

**TPB Paper No. 10877
For Consideration by
the Town Planning Board on 24.2.2023**

**REVIEW OF APPLICATION NO. A/YL-LFS/443
UNDER SECTION 17 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE**

**Proposed Temporary Open Storage of Building Materials for a Period of 3 Years
in “Green Belt” Zone,
Lot 2842 RP in D.D.129, Lau Fau Shan, Yuen Long**

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1. Background

- 1.1 On 17.8.2022, the applicant, Mega Rich Logistics Limited represented by Hing Yip Realty Advisory Limited, sought planning permission for proposed temporary open storage of building materials for a period of 3 years at the application site (the Site) under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (the Ordinance). The Site falls within an area zoned “Green Belt” (“GB”)¹ on the approved Lau Fau Shan and Tsim Bei Tsui Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/YL-LFS/11 (**Plan R-1**).
- 1.2 On 14.10.2022, the Rural and New Town Planning Committee (the RNTPC) of the Town Planning Board (the Board) decided to reject the application and the reasons were:
- (a) the proposed use was not in line with the planning intention of the “GB” zone, which was primarily for defining the limits of urban and sub-urban development areas by natural features and to contain urban sprawl as well as to provide passive recreational outlets. There was a general presumption against development within this zone. There was no strong planning justification in the submission for a departure from the planning intention, even on a temporary basis;
 - (b) the proposed use was not in line with the Town Planning Board Guidelines for ‘Application for Development within the Green Belt zone under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance’ (TPB PG-No. 10) in that the proposed use was considered not compatible with the surrounding areas, and the applicant failed to demonstrate that the proposed use would not have significant adverse environmental and landscape impacts on the surrounding areas;
 - (c) the proposed use was not in line with the Town Planning Board Guidelines for ‘Application for Open Storage and Port Back-up Uses’ (TPB PG-No. 13F) in that the Site fell within Category 4 areas and there was no previous planning approval for open storage use; and there were adverse departmental comments on environmental and landscape aspects; and
 - (d) approval of the application would set an undesirable precedent for similar applications for open storage use within the “GB” zone. The cumulative effect of approving such applications would result in a general degradation of the environment of the area.

¹ A minor portion at the south of the Site (about 0.3%) falls within the “Residential (Group A)” zone of the OZP, which can be considered as minor boundary adjustment in accordance with the covering Notes of the OZP.

- 1.3 There is no change to the development parameters in the review application. To recapitulate, the site area is about 2,450m². As shown on the layout plan at Drawing A-1 of **Annex A**, the proposal comprises four structures of one storey (2.6m to 4.5m) high, with a total floor area of about 239m² for open shelter for storage, site office and guard house uses. An area of about 1,360m² (or 55.5%) is proposed for open storage of building materials including concrete, curtain walls, fire protection materials and structural fixings. The ingress/egress point will be located at the east of the Site. Two parking spaces for light goods vehicle (LGV), three parking spaces for medium goods vehicle (MGV) and one loading/unloading space for heavy goods vehicle (HGV) will be provided.
- 1.4 The Site was largely a pond when the pond filling restriction was first introduced with the gazettal of the draft Lau Fau Shan and Tsim Bei Tsui OZP No. S/YL-LFS/1 on 10.6.1994. The Site was subject to a previous application (No. A/YL-LFS/9) for pond filling for agricultural use (fruit tree plantation) approved with conditions on 23.8.1996. Subsequently, another previous application (No. A/YL-LFS/39) for recreational uses was approved with conditions on 14.5.1999, of which all the ponds (including the one at the Site) were proposed to be retained. The pond at the Site was subsequently filled by 2000 (**Plans R-3b to R-3d**).
- 1.5 The vehicle park use on the Site would be subject to planning enforcement action.
- 1.6 For Members' reference, the following documents are attached:
- (a) RNTPC Paper No. A/YL-LFS/443 (Annex A)
 - (b) Extract of minutes of the RNTPC Meeting held on 14.10.2022 (Annex B)
 - (c) Secretary of the Board's letter dated 28.10.2022 (Annex C)

