area** : About 116.16m²
- Lease** : Block Government Lease (demised for agricultural use)
- Plan** : Approved Luk Keng and Wo Hang Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/NE-LK/11
- Zoning** : “Agriculture” (“AGR”)
- Application** : Proposed House (New Territories Exempted House (NTEH) – Small House)

1. The Proposal

1.1 The applicant, who claims himself to be an indigenous villager of Ma Tseuk Leng Village¹, is seeking planning permission to build an NTEH (Small House) on the application site (the Site) in Ma Tseuk Leng Village (**Plans A-1 and A-2a**). The Site falls within an area zoned “AGR” on the approved Luk Keng and Wo Hang OZP No. S/NE-LK/11. According to the Notes of the OZP, ‘House (NTEH only) in the “AGR” zone requires planning permission from the Town Planning Board (the Board). The Site is vacant and covered with vegetation.

1.2 Details of the proposed NTEH (Small House) are as follows:

Total Floor Area	: 195.09m ²
Number of Storeys	: 3
Building Height	: 8.23m
Roofed Over Area	: 65.03m ²

1.3 Layout of the proposed Small House (including septic tank) is shown in **Drawing A-1**. The applicant indicates that the uncovered area of the Site would be used as an open space/garden area.

¹ As advised by District Lands Officer/North, Lands Department (DLO/N, LandsD), the applicant claims himself to be an indigenous villager of Ma Tseuk Leng Village. His eligibility for Small House grant is yet to be ascertained.

1.4 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted an Application Form with attachments (**Appendix I**).

2. Justifications from the Applicant

The justifications put forth by the applicant in support of the application are detailed in the Application Form at **Appendix I**, and summarized as follows:

- (a) the applicant is an indigenous villager of a recognized village in Sha Tau Kok and he is eligible to apply for Small House under the current Small House Policy;
- (b) the Site falls within the village ‘environs’ (‘VE’) of Ma Tseuk Leng Village. The proposed development only involves the construction of one Small House. It is considered compatible with the surrounding environment and land uses;
- (c) the Site is surrounded by existing village houses and the proposed Small House would not cause adverse visual and environmental impacts;
- (d) the land in the “V” zone Ma Tseuk Ling Village is not sufficient to meet the Small House demand; and
- (e) the non-building area of the Site will be properly landscaped for the open space or garden use.

3. Compliance with the “Owner’s Consent/Notification” Requirements

The applicant is the sole “current land owner” of the lot. Detailed information would be deposited at the meeting for Members’ inspection.

4. Assessment Criteria

The set of Interim Criteria for Consideration of Application for NTEH/Small House in New Territories (the Interim Criteria) was first promulgated on 24.11.2000. The latest set of Interim Criteria, which was promulgated on 7.9.2007, is at **Appendix II**.

5. Previous Application

There is no previous application for the Site.

6. Similar Applications

- 6.1 There have been 30 similar applications for Small House development within/partly within the “AGR” zone in the vicinity of the Site in the Luk Keng and Wo Hang area since the first promulgation of the Interim Criteria on 24.11.2000.
- 6.2 17 applications were approved by the Rural and New Town Planning Committee (“the Committee”) between Decembers 2000 and January 2015 (i.e. before the formal adoption

of a more cautious approach² by the Board since August 2015) mainly on the ground that the applications generally complied with the Interim Criteria in that more than 50% of the proposed Small House footprints fell within the ‘VE’ and the proposed Small House developments were not incompatible with the surrounding rural landscape character and would unlikely generate significant adverse impacts on the surrounding areas. Two applications (No. A/NE-LK/92 and 93) straddling the “AGR” and “Green Belt” (“GB”) zones were rejected mainly on the grounds that the proposed developments were not in line with the planning intention of the "AGR" zone; land was still available within the "V" zone of Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster; and the proposed developments did not comply with the Interim Criteria and Town Planning Board Guidelines No. 10 on 'Application for Development within "GB" Zone under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance'.

- 6.3 After the formal adoption of the more cautious approach by the Board, 11 applications were considered. Three applications (No. A/NE-LK/109, 149 and 150) were approved by the Committee between November 2017 and June 2023 mainly on the grounds that the sites were the subject of previously approved applications submitted by the same applicants. The remaining eight applications (No. A/NE-LK/114 to 117, 122, 134, 144 and 152) were rejected by the Committee/Board between November 2018 and August 2023 mainly on the grounds that the proposed developments were not in line with the planning intention of the "AGR" zone; and land was still available within the "V" zone of Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster.
- 6.4 Details of the similar applications are summarized at **Appendix III** and their locations are shown on **A-2a**.

7. The Site and Its Surrounding Areas (Plans A-1 to A-4)

7.1 The Site is:

- (a) vacant and covered with vegetation;
- (b) located in close proximity to the village cluster of Ma Tseuk Leng San Uk Ha village; and
- (c) accessible via local village access leading from Sha Tau Kok Road – Wo Hang.

7.2 The surrounding areas are settled valley landscape character comprising village houses, farmlands, tree clusters and woodlands.

8. Planning Intention

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.

