

RNTPC Paper No. A/YL/302  
For Consideration by  
the Rural and New Town  
Planning Committee  
on 8.9.2023

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

**APPLICATION NO. A/YL/302**

<b><u>Applicant</u></b>	:	Si Mau Limited represented by DeSPACE (International) Limited
<b><u>Site</u></b>	:	Lots 1695 S.E ss.1 RP, 1695 S.F ss.1 and 1695 S.H RP (Part) in D.D. 120 and adjoining Government Land (GL), Tai Kei Leng, Yuen Long, New Territories
<b><u>Site Area</u></b>	:	1,877.1m <sup>2</sup> (including GL of about 144.8m <sup>2</sup> or 7.7%)
<b><u>Lease</u></b>	:	Old Scheduled Agricultural Lots ( <i>the lease is untraceable</i> )
<b><u>Plan</u></b>	:	Draft Yuen Long Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/YL/26
<b><u>Zonings</u></b>	:	“Government, Institution or Community (1)” (“G/IC(1)”) [ <i>restricted to a maximum building height (BH) of 3 storeys (8 storeys for ‘School’ and ‘Hospital’ uses) excluding basement(s)</i> ]
<b><u>Application</u></b>	:	Proposed Minor Relaxation of Building Height Restriction (BHR) for Permitted Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) (RCHE) and Proposed House Use with Conservation Proposal

**1. The Proposal**

- 1.1 This application is an amendment to the scheme of application No. A/YL/289 involving the same uses at the same application site (the Site) which was approved by the Rural and New Town Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Town Planning Board (the Board) with conditions on 29.7.2022. The applicant seeks planning permission for minor relaxation of BHR from 3 storeys to 6 storeys (+3 storeys) for permitted social welfare facility (RCHE) and proposed house use with conservation proposal for a Grade 3 historic building, namely ‘Siu Lo’ (筱廬)<sup>1</sup>, at the Site (**Plan A-1**). According to the Notes of the OZP for “G/IC(1)” zone, ‘Social Welfare Facility’ is a Column 1 use which is always permitted while ‘House’ use is under Column 2 which requires planning permission from the Board. The Remarks of the Notes stipulates that the maximum BH of the “G/IC(1)” zone is three storeys

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<sup>1</sup> According to the assessment by the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB), ‘Siu Lo’, which was built in early 1942, comprises a two-storey Main Building with a single-storey Annex Block attached to the house at an angle. It is a house in mixed style, with Western influence in the open porch and verandah, as well as Chinese influence in the splayed fung shui corners. ‘Siu Lo’ has built heritage value, and the architecturally mixed style (both Chinese and Western) is character attribute. It has local interest and local significance.

(8 storeys for 'School' and 'Hospital' uses) excluding basement(s). Based on the individual merits of a development or redevelopment proposal, minor relaxation of the BHR may be considered by the Board on application under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance. The Site is accessible via Tai Tong Road and currently occupied by Siu Lo which is vacant and some vacant land (**Plans A-2 to A-4b**).

- 1.2 Compared with the last approved application (No. A/YL/289), the proposed number of storeys of the RCHE building remains as 6 storeys, but with an increase in actual BH of 3.25m and increase in GFA of 1,026m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed increase in actual BH is due to the increase in floor-to-floor heights for accommodating a larger ventilation system to comply with the Department of Health's (DoH's) guidelines on prevention of communicable diseases in RCHE and allowing more vertical separation space between the pitched roof of the Annex Block of 'Siu Lo' and the cantilevered structure of the RCHE building for future maintenance. Besides, the proposed number of beds in the RCHE is reduced from 281 beds (or a range of 260-300) to 241 beds (or a range of 220-260) due to design and operational requirements and constraints as well as for enhancing the living quality of future residents of the RCHE. A comparison of the major development parameters of the current application and the last approved application is summarised as follows:

<b>Major Development Parameters</b>	<b>Previous Application (No. A/YL/289) (a)</b>	<b>Current Application (No. A/YL/302) (b)</b>	<b>Difference (b) - (a)</b>
Site Area	About 1,953m <sup>2</sup> (including GL of about 165m <sup>2</sup> )	About 1,877.1m <sup>2</sup> # (including GL of about 144.8m <sup>2</sup> )	-75.9m <sup>2</sup> (-3.9%)
Total GFA	About 5,930m <sup>2</sup> *	About 6,956m <sup>2</sup>	+1,026m <sup>2</sup> (+17.3%)
Plot Ratio (PR)	Not more than 3.04	Not more than 3.71	+0.67 (+22.0%)
Site Coverage	Not more than 60%	Not more than 65%	+5% (+8.3%)
<b>Historic Building – 'Siu Lo'</b>			
GFA	368m <sup>2</sup>	356m <sup>2</sup> #	-12m <sup>2</sup> (-3.3%)
No. of storeys	Main Building: 2 Annex Block: 1	Main Building: 2 Annex Block: 1	No change
Proposed Use	House	House	No change
<b>Proposed RCHE Building</b>			
GFA	Not more than 5,400 m <sup>2</sup>	Not more than 6,600 m <sup>2</sup> @	+1,200m <sup>2</sup> (+22.2%)
No. of Storeys	6 storeys	6 storeys	No change
Maximum BH	+28.4mPD	+31.65mPD	+3.25m (+14.3%)
No. of Beds	281	241	-40 beds (-14.2%)
<b>Provision of Internal Transport Facilities</b>			
No. of Parking Spaces	2 (for private cars)	2 (for private cars)	No change
No. of Loading/Unloading Bays	2 (for light buses)	2 (for light buses)	No change

- Remarks: # According to the detailed land survey conducted by the applicant in August 2022, the site area should be 1,877.1m<sup>2</sup> while the existing GFA of 'Siu Lo' (including Main Building and Annex Block) should be 356m<sup>2</sup>.
- \* Including about 162m<sup>2</sup> for covered internal road and parking spaces serving 'Siu Lo' and the proposed RCHE building (assuming 50% of the GFA to be disregarded).
- @ GFA of the G/F of the proposed RCHE building needs to be double-counted due to excessive headroom (i.e. 7.45m) as per the practice of the Buildings Department.

- 1.3 According to the applicant, similar to the last approved application, special design considerations have been given to the proposed RCHE building in order to conserve the historic building 'Siu Lo'. Besides, a greenery ratio of at least 20% will be provided with proposed tree planting and greenery provision at different levels (**Drawing A-11**). Apart from free public visits of the heritage garden with display boards available through advanced bookings to allow public appreciation of the exterior of the historic building as proposed in the last application, additional merits, including allowing future guided and private tours for non-profit organisations and schools to visit some of the interior areas of 'Siu Lo' under the docent's guidance, are proposed in the current application. The detailed arrangement would be subject to agreement with the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) and the Commissioner for Heritage's Office.
- 1.4 The applicant has submitted a revised set of relevant technical assessment reports including Traffic Impact Assessment, Sewerage and Drainage Impact Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment (NIA), Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) and Heritage Appraisal in support of the current application. The proposed floor plans, section and elevation plans, landscape plans, photomontages, heritage conservation strategy plan, and a set of comparison plans between last approved scheme and the proposed scheme submitted by the applicant are shown in **Drawings A-1 to A-17**.
- 1.5 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted the following documents:
- (a) Application form received on 28.3.2023 (Appendix I)
- (b) Further Information (FI) received on 31.8.2023 enclosing the revised Application form and Consolidated Planning Statement (Appendix Ia)  
(*exempted from publication and recounting requirements*)
- [Supporting Planning Statement and FIs received on 28.3.2023, 9.5.2023, 25.5.2023, 15.6.2023, 7.7.2023, 21.7.2023, 11.8.2023 and 23.8.2023 were superseded and not attached]

## 2. **Justifications from the Applicant**

The justifications put forth by the applicant in support of the application are detailed in **Appendix Ia**. They are summarised as follows:

### *In line with the policy direction of encouraging private RCHE development*

- (a) The proposed development is in line with the policy direction of the "Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Home for the Elderly Premises in New Private Developments – Time-limited Enhancements" promulgated by the Lands Department in 2023 (Practice Note Issue No. 5/2023) which encourages the provision of purpose-built RCHE by private initiatives with a cap of 12,000m<sup>2</sup> GFA.

Addressing surging demand for RCHE places

- (b) The projected service demand for RCHE would increase from 49,000 places in 2016 to about 68,000 places in 2046. However, the total number of subsidised and non-subsidised RCHE places was only 34,742 as at 30 June 2021. The proposed RCHE development of 241 beds (or a range of 220-260) can help address the shortfall of elderly facilities in Yuen Long district.

Optimal use of standalone “G/IC” site

- (c) The “G/IC” sites for standalone development have become scarce in Hong Kong. Increasing number of Government, institution or community (GIC) facilities has been accommodated within the podiums of housing sites, which may not be an ideal spatial arrangement and has led to interface problems as reflected by many end users. As such, the development potential of the standalone “G/IC” site should be fully optimised through relaxation of BHR.