2. Application for Review

- 2.1 On 31.10.2022, the applicant applied, under Section 17(1) of the Ordinance, for a review of the RNTPC's decision to reject the application with written representation in support of the review application (**Annex D1**). On 4.1.2023, the applicant submitted Further Information (FI) (**Annex D2**) confirming there is no change to the development proposal in the review application.
- 2.2 *The review application was originally scheduled for consideration by the Board on 20.1.2023. In view of the overrun in the meeting schedule and that the applicant was not available to attend the meeting in the afternoon, the applicant requested and Board Members agreed the consideration of the review application be deferred to a later date. The review application is scheduled for consideration by the Board at this meeting.*

3. Justifications from the Applicant

The justifications put forth by the applicant in support of the review application are detailed in his written representation at **Annex D1** as summarised below:

- (a) logistics uses with temporary structures have all along been prevalent within the "GB" zones in the Tin Shui Wai and Lau Fau Shan areas;
- (b) the proposed use is temporary in nature;
- (c) the proposed covered area takes up less than 10% of the Site which is minor; and

- (d) logistics businesses in Yuen Long have been and will continue to be important components of the commodity supply chain in Hong Kong, particularly with the announcement of the new infrastructures under the 2022 Policy Address. Approving the application is in line with the Government's policy of fostering Hong Kong's role as a logistic hub.

4. The Section 16 Application

The Site and Its Surrounding Areas (**Plans R-1a, R-1b, R-2**, aerial photo on **Plan R-3a** and site photos on **Plans R-4a and R-4b**)

- 4.1 The situation of the Site and its surrounding areas at the time of the consideration of the section 16 application by the RNTPC was described in paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 of **Annex A**. There has not been any major change in the planning circumstances of the Site and the area since then.
- 4.2 The Site is:
 - (a) concrete-paved, largely fenced off, and used as a vehicle park without valid planning permission; and
 - (b) accessible via a local track on Government Land (GL) branching off from Tin Wah Road to its south.
- 4.3 The surrounding areas have the following characteristics:
 - (a) to the east across the local track is Tin Ying Road and the Tin Shui Wai Nullah; to the further east across the Tin Shui Wai Nullah is Tin Yan Estate in the Tin Shui Wai New Town;
 - (b) to the south across the local track is a site falling within the "Residential (Group A) 1" ("R(A)1") zone on the Tin Shui Wai OZP, which is covered by a Simplified Temporary Land Allocation (STLA) No. STLA-TYL 54 allocated to the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) for works area for site formation and infrastructure works in relation to the public housing development thereat, viz. Proposed Public Housing Development at Tin Wah Road².
 - (c) to the southwest is a public vehicle park covered by valid planning permission under application No. A/YL-LFS/394; to the further southwest are a permitted vehicle park falling within the "R(A)" zone, shrubland and vacant land. To the further west and northwest is the recognised village of Sha Kong Wai; and
 - (d) to the north is a recreational development named Tin Shui Wai Greenfield Garden covered by valid planning permission under Application No. A/YL-LFS/424.

² The concerned site was covered by a Temporary Government Land Allocation (TGLA) No. GLA-TYL-3471 allocated to CEDD for works area for site formation and infrastructure works in relation to public housing development at Wang Chau at the time when the section 16 application was considered by the RNTPC. The tenancy period of the TGLA ended on 1.1.2023.

Planning Intention

- 4.4 The planning intention of the “GB” zone is primarily for defining the limits of urban and sub-urban development areas by natural features and to contain urban sprawl as well as to provide passive recreational outlets. There is a general presumption against development within this zone.

Town Planning Board Guidelines

- 4.5 Town Planning Board Guidelines for “Application for Development within the Green Belt Zone under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance” (TPB PG-No. 10) are relevant to the application. The relevant assessment criteria are detailed at Appendix II of **Annex A**.
- 4.6 According to Town Planning Board Guidelines for “Application for Open Storage and Port Back-up Uses under Section 16 of the Town Planning Guidance” (TPB PG-No. 13F), the Site falls within the Category 4 area. The relevant assessment criteria are detailed at Appendix III of **Annex A**.