² Among others, in considering whether there is a general shortage of land in meeting Small House demand, more weighting shall be put on the number of outstanding Small House applications provided by LandsD.

9. Comments from Relevant Government Departments

9.1 The application has been assessed against the assessment criteria at **Appendix II**. The assessment is summarised in the following table:

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1.	Within “V” zone? - The Site - Footprint of the proposed Small House	- -	100% 100%	- The Site and footprint of proposed Small House fall entirely within “AGR” zone.
2.	Within ‘VE’? - The Site - Footprint of the proposed Small House	100% 100%	- -	- District Lands Officer/North, Lands Department (DLO/N, LandsD) advises that the Site and the entire footprint of the proposed Small House falls entirely within the ‘VE’ of Ma Tseuk Leng.
3.	Sufficient land in “V” zone to meet Small House demand (outstanding Small House application plus 10-year Small House demand)?		✓	<u>Land Required</u> - Land required to meet Small House demand in Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster: about 18.1 ha ³ (equivalent to 725 Small House sites). The number of outstanding Small House applications for Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster is 32 ⁴ while the 10-year Small House demand forecast for the same village is 693.
	Sufficient land in “V” zone to meet outstanding Small House application?	✓		<u>Land Available</u> - Land available to meet the Small House demand within the “V” zone of Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster: about 1.7 ha ⁵ (equivalent to 67 Small House sites) (Plan A-2b).
4.	Compatible with the planning intention of “AGR” zone?		✓	- Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (DAFC) does not support the application from agricultural point of view as the Site possesses potential for agricultural rehabilitation. Agricultural activities are active

³ The land required to meet Small House demand in Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha Villages is about 8.5 ha (equivalent to 340 Small Houses sites) while that of Shek Kiu Tau is about 9.6 ha (equivalent to 385 Small House sites).

⁴ Among the 32 outstanding Small House applications, 14 of them fall within the “V” zone and 18 straddle or outside the “V” zone. For those 18 applications straddling or being outside the “V” zone, two of them have obtained valid planning approval from the Board.

⁵ Ma Tseuk Leng and San Uk Ha share the same ‘VE’ while Shek Kiu Tau has its own ‘VE’ without overlapping with one another. As the three villages are located within the same “V” zone, the total number of outstanding Small House applications for Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster (i.e. 32) is adopted for assessment against the land availability within the “V” zone (i.e. about 1.7 ha or equivalent to 67 Small Houses sites).

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
				in the vicinity and agricultural infrastructures such as road access and water source are available. The Site can be used for agricultural activities such as open-field cultivation, greenhouses and plant nurseries, etc.
5.	Compatible with surrounding area/ development?	✓		- The proposed development is not incompatible with the surrounding areas predominated by village houses, farmlands, ponds, tree group cluster and woodland.
6.	Within Water Gathering Grounds? (WGGs)		✓	- Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department (CE/C, WSD) has no objection to the application.
7.	Encroachment onto planned road networks and public works boundaries?		✓	
8.	Need for provision of fire service installations and emergency vehicular access (EVA)?		✓	- Director of Fire Services (D of FS) has no in-principle objection to the application. The applicant is reminded to observe 'New Territories Exempted House – A Guide to Fire Safety Requirements' published by LandsD.
9.	Traffic impact?	✓		- Commissioner for Transport (C for T) has reservation on the application and advises that Small House development should be confined within the "V" zone as far as possible. Although additional traffic generated by the proposed development is not expected to be significant, such type of development outside the "V" zone, if permitted, will set an undesirable precedent case for similar applications in the future. The resulting cumulative adverse traffic impact could be substantial. Notwithstanding this, the application only involves construction of one Small House. He considers that the application could be tolerated
10.	Drainage impact?		✓	- Chief Engineer/Mainland North, Drainage Services Department (CE/MN, DSD) has no objection to the application and advises that an approval condition on the submission and implementation of a drainage proposal is required.

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
11.	Sewage impact?		✓	- Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) advises that in view of the small scale of the proposed development, the application alone is unlikely to cause major pollution.
12.	Landscaping impact?		✓	- Chief Town Planner/Urban Design and Landscape, Planning Department (CTP/UD&L, PlanD) has no objection to the application from the landscape planning perspective. Significant adverse landscape impact arising from the development is not anticipated.
13.	Local objection conveyed by DO?		✓	- District Officer (North), Home Affairs Department (DO(N), HAD) advises that he has consulted the locals. All consultees, including the Chairman of Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee, the incumbent North District Councilor of N16 Constituency, the Indigenous Inhabitant Representative (IIR) and the Resident Representative (RR) of Ma Tseuk Leng Ha have no comment.

9.2 Comments from the following government departments have been incorporated in paragraph 9.1 above. Detailed comments from government departments are at **Appendix IV**.

- (a) DLO/N, LandsD;
- (b) C for T;
- (c) DEP;
- (d) CE/C, WSD;
- (e) CTP/UD&L, PlanD;
- (f) CE/MN, DSD;
- (g) D of FS;
- (h) DAFC; and
- (i) DO(N), HAD.