Planning merits of the conservation-cum-development approach

- (d) The proposed development is in line with the heritage conservation policy which aims to strike a proper balance between respect for private property rights and heritage conservation by offering appropriate economic incentives to encourage private owners to conserve and revitalise their historic buildings. According to the conservation-cum-development proposal initiated by the applicant, ‘Siu Lo’ will be managed and maintained at the applicant’s own cost, whilst the remaining part of the Site will be developed into a compatible use to the benefits of the community. The heritage garden is proposed to allow public appreciation of the exterior of the historic building, while some of the interior areas of ‘Siu Lo’, including the display area and the historic kitchen, would also be visited under the docent’s guidance.

An optimised design in response to site constraints

- (e) The proposed development scheme is an optimised design in response to the development constraints at the Site, which include setback from Tai Tong Road, provision of minimum separation from the dispensers of the petrol filling station near the Site, irregular configuration of the Site, requirements of the emergency vehicular access and the need to maintain a clear space at the northeast part of the Site for maintaining physical and visual accessibility of ‘Siu Lo’.
- (f) Compared with the previously approved scheme under application (No. A/YL/289) with a proposed BH at +28.4mPD, the RCHE building under the current application will result in an increase of actual BH of only 3.25m (i.e. +31.65mPD), mainly due to increase in floor-to-floor heights to allow more space atop the Annex Block for future maintenance, and to accommodate a larger ventilation system in order to comply with the latest DoH’s guidelines on prevention of communicable diseases in RCHE.
- (g) The increase in GFA of 1,026m<sup>2</sup> (from 5,930m<sup>2</sup> to 6,956m<sup>2</sup>) is mainly resulted from the double-counting of the GFA of G/F of the proposed RCHE due to the excessive headroom of 7.45m as per the practice of the Buildings Department (BD). The proposed development scheme is an optimised design in achieving the intended GFA of 6,600m<sup>2</sup> for the proposed RCHE building.

Compatibility

- (h) There are existing medium-rise to high-rise residential estates on land zoned “Residential (Group A)1” and “Residential (Group B)” in the vicinity of the Site. The BHs of planned developments in close proximity of the Site range from 6 to 8

storeys, including a planned 8-storey composite building comprising school and church uses (under application No. A/YL/252), and a planned 6-storey RCHE building (under application No. A/YL/263). The proposed RCHE with a BH of 6 storeys is lower than the maximum BH of 8 storeys for ‘School’ and ‘Hospital’ uses on the subject “G/IC(1)” zone on the OZP. In view of such, the proposed BH should be considered a compatible height in terms of the scale of building blocks.

No adverse impact to surrounding area

- (i) The proposed development would not incur adverse impacts to its surroundings on visual, landscape, heritage, environmental, sewerage, drainage and traffic aspects.

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

The applicant is the sole “current land owner”. Detailed information would be deposited at the meeting for Members’ inspection. For the GL portion, the requirements under Town Planning Board Guidelines PG-No. 31A are not applicable.

**4. Background**

- 4.1 The Site has been zoned “G/IC” since the exhibition of the first draft Yuen Long OZP No. S/YL/1 on 12.4.1991. Subsequently, the Site was rezoned to “G/IC(1)” with the imposition of BHR to help ensure that the developments will be in keeping with the adjacent village environment under the draft Yuen Long OZP No. S/YL/16 gazetted on 5.1.2007. There is no designated GIC use for the subject “G/IC(1)” zone.
- 4.2 ‘Siu Lo’, comprising a two-storey Main Building and a single-storey Annex Block, is a Grade 3 historic building<sup>2</sup> accorded by the AAB on 7.9.2017.

**5. Previous Applications**

- 5.1 The Site is involved in two previous applications (No. A/YL/256 and A/YL/289). Application No. A/YL/256 was submitted by a different applicant for proposed conservation of historic building (for public gallery use) and minor relaxation of BHR for a proposed RCHE development. The application was approved with conditions by the Committee on 20.3.2020.
- 5.2 The last approved application No. A/YL/289 was submitted by the same applicant for the same use as the current application but with different development parameters. The application was approved with conditions by the Committee on 29.7.2022.
- 5.3 Both applications were approved mainly on the considerations that the proposed developments were in line with the planning intention of the “G/IC(1)” zone; the proposals were in line with relevant government policies in heritage conservation and encouraging provision of RCHE premises in private developments; the proposed developments were considered not incompatible with the surroundings;

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<sup>2</sup> By definition, Grade 3 historic buildings are “buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means should be considered if preservation is not applicable”.

and concerns of relevant departments could be addressed by imposing approval conditions. Details of the previous applications are summarised at **Appendix II** and the locations are shown on **Plan A-1**.