Previous Applications

- 4.7 The Site is the subject of two previous applications. Application No. A/YL-LFS/9 for pond filling for agricultural use (fruit tree plantation) within the “GB” and the then “Residential (Group C)” zones covering a much larger site area was approved with conditions by the RNTPC on 23.8.1996 mainly on the considerations that the proposal was in line with the planning intention of the “GB” zone and compatible with the surrounding area; ‘Agricultural use (fruit tree plantation)’ was a Column 1 use within the “GB” zone; there was no adverse comments from concerned government departments on ecological and drainage aspects; and the technical concerns could be addressed by approval conditions. The pond filling works had not been fully implemented during the validity period of the planning permission, viz. until 23.8.1998 (**Plan R-3c**).
- 4.8 Application No. A/YL-LFS/39 for recreational uses including barbecue spot, playground, refreshment kiosk, visitor centre, public car park and ancillary uses within the “GB” and “Village Type Development” zones covering a much larger site area was approved with conditions by the RNTPC on 14.5.1999 mainly on considerations that the development was primarily rural in character and did not involve filling of existing ponds (including the one at the Site); the development was compatible with the surrounding land uses; it helped to reinstate the deteriorating rural environment in the context of decline in pond fish farming and agricultural activities; there was no adverse comment from concerned government departments; and the technical concerns could be addressed by approval conditions.
- 4.9 As compared with the last approved previous application, the current application is submitted by a different applicant for a different use at a smaller site. Details of these previous applications are summarised in **Annex E** and their locations are shown on **Plan R-1b**.

Similar Applications

- 4.10 Within/straddling the same “GB” zone, there have been four similar applications (No.

A/YL-LFS/346, 358, 373 and 416) for temporary open storage of various materials with or without warehouse and filling of land in the past five years. All of them were rejected by the Committee between 2019 and 2022 mainly on grounds of not in line with the planning intention and relevant Town Planning Board Guidelines; not compatible with the surrounding area; failure to demonstrate no adverse traffic, environmental, landscape and/or slope safety impacts; and/or setting of undesirable precedent. Details of the similar applications are summarised in **Annex E** and their locations are shown on **Plan R-1a**.

5. Comments from Relevant Government Departments

- 5.1 Comments on the section 16 application made by relevant government departments are stated in paragraph 10 of **Annex A**.
- 5.2 For the review application, the following government departments maintain their previous adverse views on the section 16 application in paragraph 10.2 of **Annex A**, which are recapitulated below:

Environment

5.2.1 Comments of the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP):

- (a) She does not support the application as the applied development involves heavy vehicles and there are sensitive receivers, i.e. residential dwellings located to the north and to the west of the Site (the closest residential dwelling being about 85m away) (**Plan R-1b**). Environmental nuisance is expected.
- (b) There is no substantiated environmental complaint pertaining to the Site received in the past three years.
- (c) The applicant should be reminded of the advisory comments at **Annex G**.

Landscaping

5.2.2 Comments of the Chief Town Planner/Urban Design and Landscape, Planning Department (CTP/UD&L, PlanD):

- (a) The Site is situated in area of miscellaneous rural fringe predominated by residential blocks, public vehicle parks, vacant land, graveyard, pond and scattered tree groups.
- (b) The Site is hard paved and existing trees along the northwestern periphery are observed. No information on existing landscape resources and proposed treatment on existing trees are provided in the application.
- (c) The “GB” zone is primarily intended to promote the conservation of the natural environment, and an existing pond is located in close proximity to the Site. Moreover, there is no similar application for open storage uses approved in the same “GB” zone. There is concern that approval

of the application would alter the landscape character of the “GB” zone and further degrade the landscape quality of surrounding environment. The proposed open storage is considered incompatible with the surrounding landscape setting from landscape planning perspective.

5.3 The following government departments maintain their previous views on the section 16 application as stated in paragraphs 1 to 6 of Appendix V of **Annex A**:

- (a) Chief Building Surveyor/New Territories West, Buildings Department (CBS/NTW, BD);
- (b) Chief Engineer/Mainland North, Drainage Services Department (CE/MN, DSD);
- (c) Director of Fire Services (D of FS);
- (d) District Lands Officer/Yuen Long, Lands Department (DLO/YL, LandsD);
- (e) District Officer (Yuen Long), Home Affairs Department (DO(YL), HAD); and
- (f) Project Team Leader/Project, Civil Engineering and Development Department (PTL/P, CEDD).

