

PlanD Ref.: A/YL-MP/316

Appendix 2

Date: 28 Aug 2024

**Application of S16-III - Renewal of Permission for Temporary Use or Development of Field Study Centre and Organic Farm at Government Land (GL) D.D. 104, Ha Chuk Yuen Tsuen, San Tin, Yuen Long**

## Planning Statement

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### 1. The Site

The site, with an area about 1700 sqm., is zoned “Village Type Development” (“V”) on the approved Mai Po & Fairview Park Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL-MP/7. The site is currently a piece of government land occupied by vacant school premises (used as former Chuk Hing Public School, which ceased operation in 1994). There were four main structures on a covered land area of about 619 sqm and gross floor area of about 766sqm, one of which being 2-storey and the rest 1-storey.



### 2. Field Study and Organic Farm (The Project)

Fruit Garden Social Enterprise Limited (FGSE) is a non-profit making organization set up to serve the society.

This project aims to better utilize the vacant government development to provide some services and activities for society and the nearby neighborhoods. The service could also provide opportunities for people to get into contact with nature, spend less time in computer games, and educate people with life education:

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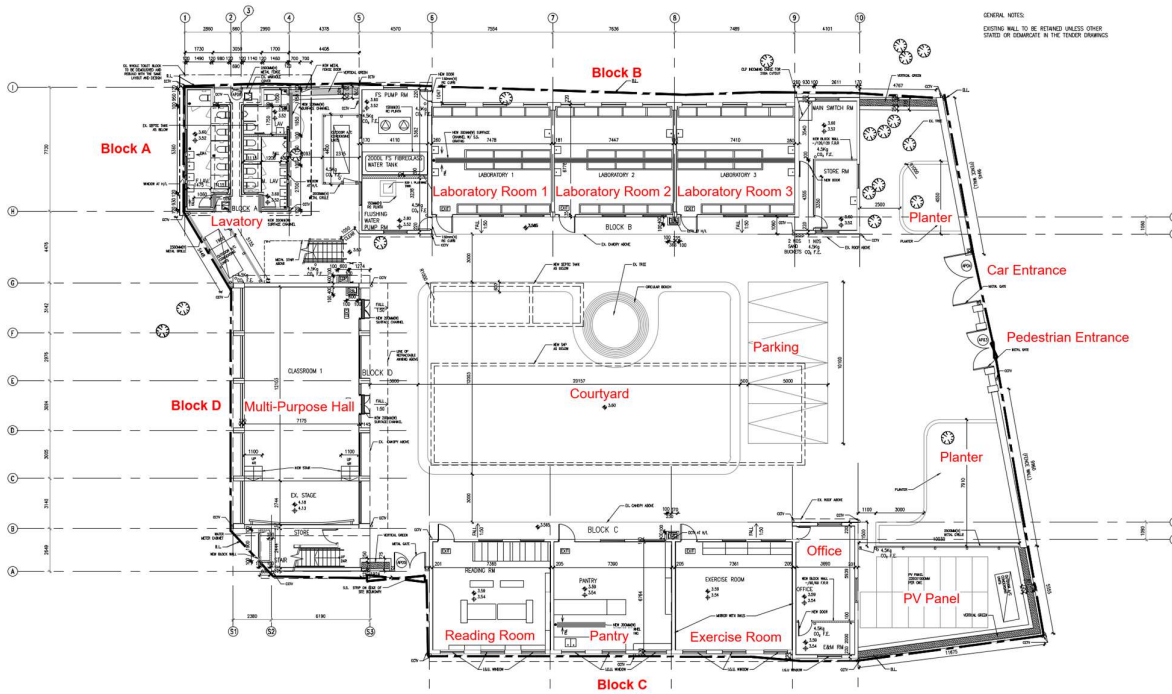
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- i) Educating the public on organic farming, planting with water, and without the use of pesticides. Teach the young and the kids individual thinking, learning, and cooperation with others in farming activities, and bring them back from the electronic world. The aim is to break the isolation barrier and achieve real in-person communication, love, respect and improve the family relationship that the modern world lacks. Believe in family and strengthen the support to the young and the kids. Last but not least, to help the weakness and the vulnerable groups and to give them a positive attitude towards the society.
- ii) Visiting the community centre, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, old people's homes etc. with licensed dogs "動物大師" animal masters" for conducting life education and related activities, allowing the closer relationship of animals with people of different ages and levels for creating a positive attitude towards the animal.
- iii) Arranging visits of some educational institutes, schools, or people to the FGSE centre for conducting animal training like dogs. This could allow more people to understand and learn how to be with the animal in a positive way. The understanding of animals could reduce misunderstanding of the behavior of the animal and reduce the chance of abandoning animals.
- iv) To create some job opportunities for the vulnerable groups and the weaknesses in the development. This could assist them go into society, self-reliance, and establishing self-esteem and self-confidence.
- v) Establish training and classes for serving the neighborhood and society, learning recycling and reuse of kitchen waste, etc.