## **6. Similar Applications**

Within the “G/IC(1)” zone on the OZP, there are two similar applications (No. A/YL/252 and No. A/YL/276) for minor relaxation of BHR for a composite building comprising school and religious institution (church) (from 3 storeys to 8 storeys) and a proposed RCHE (from 3 storeys to 5 storeys) respectively. These two applications were approved with conditions by the Committee on 3.5.2019 and 10.6.2022 mainly on the grounds that the proposed developments were in line with the planning intention of the “G/IC” zone and not incompatible with the surrounding areas; the applicants had demonstrated design merits to justify the proposed BHs; and there were no adverse comments from concerned government departments. Details of the similar applications are at **Appendix III** and shown on **Plan A-1**.

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

### **7.1 The Site:**

- (a) is located at the southern part of Yuen Long New Town. It is accessible via Tai Tong Road; and
- (b) comprises a Grade 3 historic building ‘Siu Lo’ (including its Main Building and Annex Block) which is currently vacant and its adjoining vacant land.

### **7.2 The surrounding areas have the following characteristics:**

- (a) the Site is situated in an area generally occupied by low-density residential and village settlements intermixed with shops and services, open storage yards, warehouses and workshops, vehicle parks, GIC facilities, fallow agricultural land and vacant land;
- (b) to its immediate north is the Yuen Long Baptist Church<sup>3</sup>;
- (c) to its immediate east is a petrol filling station and Tai Tong Road;
- (d) to its immediate west is a piece of vacant land and to its further west are open storage yards, warehouses and village settlements; and
- (e) to its south is a cluster of village houses and temporary structures, and the Hang Heung Bakery Factory<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> It is the subject of an approved planning application No. A/YL/252 for proposed composite building comprising school and religious institution (church) with minor relaxation of BHR (from 3 storeys to 8 storeys), which was approved with conditions by the Committee on 3.5.2019.

<sup>4</sup> It is the subject of an approved planning application No. A/YL/263 for proposed social welfare facility of a RCHE (6 storeys), which was approved with conditions by the Committee on 5.2.2021.

## **8. Planning Intention**

- 8.1 The planning intention of “G/IC” zone is primarily for the provision of GIC facilities serving the needs of the local residents and/or a wider district, region or the territory. It is also intended to provide land for uses directly related to or in support of the work of the Government, organisations providing social services to meet community needs, and other institutional establishments.
- 8.2 A minor relaxation clause in respect of BHR is incorporated into the Notes in order to provide incentive for developments/redevelopments with planning and design merits. Each application for minor relaxation will be considered on its own merits and the relevant criteria for consideration of such relaxation set out in paragraph 9.1.7 of the Explanatory Statement of the OZP are as follow:
- (a) amalgamating smaller sites for achieving better urban design and local area improvements;
  - (b) accommodating the bonus PR granted under the Buildings Ordinance in relation to surrender/dedication of land/area for use as public passage/street widening;
  - (c) providing better streetscape/good quality street level public space;
  - (d) providing separation between buildings to enhance air ventilation and visual permeability; and
  - (e) other factors, such as site constraints, need for tree preservation, innovative building design and planning merits that would bring about improvements to townscape and amenity of the locality, provided that no adverse landscape, visual and air ventilation impacts, as appropriate, would be resulted from the innovative building design.

## **9. Comments from Relevant Government Bureau and Departments**

- 9.1 The following Government bureau and departments have been consulted and their views on the application and/or the public comments received are summarised as follows:

### **Heritage Preservation**

- 9.1.1 Comments of the Commissioner for Heritage (C for H) and the Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments) (ES(A&M)), Development Bureau (DevB):
- (a) The preservation-cum-development scheme in the application is similar to the last approved application No. A/YL/289, which was approved by the Committee on 29.7.2022. The good intention from the applicant to preserve ‘Siu Lo’ in-situ and provide various types of public appreciation arrangements is appreciated. Compared with the approved application No. A/YL/289, the public appreciation

arrangement is enhanced by allowing visitors to enter some of the interior areas of 'Siu Lo' under docent's guidance. With regard to the prevailing heritage conservation policy, the current preservation-cum-development proposal for 'Siu Lo' is considered commensurate with its grading and heritage value. They therefore render in-principle support to the preservation-cum-development proposal for 'Siu Lo' from heritage conservation perspective.