5.4 The following government departments maintain their previous views of having no objection to/no comment on the application as stated in paragraph 7 of Appendix V of **Annex A**:

- (a) Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department (CE/C, WSD);
- (b) Chief Engineer/Land Works, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CE/LW, CEDD);
- (c) Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office, CEDD (H(GEO), CEDD);
- (d) Project Manager (West), CEDD (PM(W), CEDD);
- (e) Chief Highway Engineer/New Territories West, Highways Department (CHE/NTW, HyD);
- (f) Commissioner of Police (C of P);
- (g) Commissioner for Transport (C for T); and
- (h) Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (DAFC).

6. Public Comments on the Review Application Received During the Statutory Publication Period

6.1 On 11.11.2022, the review application was published for public inspection. During the statutory public inspection period, three public comments from Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden Corporation and two individuals (**Annexes F-1 to F-3**) were received objecting to the review application mainly on grounds that the proposed open storage use is not in line with the planning intention of the “GB” zone, and would generate adverse traffic, environmental and fire safety impacts; and approval of the review application would set an undesirable precedent.

6.2 A total of three public comments, all objecting to the application, were received at the section 16 application stage as set out in paragraph 11 of **Annex A**.

7. Planning Considerations and Assessments

7.1 The application is for a review of the RNTPC’s decision on 14.10.2022 to reject the

subject application for proposed temporary open storage of building materials for a period of three years at the Site zoned “GB” on the OZP (**Plan R-1a**). The application was rejected for the reasons that (i) the proposed use was not in line with the planning intention of the “GB” zone; (ii) the proposed use was not in line with the TPB PG-No. 10 in that the proposed use was considered not compatible with the surrounding areas, and the applicant failed to demonstrate that the proposed use would not have significant adverse environmental and landscape impacts on the surrounding areas; (iii) the proposed use was not in line with the TPB PG-No. 13F in that the Site fell within Category 4 areas and there was no previous planning approval for open storage use, and there were adverse departmental comments on environmental and landscape aspects; and (iv) approval of the application would set an undesirable precedent for similar applications for open storage use within the “GB” zone.

Justifications for the Review Application

- 7.2 In support of the review application, the applicant put forward justifications that (1) the proposed use is temporary in nature; (2) the proposed covered area of less than 10% is minor; (3) approval of the review application is in line with Government’s logistics policy; and (4) logistics uses with temporary structures have been prevalent within the “GB” zones in the area.
- 7.3 The major development parameters and layout of the proposed use remain unchanged in the review application. Since the consideration of the subject application by the RNTPC on 14.10.2022, there has been no major change in planning circumstances regarding the Site and its surrounding areas. Having considered the review submission, the planning consideration and assessments on the review application are appended below.

Planning Intention of the “GB” Zone

- 7.4 The Site falls within the “GB” zone which is primarily for defining the limits of urban and sub-urban development areas by natural features and to contain urban sprawl as well as to provide passive recreational outlets. There is a general presumption against development within this zone. The proposed open storage use is not in line with the planning intention of the “GB” zone.
- 7.5 In Justifications (1) and (2) of the review submission, the applicant states that the proposed use is temporary in nature, and the proposed covered area is minor. In these regards, the proposed open storage use, whether it is temporary or the covered area is minor, may generate adverse impacts or nuisance on the surrounding area which should be properly assessed (see paragraphs 7.6 to 7.11 below). However, no technical assessment have been submitted by the applicant to address the potential adverse impacts. As for Justification (2) in particular, it should be noted that the scale of the temporary structures had not been a major consideration of the RNTPC in rejecting the subject application for proposed temporary open storage use. Hence, there is no strong planning justification given in the review submission for a departure of the planning intention, even on a temporary basis.

