

RNTPC Paper No. A/YL-TYST/1097
For Consideration by
the Rural and New Town
Planning Committee
on 25.6.2021

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION
UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE

APPLICATION NO. A/YL-TYST/1097

- Applicant** : Merrily Development and Investment Company Limited represented by Metro Planning and Development Company Limited
- Site** : Lots 773 (Part), 774 (Part) in D.D. 119 and Adjoining Government Land (GL), Pak Sha Tsuen, Yuen Long, New Territories
- Site Area** : 4,820 m² (about) (including GL of about 560 m² (about 11.6%))
- Lease** : Block Government Lease (demised for agricultural use)
- Plan** : Draft Tong Yan San Tsuen Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/YL-TYST/13
- Zoning** : “Undetermined” (“U”)
- Application** : Temporary Warehouse for Storage of Electronic Parts, Construction Materials and Vehicle Parts for a Period of 3 Years

1. The Proposal

- 1.1 The applicant seeks planning permission to use the application site (the Site) for temporary warehouse for storage of electronic parts, construction materials and vehicle parts for a period of 3 years (**Plan A-1a**). According to the covering Notes of the OZP for the “U” zone, all uses or development except those specified in the Notes require planning permission from the Town Planning Board (the Board). The Site is currently mainly occupied by the applied use with valid planning permission under application No. A/YL-TYST/1060 (**Plans A-2, A-4a and A-4b**).
- 1.2 The Site involves nine previous applications for various temporary warehouse uses (**Plan A-1b**). The last application (No. A/YL-TYST/1060) for the same use as the current application was approved with conditions for a period of 3 years by the Rural and New Town Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Board on 18.12.2020. The planning permission is valid up to 18.12.2023. Compared with the last application, the current application is submitted by the same applicant for the same use covering a slightly larger site with slightly different site layout and similar development parameters.
- 1.3 According to the applicant, the temporary warehouse is for storage of electronic parts (including computer/tablet parts), construction materials (including pipes,

tiles and sanitary wares) and vehicle parts. No storage of used electronic goods and recyclable materials and no workshop activities will be carried out at the Site. Furthermore, no vehicles exceeding 5.5 tonnes will enter the Site. Plans showing the vehicular access leading to the Site, site layout and drainage proposal submitted by the applicant are at **Drawings A-1 to A-3** respectively.

- 1.4 The major development parameters of the current application and the previously approved application are summarised as follow:

Major Development Parameters	Previously Approved Application No. A/YL-TYST/1060 (a)	Current Application No. A/YL-TYST/1097 (b)	Difference (b)-(a)
Applied Use	Temporary Warehouse for Storage of Electronic Parts, Construction Materials and Vehicle Parts for a Period of 3 Years		--
Site Area	About 4,570 m ² (including GL of about 560 m ²)	About 4,820 m ² (including GL of about 560 m ²)	+250 m ² (+5.5%)
Total Floor Area (non-domestic)	About 2,498 m ²	About 2,362 m ²	-136 m ² (-5.4%)
No. and Height of Structures	13 • for warehouses and toilet (4-8.5m, 1 storey)	19 • for warehouses, electricity meter rooms, toilets and site offices (3-8.5m, 1 storey)	+6 (+46.2%)
No. of Loading/Unloading Space(s)	2 (for light goods vehicle) (7m x 3.5m each)		--
Operation Hours	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with no operation on Sundays and Public Holidays		--

- 1.5 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted the following documents:

- (a) Application Form with annexes and plans received on **(Appendix I)** 28.4.2021
- (b) Further Information (FI) received on 2.6.2021 clarifying **(Appendix Ia)** the proposed operation hours
[exempted from publication and recounting requirements]

2. Justifications from the Applicant

The justifications put forth by the applicant in support of the application are detailed in the Application Form (**Appendix I**). They can be summarised as follows:

- (a) The Site was the subject of previous planning permissions for warehouse use since 2015. The current application is submitted as the Site is being leased to a new tenant and there are changes in number of structures.