- (b) The Government's heritage conservation policy aims to strike a proper balance between respect of private property rights and heritage conservation, and offer appropriate economic incentives to encourage private owners to conserve and revitalise their historic buildings. The grading system provides an objective basis for determining the heritage value, and hence the preservation need, of historic buildings in Hong Kong. The grading system is administrative in nature and does not affect the ownership, management, uses and development right of the buildings.
- (c) 'Siu Lo', comprising a two-storey Main Building and a single-storey Annex Block, was accorded as a Grade 3 historic building by the AAB on 7.9.2017. By definition, Grade 3 historic buildings are "buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means should be considered if preservation is not practical".
- (d) As per the preservation-cum-development proposal in the subject application, the Main Building of 'Siu Lo' and its Annex Block would be preserved in-situ and a 6-storey RCHE would be constructed. 'Siu Lo' would be used as 'House'. A heritage garden with educational display boards would be provided at 'Siu Lo' to allow the public visitors to appreciate the internal area from outside. According to the heritage appraisal, a conservation management plan (CMP) would be submitted for AMO's agreement. Self-guided tours, guided tours, private tours for non-government organisations and school, and online virtual tours of 'Siu Lo' would be provided free-of-charge. Visits to some of the interior areas of 'Siu Lo' would be allowed under docent's guidance.
- (e) It is noted that the applicant would maintain the public views to 'Siu Lo' and its Annex Block from Tai Tong Road (the main road) unobstructed, and would carefully study and design the façade treatment of the new RCHE building fronting 'Siu Lo' for integration with 'Siu Lo'. The applicant will devise a heritage sympathetic and sensible design for the two columns of the RCHE building at detailed design stage.
- (f) It is suggested that the Board could consider including the submission of CMP as approval conditions as below:
  - (i) the submission of a CMP for the conservation of the Main Building and the Annex Block of Siu Lo prior to commencement of any works and implementation of the CMP to the satisfaction of AMO or of the Board; and



- (ii) the submission of a full set of photographic and cartographic records of the Main Building and the Annex Block of Siu Lo prior to commencement of any works to the satisfaction of AMO or of the Board.

### **Land Administration**

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

According to desktop checking, the Site falls within the private lot boundary of Lots 1695 S.E ss.1 RP, 1695 S.F ss.1 and 1695 s.H RP (Part) in D.D.120, which are Old Scheduled Agricultural Lots but the lease cannot be traced, and adjoining GL. Other detailed advisory comments are at **Appendix V**.

### **Traffic**

- 9.1.3 Comments of the Commissioner for Transport (C for T):

She has no adverse comment on the application from the traffic engineering viewpoint. Her detailed advisory comments are at **Appendix V**.

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

He has no adverse comment from highway maintenance point of view. His detailed advisory comments are at **Appendix V**.

### **Social Welfare**

- 9.1.5 Comments of the Director of Social Welfare (DSW):

Should the revised design be essential for fulfillment of BD's requirements, she has no adverse comment from the service perspective on the proposed increase of maximum GFA of the RCHE from 5,400m<sup>2</sup> to 6,600m<sup>2</sup>. The applicant should also be reminded of her detailed advisory comments at **Appendix V**.

### **Environment**

- 9.1.6 Comments of the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP):

He has no objection to the application from the environmental planning perspective subject to the planning condition requiring the submission of an updated NIA and the implementation of mitigation measures identified therein to the satisfaction of his/the Board's satisfaction, such that there will be a mechanism for the applicant to submit an updated NIA if there is any update to the design of the proposed development at the later stage and ensure the noise mitigation measures recommended in the NIA be properly implemented.

### **Visual and Landscape**

9.1.7 Comments of the Chief Architect/Advisory and Statutory Compliance, Architectural Services Department (CA/ASC, ArchSD):

- (a) She has no particular comment on the application from architectural and visual points of view.
- (b) The applicant may however wish to review the treatment/articulation of the building elevations in the design stage to blend the new building harmoniously with the historic building.