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### 3. Proposed Development



**Master Layout Plan of the Centre**

Full completion report with Layout Plan, section, elevation and completed photo record of the development is enclosed in the **Annex A**.

#### **Building Block A – Lavatory**

It is a 1-storey building of about 2.6m high with male, and female and accessible lavatories to serve the workers and the visitors.

#### **Building Block B – Laboratories, E&M room & Store room**

It is a 1-storey building of about 3.2 to 5.5m high provided indoor organic farming space, E&M room and store room. Classes would be organized for learning organic planting without soil and without pesticide.

#### **Building Block C – Reading Room, Pantry & Exercise Room**

It is a 1-storey building of about 3.2 to 5.5m high contained reading room, pantry, exercise room. Offering classes for learning environmental detergent making, environment soap making, preparing food based on organic farming produces, environmental mosquito repellent, making small plants, pots, planting of herbs and flowers, etc.

Classes like yoga, Tai-Qi and stretching in the exercise room would be organized to promote more exercise for the people.

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### **Building Block D – Multi-Purpose Hall**

It is a 2-storey building of about 7.3m high. Some activity room / function room provided for the events and activities.

Detail service activities of the development refer to item 4.

### **Exterior and parking facilities**

In the centre of the courtyard, a bench would be set up under a tree so as to imitate the “榕樹頭”. People can sit under the tree chatting and watching people or kids learning cycling or roller skating in the courtyard. Four carparks would be provided to serve the workers, volunteer and the delivery of goods or the olds to and from the site.

## **4. Service activities / targets**

The development would provide the following activities:

### **a) Organic farming**

FGSE would establish some organic farming facilities in the development. Courses would be offered to learn organic farming and promote green living.

### **b) Interest classes**

FGSE would establish a workshop and classrooms for offering interest classes like environmental detergent making, environment soap making, preparing food based on organic farming products, environmental mosquito repellent, making small plants, and pots, planting of herbs and flowers, etc.

One of the activities would establish reading sessions at the reading room which could encourage participants, especially children, to develop a love for reading and improve their literacy skills. It fosters a culture of learning and curiosity, which can benefit participants academically and personally. Besides, reading sessions are designed to involve families, promoting family bonding and encouraging parents to read with their children, which has numerous developmental benefits.

There would also be a small room for exercise like yoga and stretching to promote more exercise for the people. The facilities would also be lent out to educational institutes to promote life education.

### **c) Animal training**

FGSE would offer animal training for dogs. In HK, abandoning of dogs is a major issue. There is a huge need for dog training in order to keep the dog close to people to avoid abandoning dogs due to misbehavior.

All dog training would be daytime only and would not have dogs staying in the facilities overnight.

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**d) Rest station**

FGSE would offer a rest station for the people coming to the establishment, particularly in the nearby neighborhood. Drinking facilities would be offered so that people could take a rest and chat indoors and outdoors. A bench would be set up under a tree so as to imitate the '榕樹頭', people can sit under the tree chatting and watching people or kids learning cycling or roller skating in the courtyard.

**e) Lavatory facilities**

FGSE would renovate the existing lavatories with shower facilities to serve the visitors and workers and allow participants to take a shower after the outdoor activities and indoor farming activities.

## **5. Operation Hours**

Animal training activities would usually take place twice per week. The course would usually take place on Saturday or Sunday from 10:00am to 6:00pm within the development.

