

8 March 2021

Chairman and Members

Town Planning Board

15/F, North Point Government Offices

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Hong Kong

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**Re: Draft Sha Lo Wan and San Tau Development Permission Area Plan No. DPA/I-SLW/1**

Dear Chairman and Members,

Designing Hong Kong **support** the captioned draft Development Permission Area Plan to ensure the greatest possible planning and development control in Sha Lo Wan and San Tau, and to protect the rural and natural character with conservation value of the area.

We understand that DPA Plan will only be effective for maximum three years and will be replaced by an Outline Zoning Plan. We would like to raise our concerns in preparation of a better OZP as follows.

**For the proposed 1.14 ha “Site of Special Scientific Interest”**

- San Tau Beach was designated as SSSI in 1994. The area of SSSI in this plan does not include the seagrass beds below the high watermark. To have better protection and avoid human destruction to the area, we urge the Board to modify the boundary of the zoning to cover the whole SSSI designated by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department.

**For the proposed 154.78 ha “Unspecified Use”**

- The majority of the coastal area is natural with limited human intervention. We urge the government to zone the coastal area with high conservation values such as Coastal Protection Area (CPA) to reflect its environmental value and prevent potential damage.
- The river in San Tau flows to the SSSI. The area along the stream should have better protection by zoning for conservation uses in order to protect the stream and avoid pollution from human activities.
- There are two recognised villages namely Sha Lo Wan and San Tau in the plan. As the area is embraced by the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park, we recommend the Board to minimize the size of “Village Type Development” by only covering the existing village area in order to control human development and to minimize human disturbance to the nature.

**Review the definition of “Existing Uses”**

- In the notes of the plan, it is stated that *no action is required to make the use of any land or building which was in existence immediately before the first publication in the Gazette of the notice of the draft development permission area plan conform to this Plan, provided such use has continued since it came into existence.*
- It is noted that unauthorized road widening and slope cutting were found and land has been transformed as parking space in Sha Lo Wan. We are deeply concerned that these would be regarded as “Existing Uses” under the Town Planning Ordinance and that this loophole will be abused.
- We plea for the Board to review the definition of existing uses and to take a proactive approach to stop any “Destroy first, develop later” activity.

**Better Protection of Lantau Island**

- The Government has a clear principle of “Development in the North, Conservation for the South” for Lantau Island. However, there are continuous reports of natural destruction at Lantau over the last decade.
- There is no development control over other parts of South Lantau as there was no DPA before gazetting the OZPs. We urge the government to review the existing situation and to impose development control for areas which were not covered by DPA in order to have better protection of our nature.

Here we submit our concerns for your consideration.

Yours,

**Designing Hong Kong Limited**