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

#### **Urban Design**

- (a) The Site is located in the southern part of Yuen Long New Town. Being located in a predominantly low-rise to medium-rise neighbourhood and given the approved GIC developments in the locality (mainly with BHs ranging from +28.25mPD to +37.9mPD), the proposed development with a BH of +31.65mPD is considered not incompatible with the surrounding context.
- (b) According to the submitted VIA, as compared with the existing condition, the visual impacts of the proposed development would be negligible to the majority of the selected public viewing points (VPs) and moderately adverse for two VPs within short distance, and it could maintain a harmony with the approved GIC developments in the locality in terms of overall visual character. Besides, special design considerations are incorporated into the proposed RCHE building in order to conserve the historic building of 'Siu Lo', such as façade treatment of the RCHE building to integrate with 'Siu Lo' and increasing the vertical separation between the Annex Block of 'Siu Lo' and the RCHE building.

#### **Landscape**

- (c) According to the aerial photo of 2022, the Site is situated in an area of miscellaneous rural fringe landscape predominated by shops and services, workshops, open vehicle parks, residential blocks and village houses. With reference to the site photos in **Plans A-4a and A-4b**, the Site is hard paved without any vegetation, and the historic building 'Siu Lo' is observed.
- (d) According to the planning statement and landscape plans, a total of 11 new trees, together with lawn, shrubs and groundcovers, will be provided at ground level and roof level, whereas a bamboo strip is proposed along the western perimeter wall at ground level. She has no comment on the application from the landscape planning perspective. Other detailed advisory comments on the application are at **Appendix V**.

### **Drainage**

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

He has no objection in principle to the application from the drainage point of view. Should the Board approve the application, he would suggest to incorporate an approval condition requiring the applicant to submit and implement a revised drainage proposal to his satisfaction.

### **Fire Safety**

- 9.1.10 Comments of the Director of Fire Services (D of FS):

He has no objection to the proposal subject to water supplies for firefighting and fire service installations being provided to his satisfaction and that the height restriction as stipulated in relevant regulations governing the proposed social welfare facilities being observed. The applicant should also be reminded of his detailed advisory comments at **Appendix V**.

### **Building Matters**

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

His detailed advisory comments at **Appendix V**.

### **Others**

- 9.1.12 Comments of Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department (H(GEO), CEDD):

He has no adverse comment on the planning application. The applicant should be reminded of the detailed comments at **Appendix V**.

- 9.1.13 Comments of Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH):

Her detailed advisory comments at **Appendix V**.

### **District Officer's Comments**

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

His office has not received any comment from the locals regarding the application.

- 9.2 The following Government departments have no comment on the application:

- (a) Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department (CE/C, WSD);
- (b) Project Manager (West), CEDD (PM(W), CEDD);
- (c) Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (DEMS);
- (d) Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (DLCS); and
- (e) Commissioner of Police (C of P).

**10. Public Comments Received During Statutory Publication Periods**

- 10.1 On 4.4.2023, 16.5.2023, 2.6.2023, 20.6.2023, 14.7.2023 and 28.7.2023, the application and FIs were published for public inspection. During the first three weeks of the statutory public inspection periods, a total of 51 public comments were received with 48 supporting and three objecting to the application.
- 10.2 The 48 supporting comments were submitted by individuals (samples of comments are extracted in **Appendices IV-1 to IV-4**). The major supporting grounds are summarised as follows:
- (a) the Site was used as a vehicle park for many years. The proposed development can utilise the land resources and would be in line with Government's policy direction and the planning intention of the "G/IC" zone;
  - (b) the Site does not fall within areas for village type development, thus posing minimal impact to the surrounding villagers;
  - (c) the proposed RCHE can address the acute demand for both the Yuen Long district and Hong Kong amid aging population;
  - (d) the location of the Site is considered appropriate with good accessibility and without adverse impact on the nearby residents, while the proposed development intensity and BH of six storeys are compatible with the surrounding environment. The proposed minor relaxation of BHR will not pose much visual impact to the surrounding area and the proposed landscape proposal would enhance the overall environmental quality;
  - (e) as compared to the previous scheme, there are improvements in living quality of the RCHE and better air ventilation with the minor increase in BH. The overall visual quality is also considered better than the previous scheme, with 'Siu Lo' being more attractive in terms of external appearance;
  - (f) the proposed standalone RCHE will provide spacious and quality RCHE spaces with design merits. It would enhance the overall service quality of the industry and help phasing out existing sub-standard RCHEs;
  - (g) the proposed in-situ conservation of the Grade 3 historic building 'Siu Lo' would strike a proper balance between heritage preservation and private development, preserve its historic culture and serve educational purpose by opening up part of the conserved building for visitors; and
  - (h) the comprehensive technical assessments have demonstrated that the proposed development would not pose adverse impacts to the surrounding environments and locals.
- 10.3 Three objecting comments were submitted by a residents' representative of Tai Kei Leng (**Appendix IV-5**) and an individual (**Appendix IV-6**) on the grounds that the proposed development would pose security and safety issues, traffic concerns on the already congested Tai Tong Road, increase in BH in terms of number of storeys, reduction in number of beds as compared to last approved application, insufficient provision of open-air recreational spaces, considerable visual impact induced by the proposed development and concerns on diminishing living conditions of the elderly residents.