Land Use Compatibility

- 7.6 The Site is currently paved and situated in between the recognised village of Sha Kong Wai to its west, and Tin Yan Estate in the Tin Shui Wai New Town to its east. It is

immediately surrounded mainly by vehicle parks and a recreational development. Although there is a works area to the south, it falls within the “R(A)1” zone of the Tin Shui Wai OZP, and is covered by an STLA allocated to CEDD as works area for the public housing development thereat. The proposed open storage use is considered not compatible with the surrounding land uses.

Not in line with TPB PG-No. 10

- 7.7 According to the TPB PG-No. 10, an application for new development within “GB” zone will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be justified with very strong planning grounds. The development should not involve extensive clearance of existing natural vegetation and affect the existing natural landscape. The design and layout of any proposed development within “GB” zone should be compatible with the surrounding area. The development should also not be the source of pollution. In these regards, no information is provided in the review submission as to how the existing trees along the northwestern periphery of the Site would be treated. CTP/UD&L of PlanD considers that the proposed use is incompatible with the surrounding landscape setting, and has concerns that approval of the application would alter the landscape character of the “GB” zone and further degrade the landscape quality of surrounding environment. Moreover, DEP does not support the application as the proposed use involves operation of heavy vehicles and there are sensitive receivers (i.e. residential dwellings) to the north and to the west of the Site. The proposed open storage is also not compatible with the surrounding land uses as explained in paragraph 7.6 above. As such, the proposed use is considered not in line with TPB PG-No. 10.

Not in line with TPB PG- No. 13F

- 7.8 In Justification (3) of the review submission, the applicant claims that approval of the review application is in line with Government’s logistics policy. While the Government has strived for providing favourable business environment to support the development of the logistics industry in general, the Board has set out the locational criteria for particularly open storage and port back-up uses under TPB PG-No. 13F in order to prevent further uncontrolled sprawl of these land uses in the rural area and minimise adverse environmental impacts. Under TPB PG-No. 13F, the Site falls within Category 4 areas, wherein application would normally be rejected except under exceptional circumstances. Other than the assertion of land shortage in the section 16 application, the applicant has not provided any information in the review submission to demonstrate why other suitable sites, e.g. those within Categories 1 and 2 areas designated under TPB PG-No. 13F, could not be made available for the proposed use. In sum, the proposed use is not in line with TPB PG-No. 13F in that the Site falls within Category 4 areas and the Site was not involved in any previous approvals for open storage use; there are no exceptional circumstances to justify for the proposed use; and there are adverse comments from CTP/UD&L of PlanD and DEP on landscape and environmental aspects respectively.

Setting Undesirable precedent

- 7.9 There is no previous application for open storage use approved at the Site. Moreover, contrary to Justification (4) put forward by the applicant, no approval for similar applications for open storage use has been granted by the Committee within the same

“GB” zone of the OZP³. Approval of the application would set an undesirable precedent and encourage proliferation of similar developments within the same “GB” zone. The cumulative effect of approving such similar applications would result in a general degradation of the natural environment of the area, thereby frustrating the planning intention of the “GB” zone. Rejecting the subject application is in line with the previous decisions of the Committee.

Other Departmental Comments

- 7.10 Other concerned departments including DAFC, C for T, CE/MN of DSD and D of FS have no objection to or no comment on the proposed use from nature conservation, traffic, drainage and fire safety perspectives.

Public Comments

- 7.11 Regarding the public comments objecting to the review application on the grounds as summarised in paragraph 6 above, the planning considerations and assessments in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.10 above are relevant.

8. Planning Department’s Views

- 8.1 Based on the assessments made in paragraph 7, having taken into account the public comments mentioned in paragraph 6 and given that there has been no major change in the planning circumstances since the consideration of the subject application by the RNTPC on 14.10.2022, the Planning Department maintains its previous view of not supporting the review application for the following reasons:
- (a) the proposed use is not in line with the planning intention of the “GB” zone, which is primarily for defining the limits of urban and sub-urban development areas by natural features and to contain urban sprawl as well as to provide passive recreational outlets. There is a general presumption against development within this zone. There is no strong planning justification in the submission for a departure from the planning intention, even on a temporary basis;
 - (b) the proposed use is not in line with the Town Planning Board Guidelines for ‘Application for Development within the Green Belt zone under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance’ (TPB PG-No. 10) in that the proposed use is considered not compatible with the surrounding areas, and the applicant fails to demonstrate that the proposed use would not have significant adverse environmental and landscape impacts on the surrounding areas;
 - (c) the proposed use is not in line with the Town Planning Board Guidelines for ‘Application for Open Storage and Port Back-up Uses’ (TPB PG-No. 13F) in that the Site falls within Category 4 areas and there is no previous planning approval for open storage use; and there are adverse departmental comments on environmental and landscape aspects; and
 - (d) approval of the application would set an undesirable precedent for similar applications for open storage use within the “GB” zone. The cumulative effect