The development would be opened from 10:00am to 6:00pm from Tuesday to Sunday. Use of facilities has to be booked in advance.

## **6. Number of Staff members on site**

Typically, there are eight staff members on-site daily, depending on the scale of the activities.

## **7. Estimated number of Visitors**

Each interest class would be of the size of about 30 people.

The classes would be organized from Tuesday to Sunday (10:00am-6:00pm). For special events and festival like mid-autumn festival, Christmas, New Year, maximum of 200 people would be allowed.

## **8. Access to the site / Transportation**

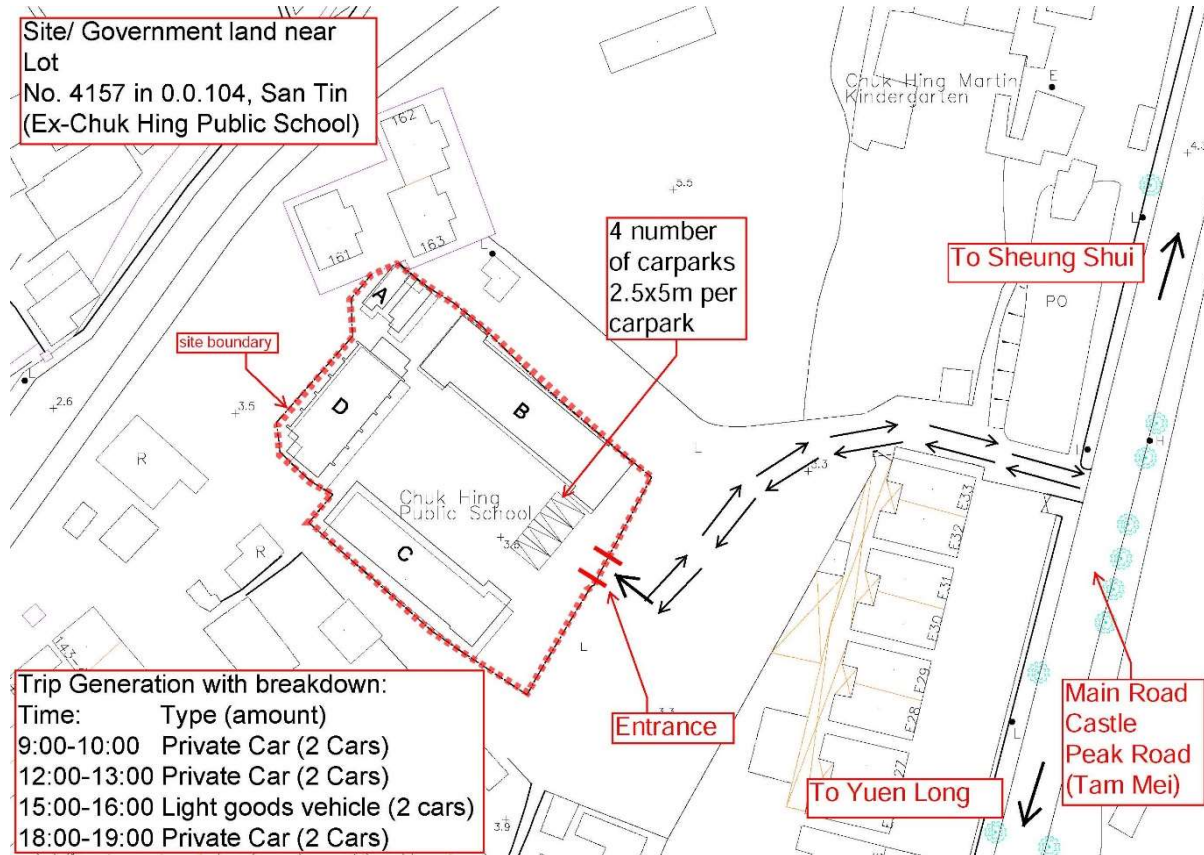
Visitors could walk from nearby bus stop/ mini-bus stop along Castle Peak Road (Tam Mei) to the development through the path next to Tai Yuen Villa. Also, people could also take bus No. 76K (Long Ping Estate Bus Terminus- Ching Ho Estate B/T) and drop at Chuk Yuen Station, or mini-bus No. 37 (Yuen Long Fuk Hong Street- Wai Chai Tsuen) and drop at Chuk Yuen Station.