## 11. Planning Considerations and Assessments

- 11.1 The application is an amendment substantially similar to the last approved scheme under application No. A/YL/289 for proposed minor relaxation of BHR from 3 storeys to 6 storeys for a permitted RCHE and proposed house use with conservation proposal (**Plan A-1**) at the Site zoned “G/IC(1)” on the OZP. According to the applicant, the proposed development will preserve the Grade 3 historic building ‘Siu Lo’ in-situ and restore it for ‘House’ use, and a new 6-storey RCHE building would be constructed to provide about 241 beds (or a range of 220-260) to serve the community. Free public visits and guided tours of the landscaped heritage garden on the ground level through advanced bookings are proposed to allow public appreciation of the exterior of the historic building. Furthermore, self-guided tours, guided tours, private tours for non-government organisations and school, and online virtual tours of ‘Siu Lo’ would be provided free-of-charge, while visits to some of the interior areas of ‘Siu Lo’, including the display area and the historic kitchen, under docent’s guidance are also proposed in the current application.

### Planning Intention

- 11.2 Similar to the last approved application, the proposed development with a major portion used for RCHE is in line with the planning intention for the “G/IC” zone for the provision of GIC facilities to serve the needs of the local residents and/or a wider district, region or the territory. According to the applicant, there is a demand for elderly services in the territory and the proposed ‘House’ would allow in-situ preservation of the entire ‘Siu Lo’ to reflect its most genuine state in the past. Should the revised design be essential for fulfillment of BD’s requirements, DSW has no adverse comment from the service perspective. Moreover, C for H and ES(A&M) of DevB have rendered in-principle support to the preservation-cum-development proposal for ‘Siu Lo’ from the heritage conservation perspective. Taking into account the background of the Site, the proposed ‘House’ development of ‘Siu Lo’ with conservation proposal is considered not in conflict with the planning intention of the “G/IC” zone. Should the application be approved, approval condition requiring the submission of CMP setting out the detailed conservation proposal prior to the commencement of any works and implementation of the CMP is recommended.

### Compatibility with Surrounding Areas and Development Intensity

- 11.3 The immediate surrounding areas of the Site are mainly low-rise, low-density village type developments and temporary structures of one to three storeys while to the immediate north of the Site is the proposed composite school and religious institution development with a BH of eight storeys under the approved planning application No. A/YL/252 (**Plan A-1**). As compared to the last approved application (**Drawing A-17**), the further increase in actual BH of 3.25m (from +28.4mPD to +31.65mPD) is due to the increase in floor-to-floor heights to allow more vertical separation space above the pitched roof of the Annex Block of ‘Siu Lo’ (without any structural intrusion on the Main Building of ‘Siu Lo’) for future maintenance consideration, and to accommodate a larger ventilation system in order to comply with the latest DoH’s guidelines on prevention of communicable diseases in RCHE. Besides, the number of beds in the RCHE is proposed to be reduced by 40 due to design and operational requirements and constraints, as well as for enhancing living quality of future residents of the RCHE. Special design

considerations which have been given to the proposed new RCHE building in order to conserve the historic building of 'Siu Lo', as highlighted in the last approved application, would be maintained. Moreover, the further increase in GFA of 1,026m<sup>2</sup> is mainly to reflect the double-counting of the GFA of G/F of the proposed RCHE building due to the excessive headroom of 7.45m (**Drawing A-8**), with the overall building bulk being largely similar to the last approved scheme.

- 11.4 CTP/UD&L, PlanD considers the proposed minor relaxation of BHR not incompatible with the surrounding context and could maintain harmony with the approved GIC developments in the locality in terms of overall visual character. CA/ASC, ArchSD also has no particular comment on the proposal from architectural and visual points of view. Having regard to the need to preserve 'Siu Lo' and to construct a RCHE with about 241 beds (or a range of 220-260) as well as the slight change in building bulk, the proposed minor relaxation of BHR from three to six storeys, with an actual BH of +31.65mPD, is considered not unreasonable.