- (b) The proposal is in line with the Town Planning Board Guidelines for “Application for Open Storage and Port Back-up Uses” (TPB PG-No. 13F), as the Site falls within Category 1 areas.
- (c) The temporary proposal would not jeopardise the long-term planning intention. A number of open storage and port back-up uses have been approved by the Board in the vicinity of the Site and their planning circumstances are similar to that of the Site. The proposal is compatible with the surrounding environment. Besides, there is a shortage of land for port back-up purpose in Tong Yan San Tsuen.
- (d) There will be minimal traffic, environmental and drainage impacts arising from the proposal.

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

The applicant is not a “current land owner” but has complied with the requirements as set out in the Town Planning Board Guidelines on Satisfying the “Owner’s Consent/Notification” Requirements under Sections 12A and 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (TPB PG-No. 31A) by posting site notice and sending the notice to the Ping Shan Rural Committee by registered post. Detailed information would be deposited at the meeting for Members’ inspection. For GL, the requirements as set out in TPB PG-No. 31A are not applicable.

4. Background

The Site is currently not subject to planning enforcement action.

5. Previous Application

- 5.1 The Site involves nine previous applications (No. A/YL-TYST/715, 718, 722, 735, 843, 876, 909, 910 and 1060) for various temporary warehouse uses covering different extents of the Site. Details of the applications are summarised in **Appendix II** and the boundaries of the sites are shown on **Plan A-1b**.
- 5.2 Applications No. A/YL-TYST/715, 718, 722, 735, 843, 876, 909 and 910 were approved with conditions each for a period of 3 years by the Committee between 2015 and 2018, mainly on the considerations that the proposals were not incompatible with the surrounding uses; the proposals would not frustrate the long-term development of the area; and the concerns of relevant government departments could be addressed by imposing approval conditions. However, the planning permissions under applications No. A/YL-TYST/715, 722, 735, 909 and 910 were revoked between 2016 and 2020 due to non-compliance with approval conditions.
- 5.3 The last application for the same use as the current application (No. A/YL-TYST/1060) was approved with conditions for a period of 3 years by the Committee on 18.12.2020 mainly on similar considerations as those stated in paragraph 5.2 above. The comparison with the current application is set out in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.4 above.

6. Similar Applications

- 6.1 A total of 83 similar planning applications for various temporary warehouse uses with/without other uses within/straddling the subject “U” zone had been considered by the Committee since 2015. Details of the applications are summarised in **Appendix III** and the locations of the sites are shown on **Plan A-1a**.
- 6.2 Out of the 83 similar planning applications, 80 were approved mainly on similar considerations that the developments were not incompatible with the surrounding open storage/warehouse uses and the concerns of relevant departments could be addressed by imposing approval conditions. However, the planning permissions for 24 of them were revoked due to non-compliance with approval conditions.
- 6.3 The remaining three planning applications (No. A/YL-TYST/922, 926 and 943) were rejected by the Committee between 2018 and 2019 on the grounds that approval of applications with repeated non-compliances would set an undesirable precedent for other similar planning permissions for temporary uses, thus nullifying the statutory planning control system.
- 6.4 For Members’ information, application No. A/YL-TYST/1096 for temporary warehouse for storage of construction materials for a period of 3 years within the same “U” zone will also be considered at this meeting (**Plan A-1a**).

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

- 7.1 The Site is:
- (a) accessible from Kung Um Road to its east via a local track;
 - (b) paved and largely fenced off; and
 - (c) currently mainly occupied by the applied use with valid planning permission under application No. A/YL-TYST/1060.
- 7.2 The surrounding areas have the following characteristics (**Plans A-2 and A-3**):
- (a) comprise predominately open storage/storage yards and warehouses intermixed with scattered residential structures, graves, unused land and vacant land/structures;
 - (b) there are residential structures in the vicinity of the Site with the nearest ones located to its immediate north and west;
 - (c) to the northeast of the Site is an area zoned “Residential (Group C)” on the OZP; and
 - (d) except for two warehouses operating with valid planning permissions (No. A/YL-TYST/928 and 987) and two open storage yards, the other open storage/storage yards and warehouses in the vicinity are suspected

unauthorised developments (UD) subject to enforcement action taken by the Planning Authority.