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There would be 4 carparks provided in the development for use by the workers and delivery of goods and the olds.



## 9. Possible Impacts and Mitigation Measures

### a) Impact on the traffic

The visitors would not drive and park in the facilities, hence not creating traffic issue within the village and the development. They would be advised to take public transportation or walk to the facilities.

### b) Impact on the environment by the dog training and activities

The animal training would be conducted in day time. Hence there would have no noise issue at night time.

In order to reduce the noise impact to the nearby neighborhood, the facility would install insulated glass window. The windows would be closed off when dogs are in the rooms.

Also, the number of dogs would not be more than 15 number maximum at one time.

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## 10. Compliance with the previous approval condition

With DEVB's funding scheme, FGSE obtained stage 1 funding from the Development Bureau (DEVB) in November 2019 to sponsor the cost of detailed design and site investigation of the project under "Funding Scheme to Support the Use of Vacant Government Sites by Non-government Organisations" to facilitate the implementation of the proposal.

Subsequently, the detailed design has been approved, and stage 2 funding for construction purposes was obtained from the Development Bureau in Aug 2022. All the renovation works have been completed on 25 September 2023.

Regarding the TPB's letter dated 12 Nov 2021 on the relevant approval conditions, all imposed conditions have been complied with. Detail as below:

1. Approval condition (e) to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services of the TPB (**Annex B**)
2. Approval condition (g & h) to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services of the TPB (**Annex C**)

Besides, Lands Department has granted a **short-term tenancy (No. 3203)** at Government Land in D.D. 104 to FGSE for a term of commencing from 10 Dec 2019 to 2 August 2022, and renewal thereafter quarterly automatically.

## 11. In use

After the completion of the renovation work, FGSE has been proactive in organizing a variety of events for the community. These activities aim to engage different age groups and interests, fostering a sense of togetherness and enhancing community spirit. Some of the events that have been arranged include:

### Tai Chi Training Classes

These classes are designed to promote physical wellness and mindfulness, catering especially to the elderly, who can benefit from gentle exercise that improves balance, flexibility, and mental clarity.

### Mini-Concerts for the Elderly

Music events provide entertainment and joy, creating a lively and enjoyable atmosphere for the senior members of the community. These concerts offer a wonderful opportunity for social interaction and cultural enrichment.

### Hydroponics Workshops

These sessions introduce participants to the innovative method of growing plants without soil, using nutrient-rich water. It is an excellent way for community members to learn about sustainable practices and urban gardening.

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### **Magic Performances and Courses**

Magic shows are not only entertaining but also stimulate curiosity and wonder. Following the performances, magic courses are offered for those interested in learning the art of magic, encouraging creativity and boosting confidence.

### **Calligraphy Workshops**

These workshops focus on the traditional art of beautiful writing, allowing participants to explore their artistic talents while preserving cultural heritage. They offer a calming and therapeutic experience that appeals to all ages.

### **Life Education Programs**

These programs cover a range of topics aimed at personal development and well-being. They provide valuable insights and life skills, helping participants to navigate various aspects of life more effectively.

Through these diverse activities, FGSE continues to cultivate a vibrant, inclusive, and engaged community while promoting lifelong learning.

## **12. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the renewal of the temporary use of the Organic Farm and Field Study Centre for an additional three years will continue to bring significant benefits to the community and environment. The project has already transformed a previously vacant government site into a vibrant hub of activity that serves various societal needs, including education, community engagement, and environmental sustainability.

The proposed continuation of this project complies with all relevant approval conditions. Over the past year, Fruit Garden Social Enterprise Limited (FGSE) has successfully utilized the space to deliver a range of beneficial programs and activities, such as organic farming, life education, and wellness classes, which have positively impacted the local community. These initiatives have provided valuable learning opportunities, fostered social cohesion, and promoted a sustainable lifestyle.

Therefore, we respectfully request the approval of this renewal to continue fostering a community-focused, educational, and sustainable development that benefits all stakeholders involved.