10. Public Comments Received During Statutory Publication Period (Appendix V)

On 28.7.2023, the application was published for public inspection. During the statutory public inspection period, two public comments were received. The Chairman of Sheung Shui District Rural Committee indicates no comment on the application. An individual raises concerns that there is no justification in the submission for building a Small House on the “AGR” zone; and land is still available within the “V” zone. Detailed comments from public inspection are at **Appendix V**.

11. Planning Considerations and Assessments

- 11.1 The application is for a proposed Small House on the Site zoned “AGR” on the OZP. The proposed development is not in line with the planning intention of the “AGR” zone, which is primarily to retain and safeguard good quality agricultural land/farm/fish ponds for agricultural purposes, and to retain fallow arable land with good potential for rehabilitation for cultivation and other agricultural purposes. DAFC does not support the application from agricultural point of view as the Site possesses potential for agricultural rehabilitation. Agricultural activities are active in the vicinity and agricultural infrastructures such as road access and water source are available. The Site can be used for agricultural activities such as open-field cultivation, greenhouses and plant nurseries, etc. There is no strong planning justification in the current submission for a departure from the planning intention.
- 11.2 The Site is situated in an areas of settled valley landscape character comprising village houses, farmlands, tree clusters and woodlands. The proposed Small House development is not incompatible with the surrounding areas. CTP/UD&L of PlanD has no objection to the application as significant adverse impact on existing landscape resources arising from the proposed development is not anticipated. C for T considers that Small House development should be confined within the “V” zone as far as possible but given that the proposed development involves construction of one Small House only, the application could be tolerated. Other relevant government departments, including CEDD, DEP, CE/C of WSD, CE/MN of DSD and D of FS, have no adverse comment on / no objection to the application.
- 11.3 Regarding the Interim Criteria, according to DLO/N of LandsD, the number of outstanding Small House applications for Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster is 32 while the 10-year Small House demand forecast is 693. Based on PlanD’s latest estimate, about 1.7 ha (equivalent to 67 Small House sites) is available within the “V” zone covering the concerned villages. While the amount of land available within the “V” zone (**Plan A-2b**) is insufficient to fully meet the future Small House demand, it is sufficient to accommodate the outstanding Small House applications. It should be noted that the Board has formally adopted a more cautious approach in considering applications for Small House development since August 2015. Among others, in considering whether there is a general shortage of land in meeting Small House demand, more weighting has been put on the number of outstanding Small House applications as provided by LandsD. As such, it is considered more appropriate to concentrate the proposed Small House developments within the “V” zone for more orderly development pattern, efficient use of land and provision of infrastructures and services.
- 11.4 There were 30 similar applications for Small House developments in the vicinity of the Site. Among them, 11 applications were considered after the adoption of the aforementioned more cautious approach. Three applications (No. A/NE-LK/109, 149 and 150) were approved by the Committee between November 2017 and June 2023 mainly on the ground that the sites were the subject of previously approved applications submitted by the same applicants. Eight applications (No. A/NE-LK/114 to 117, 122, 134, 144 and 152) were rejected mainly on the grounds that the proposed developments were not in line with the planning intention of the "AGR" zone; and land was still available within the "V" zone of Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster. The planning circumstances of the current application are similar to the rejected applications.
- 11.5 Regarding the public comments mentioned in paragraph 10 above, the government departments’ comments and planning assessments above are relevant.

12. Planning Department's Views

12.1 Based on the assessments made in paragraph 11 and having taken into account the public comments mentioned in paragraph 10, the Planning Department does not support the application for the following reasons:

- (a) the proposed development is not in line with the planning intention of the “AGR” zone which is primarily to retain and safeguard good quality agricultural land/farm/fish ponds for agricultural purposes and to retain fallow arable land with good potential for rehabilitation for cultivation and other agricultural purposes. There is no strong planning justification in the submission for a departure from the planning intention; and
- (b) land is still available within the “V” zone of Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau village cluster which is primarily intended for Small House development. It is considered more appropriate to concentrate the proposed Small House development within the “V” zone for orderly development pattern, efficient use of land and provision of infrastructures and services.

12.2 Alternatively, should the Committee decide to approve the application, it is suggested that the permission shall be valid until 8.9.2027, and after the said date, the permission shall cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted commences or the permission is renewed. The following condition of approval and advisory clauses are also suggested for Members' reference:

Approval Condition

- the submission and implementation of a drainage proposal to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the Town Planning Board

Advisory Clauses

The recommended advisory clauses are attached at **Appendix VI**.

13. Decision Sought

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

14. Attachments

Appendix I	Application Form with attachments received on 19.7.2023
Appendix II	Relevant Interim Criteria for Consideration of Application for NTEH/ Small House in New Territories
Appendix III	Similar Applications

Appendix IV	Detailed Comments from Relevant Government Departments
Appendix V	Public Comments
Appendix VI	Recommended Advisory Clauses
Drawing A-1	Layout Plan
Plan A-1	Location Plan
Plan A-2a	Site Plan
Plan A-2b	Estimated Amount of Land Available within the “V” zone of Ma Tseuk Leng & San Uk Ha and Shek Kiu Tau for Small House Development
Plan A-3	Aerial Photo
Plan A-4a and 4b	Site Photos

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
SEPTEMBER 2023**