8. Planning Intention

- 8.1 The planning intention of the “U” zone is to cater for the continuing demand for open storage which cannot be accommodated in conventional godown premises. However, Kung Um Road is insufficient to cater for the heavy goods vehicular traffic generated from the proposed development.
- 8.2 According to the Explanatory Statement of the OZP, under the “Planning and Engineering Study for Housing Sites in Yuen Long South (YLS) – Investigation” (the YLS Study), this area falls within the remaining stages of the YLS Development and the existing operations would be gradually phased out in stages.

9. Comments from Relevant Government Departments

- 9.1 The following government departments have been consulted and their views on the application and public comments, where relevant, are summarised as follows:

Land Administration

- 9.1.1 Comments of the District Lands Officer/Yuen Long, Lands Department (DLO/YL, LandsD):

- (a) The Site comprises GL and Old Schedule Agricultural Lots held under the Block Government Lease which contains the restriction that no structures are allowed to be erected without the prior approval of the Government.
- (b) Within the Site, the GL is currently covered by Short Term Tenancies (STTs) No. 2972, 2973 and 2974, while Lot 774 in D.D. 119 is currently covered by Short Term Waiver (STW) No. 4507 to permit structures erected thereon for the purposes of “Temporary Warehouse for Storage of Construction Material and Scrap Metal”, “Temporary Warehouse for Storage of Construction Material”, “Temporary Warehouse for Storage of Construction Material and Used Electrical Appliance” and “Temporary Warehouse (excluding dangerous goods godown)” respectively.
- (c) Should planning approval be given to the subject planning application, the STW/STT holder(s) will need to apply to her office for modification of the STW/STT conditions where appropriate and the lot owner(s) of the lot(s) without STW will need to apply to her office to permit the structures to be erected or regularise any irregularities on the Site, if any. Besides, given the proposed use is temporary in nature, only application for regularisation or erection of temporary structure(s) will be considered. Applications for any of the above will be considered

by her department acting in the capacity of the landlord or lessor at its sole discretion and there is no guarantee that such application will be approved. If such application is approved, it will be subject to such terms and conditions, including among others the payment of rent or fee, as may be imposed by her department.

Traffic

9.1.2 Comments of the Commissioner for Transport (C for T):

- (a) The land status of the access road/path/track leading to the Site from Kung Um Road shall be checked with the lands authority.
- (b) The management and maintenance responsibilities of the access road/path/track shall be clarified and consulted with the relevant management and maintenance authorities accordingly.
- (c) The applicant is reminded that sufficient space should be provided within the Site for manoeuvring of vehicles. In addition, no parking, queuing and reverse movement of vehicles on public road are allowed.

9.1.3 Comments of the Chief Highway Engineer/New Territories West, Highways Department (CHE/NTW, HyD):

- (a) Adequate drainage measures should be provided at the site access to prevent surface water flowing from the Site to nearby public roads/drains.
- (b) His department shall not be responsible for the maintenance of any access connecting the Site and Kung Um Road.

Environment

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

- (a) There was no substantiated environmental complaint concerning the Site received in the past three years.
- (b) Should the planning application be approved, the applicant should be advised to follow the relevant mitigation measures and requirements in the latest “Code of Practice on Handling the Environmental Aspects of Temporary Uses and Open Storage Use” (Code of Practice) to minimise any potential environmental nuisances.

Drainage

9.1.5 Comments of the Chief Engineer/Mainland North, Drainage Services Department (CE/MN, DSD):

- (a) He has no objection in principle to the development from the public drainage point of view. Nevertheless, the applicant should be reminded of the detailed comments on the submitted drainage proposal at **Appendix V**.
- (b) Should the Board consider that the application is acceptable from the planning point of view, approval conditions requiring the submission of a revised drainage proposal and the implementation and maintenance of the drainage proposal for the development to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the Board should be stipulated.