#### Planning and Design Merits

- 11.5 The design merits proposed in the current application are similar to those in the last approved application, e.g. the design of new RCHE building blending in well with the historic building 'Siu Lo', proposed landscaped heritage garden in the northeastern portion facing Tai Tong Road, greenery at different levels of the RCHE building, and an optimised design to allow unobstructed public view towards 'Siu Lo' from Tai Tong Road (**Drawing A-10 to A-12**). Additionally, the current proposal would allow the public to visit some of the interior areas of 'Siu Lo' under docent's guidance. In view of the above and the preservation-cum-development proposal, it is considered that the current application generally complies with the criteria for consideration of relaxation of BHR stated in paragraph 8.2 above.

#### Technical Aspects

- 11.6 Similar to the last approved application, the applicant has submitted a revised set of relevant technical assessments to demonstrate that the proposed development would not generate significant adverse impacts to the surrounding areas. Concerned government departments consulted, including C for T, DEP, CE/MN, DSD, D of FS and CTP/UD&L, PlanD have no objection to or no adverse comment on the application. Significant adverse traffic, environmental, drainage, sewerage, fire safety and landscape impacts on the surrounding areas are not envisaged. Moreover, should the application be approved, the applicant will be reminded that the proposed RCHE should follow the requirements as required by the relevant licensing authority. The technical concerns of relevant departments could also be addressed by the imposition of approval conditions recommended in paragraph 12.2 below.

#### Previous and Similar Applications

- 11.7 Compared with the last approved application, the proposed number of storeys maintains as six storeys but with an increase in actual BH of 3.25m (i.e. from +28.4mPD to +31.65mPD) and the proposed number of RCHE beds reduces from 281 to 241 (-14.2%) while the proposed historic building 'Siu Lo' also remains as private 'House' use and the overall building bulk of the RCHE is largely similar.

Approval of the current application is in line with the Committee's previous decisions as highlighted in paragraphs 5 and 6 above.

Public Comments

- 11.8 There are 51 public comments received during the statutory publication periods with 48 supporting and three objecting as mentioned in paragraph 10 above. The planning considerations and assessments in paragraphs 11.1 to 11.7 above are relevant.

**12. Planning Department's Views**

- 12.1 Based on the assessment made in paragraph 11 and having taken into account the public comments in paragraph 10 above, the Planning Department has no objection to the application.
- 12.2 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 is commenced or the permission is renewed. The following conditions of approval and advisory clauses are also suggested for Members' reference:

Approval conditions

- (a) the submission and implementation of a Conservation Management Plan for the conservation of the Main Building and the Annex Block of 'Siu Lo' prior to commencement of any works to the satisfaction of the Antiquities and Monuments Office or of the Town Planning Board;
- (b) the submission of a full set of photographic and cartographic records of the Main Building and the Annex Block of 'Siu Lo' prior to commencement of any works to the satisfaction of the Antiquities and Monuments Office or of the Town Planning Board;
- (c) the submission and implementation of a revised drainage proposal to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the Town Planning Board;
- (d) the submission of an updated noise impact assessment and provision of noise mitigation measures identified therein to the satisfaction of the Director of Environmental Protection or of the Town Planning Board; and
- (e) the provision of water supplies for fire-fighting and fire service installations to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board.

Advisory clauses

The recommended advisory clauses are attached 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 conditions and advisory clauses, if any, to be attached to the permission, and the date when the validity of the permission should expire.
- 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**

<b>Appendix I</b>	Application form received on 28.3.2023
<b>Appendix Ia</b>	FI received on 31.8.2023
<b>Appendix II</b>	Previous Applications
<b>Appendix III</b>	Similar Applications
<b>Appendices IV-1 to IV-6</b>	Public Comments
<b>Appendix V</b>	Recommended Advisory Clauses
<b>Drawings A-1 to A-7</b>	Schematic Floor Plans
<b>Drawings A-8 and A-9</b>	Schematic Section Plans
<b>Drawing A-10</b>	Schematic Elevation Plan
<b>Drawing A-11</b>	Landscape Plan
<b>Drawings A-12 and A-13</b>	Photomontages
<b>Drawing A-14</b>	Heritage Conservation Strategy Plan
<b>Drawings A-15 to A-17</b>	Comparison Plans between the Last Approved Scheme (No. A/YL/289) and the Proposed Scheme
<b>Plan A-1</b>	Location Plan
<b>Plan A-2</b>	Site Plan
<b>Plan A-3</b>	Aerial Photo
<b>Plans A-4a and A-4b</b>	Site Photos

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
SEPTEMBER 2023**