³ There is no “GB” zone on the approved Tin Shui Wai OZP No. S/TSW/16.

of approving such applications would result in a general degradation of the environment of the area.

- 8.2 Alternatively, should the Board decide to approve the application, it is suggested that the permission shall be valid on a temporary basis for a period of three years until 24.2.2026. The following conditions of approval and advisory clauses are also suggested for Members' reference:

Approval Conditions

- (a) no operation from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., as proposed by the applicant, is allowed on the Site during the planning approval period;
- (b) no dismantling, maintenance, repairing, cleansing, paint spraying or other workshop activities shall be carried out on the Site at any time during the planning approval period;
- (c) the setting back of the Site from the resumption limit of Public Works Programme Item No. B847CL - Site Formation and Infrastructure Works for Public Housing Development at Tin Wah Road, Lau Fau Shan (Road Works);
- (d) the submission of a drainage proposal within **6 months** from the date of planning approval to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the Town Planning Board by 24.8.2023;
- (e) in relation to (d) above, the implementation of the drainage proposal within **9 months** from the date of planning approval to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the Town Planning Board by 24.11.2023;
- (f) in relation to (e) above, the implemented drainage facilities on the Site shall be maintained at all times during the planning approval period;
- (g) the provision of fire extinguisher(s) with a valid fire certificate (FS 251) within **6 weeks** from the date of planning approval to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board by 7.4.2023;
- (h) the submission of a fire service installations proposal within **6 months** from the date of planning approval to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board by 24.8.2023;
- (i) in relation to (h) above, the implementation of the fire service installations proposal within **9 months** from the date of planning approval to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board by 24.11.2023;
- (j) if any of the above planning condition (a), (b), (c) or (f) is not complied with during the planning approval period, the approval hereby given shall cease to have effect and shall be revoked immediately without further notice;
- (k) if any of the above planning condition (d), (e), (g), (h) or (i) is not complied with by the above specified date, the approval hereby given shall cease to have effect and shall on the same date be revoked without further notice; and

- (l) upon expiry of the planning permission, the reinstatement of the Site to an amenity area to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning or of the Town Planning Board.

Advisory Clauses

The recommended advisory clauses are attached at **Annex G**.

9. Decision Sought

- 9.1 The Board is invited to consider the application for a review of the RNTPC's decision and decide whether to accede to the application.
- 9.2 Should the Board decide to reject the review application, Members are invited to advise what reason(s) for rejection should be given to the applicant.
- 9.3 Alternatively, should the Board decide to approve the review application, Members are invited to consider the approval condition(s) and advisory clause(s), if any, to be attached to the permission, and the period of which the permission should be valid on a temporary basis.

10. Attachments

Plan R-1a	Location Plan with Similar Applications
Plan R-1b	Location Plan with Previous Applications
Plan R-2	Site Plan
Plans R-3a to R3-d	Aerial Photos Taken in 2022, 2000, 1999 and 1997
Plans R-4a and R-4b	Site Photos
Annex A	RNTPC Paper No. A/YL-LFS/443
Annex B	Extract of Minutes of the RNTPC Meeting Held on 14.10.2022
Annex C	Secretary of the Board's letter dated 28.10.2022
Annex D1	Letter Dated 31.10.2022 from the Applicant Applying for Review
Annex D2	FI received on 4.1.2023
Annex E	Previous and Similar Applications
Annexes F-1 to F-3	Public Comments Received During the Statutory Publication Period of the Review Application
Annex G	Recommended Advisory Clauses

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
~~FEBRUARY JANUARY~~ 2023**