Fire Safety

9.1.6 Comments of the Director of Fire Services (D of FS):

- (a) He has no objection in principle to the proposal subject to fire service installations (FSIs) being provided to his satisfaction.
- (b) In consideration of the design/nature of the proposal, FSIs are anticipated to be required. Therefore, the applicant is advised to submit relevant layout plans incorporated with the proposed FSIs to his department for approval. In addition, the applicant should be reminded of the detailed comments at **Appendix V**.

Building Matters

9.1.7 Comments of the Chief Building Surveyor/New Territories West, Buildings Department (CBS/NTW, BD):

- (a) As there is no record of approval granted by the Building Authority for the existing structures at the Site, he is not in a position to offer comments on their suitability for the use proposed in the application.
- (b) The applicant should be reminded of the detailed comments at **Appendix V**.

Long-Term Development

9.1.8 Comments of the Chief Engineer/Cross-Boundary Infrastructure and Development, Planning Department (CE/CID, PlanD):

- (a) The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and PlanD jointly commissioned the YLS Study. According to the Revised Recommended Outline Development Plan (RODP) of YLS promulgated in May 2020, the Site falls within an area mainly zoned “Residential - Zone 2 (Subsidised Sale Flats with Commercial)” (“R2(SSF)c”) and “Amenity” (“A”).
- (b) The objective of YLS is to transform the degraded rural land predominantly occupied by brownfield operations including open

storage yards, warehouses and rural industrial uses into housing and other uses with supporting infrastructure and community facilities, and to improve the existing environment. It is noted that the application is for temporary use for a period of 3 years. In considering the application for temporary uses, due consideration should be given on the possible implication on land clearance which would affect the future implementation of YLS.

9.1.9 Comments of the Project Manager (West), CEDD (PM(W), CEDD):

- (a) He has no objection to the application.
- (b) Based on the preliminary project boundary of the proposed YLS Development, the southern part of the Site and the proposed vehicular access (**Drawing A-1**) falls within the boundary of the proposed YLS Development – Stage 3. The YLS Development would provide land to meet the medium to long term housing needs of Hong Kong and the detailed implementation programme with phasing and packaging of works for YLS Development – Stage 3 is being formulated.

District Officer's Comments

9.1.10 Comments of the District Officer (Yuen Long), Home Affairs Department (DO(YL), HAD):

Her office has not received any feedback from locals regarding the application.

9.2 The following government departments have no comment on the application:

- (a) Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (DAFC);
- (b) Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department (CE/C, WSD);
and
- (c) Commissioner of Police (C of P).

10. Public Comments Received During the Statutory Publication Period

On 7.5.2021, the application was published for public inspection. During the first three weeks of the statutory public inspection period, three public comments from individuals were received. Two individuals objected to the application mainly on the grounds that the applied use will generate adverse traffic, environmental and fire safety impacts on the surrounding area (**Appendices IV-1 and IV-2**). The other individual raised concerns that the applied use will cause environmental, safety and security impacts on forthcoming housing development in the area (**Appendix IV-3**).

11. Planning Considerations and Assessments

- 11.1 The application is for temporary warehouse for storage of electronic parts, construction materials and vehicle parts for a period of 3 years at a site zoned “U”

on the OZP. The applied use is not in conflict with the planning intention of the “U” zone which is to cater for the continuing demand for open storage but is designated with this zoning mainly due to concerns of the capacity of Kung Um Road. In this regard, C for T has no adverse comment on the application. Whilst the Site mainly falls within an area zoned “R2(SSF)c” and “A” on the Revised RODP of YLS, CE/CID, PlanD does not raise objection to the application and PM(W), CEDD has no objection to the application. Approval of the application on a temporary basis of three years would not jeopardise the long-term development of the area.

- 11.2 The surrounding areas comprise predominantly warehouses and open storage/storage yards (**Plan A-2**). Although there are residential structures in the vicinity, the proposal is generally not incompatible with the surrounding uses.
- 11.3 There is no adverse comment on the application from concerned government departments, including C for T, CE/MN, DSD and DEP. Adverse traffic, drainage and environmental impacts arising from the proposal are not envisaged. Furthermore, relevant approval conditions are recommended in paragraph 12.2 below to minimise any potential environmental nuisances or to address the technical requirements of other concerned government departments. Any non-compliance with the approval conditions will result in revocation of the planning permission and UD on the Site will be subject to enforcement action by the Planning Authority. Should the planning application be approved, the applicant will also be advised to follow the latest Code of Practice to minimise any potential environmental impact on the surrounding areas.
- 11.4 Given that nine previous approvals for warehouse uses have been granted to the Site and 80 similar applications have been approved within/straddling the subject “U” zone since 2015, approval of the current application is generally in line with the Committee’s previous decisions. While there were three similar applications rejected by the Committee on the ground of repeated non-compliance with approval conditions, such consideration is not applicable to the current application.
- 11.5 There are three public comments received on the application during the statutory publication period as summarised in paragraph 10. The planning considerations and assessments in paragraphs 11.1 to 11.4 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 above, the Planning Department considers that the temporary warehouse for storage of electronic parts, construction materials and vehicle parts could be tolerated for a period of 3 years.
- 12.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, it is suggested that the permission shall be valid on a temporary basis for a period of 3 years until 25.6.2024. The following conditions of approval and advisory clauses are also suggested for Members’ reference:

Approval conditions

- (a) no operation between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m., as proposed by the applicant, is allowed on the Site during the planning approval period;
- (b) no operation on Sundays and public holidays, as proposed by the applicant, is allowed on the Site during the planning approval period;
- (c) no medium or heavy goods vehicles, including container tractor/trailers, as defined in the Road Traffic Ordinance, are allowed to be parked/stored on or enter/exit the Site, as proposed by the applicant, at any time during the planning approval period;
- (d) no vehicle is allowed to queue back to or reverse onto/from public road at any time during the planning approval period;
- (e) the submission of a revised 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 25.12.2021;
- (f) in relation to (e) 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 25.3.2022;
- (g) in relation to (f) above, the implemented drainage facilities shall be maintained at all time during the planning approval period;
- (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 25.12.2021;
- (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 25.3.2022;
- (j) if any of the above planning conditions (a), (b), (c), (d) or (g) 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; and
- (k) if any of the above planning conditions (e), (f), (h) or (i) is not complied with by the specified date, the approval hereby given shall cease to have effect and shall on the same date be revoked without further notice.

Advisory clauses

The recommended advisory clauses are at **Appendix V**.

12.3 There is no strong reason to recommend rejection of the application.

13. Decision Sought

- 13.1 The Committee is invited to consider the application and decide whether to grant or refuse to grant permission.
- 13.2 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 period of which the permission should be valid on a temporary basis.
- 13.3 Alternatively, should the Committee decide to reject the application, Members are invited to advise what reason(s) for rejection should be given to the applicant.

14. Attachments

Appendix I	Application Form with annexes and plans received on 28.4.2021
Appendix Ia	FI received on 2.6.2021
Appendix II	Previous Applications covering the Application Site
Appendix III	Similar Applications within/straddling the “U” zone on the OZP since 2015
Appendices IV-1 to IV-3	Public Comments received during the Statutory Publication Period
Appendix V	Recommended Advisory Clauses
Drawing A-1	Vehicular Access Plan
Drawing A-2	Layout Plan
Drawing A-3	Proposed Drainage Plan
Plan A-1a	Location Plan with Similar Applications
Plan A-1b	Previous Applications Plan
Plan A-2	Site Plan
Plan A-3	Aerial Photo
Plans A-4a and A-4b	Site Photos

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
JUNE 2021**