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30/03/2012 11:46

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bcc

Subject Comments on the Public Consultation Document -  
Licensing Scheme for Private Columbia

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Dear Sir/ Madam,

Attached please see our comments re. the captioned.

Best Regards,

Tony Nip  
Senior Ecologist  
Ecological Advisory Programme  
Fauna Conservation Department  
Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden Corporation  
Tel: 377 2222; Fax: 377 2222



Licensing Scheme for Private Columbia\_120330.pdf



嘉道理農場暨植物園公司  
Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden Corporation

Food Branch, Food and Health Bureau,  
17/F., East Wing, Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong  
(email: ccc@fhb.gov.hk)

30 March 2012

By email only

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Comments on the Public Consultation Document –  
Licensing Scheme for Private Columbaria**

KFBG welcomes the move to establish a licensing scheme for private columbaria. We consider that this can help reduce eco-vandalism and in general protect the environment of Hong Kong. We would like to emphasise to FHB and the future Private Columbaria Licensing Board (Licensing Board) several points, mainly relating to environmental impact, that should not be overlooked.

**Requirements for license application – right to use the premises**

Section 4.5(a) of the consultation document states that “...in future the premises for operation as a private columbarium which offers storage services for human cremains should be self-owned by the operator, since self-ownership, as opposed to tenancy, provides more assurance of long term occupation...”. We really appreciate this as it can ensure the operator has a long-term commitment in providing columbarium services.

Based on this, we would like to mention that a private columbarium is being proposed to be built at Sha Lo Tung by a private developer (<http://www.epd.gov.hk/eia/chi/register/profile/latest/cesb206/cesb206.pdf>). This columbarium will be managed under a Private-Public Partnership Scheme, but the land to be developed for the columbarium does not belong to the developer, according to the document at the link above (please also see **Figure 1**); there is also no guarantee for the long-term occupation of the area for the proposed development. We would like to point out that this would violate the statement at Section 4.5(a) of the present public consultation document. We urge FHB and the future Licensing Board to bear this in mind, not just for the Sha Lo Tung case but also other similar cases.

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## 嘉道理農場暨植物園公司 Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden Corporation

### Requirements for license application – statutory requirements and lease conditions

You should have noted that in recent years there have been many unauthorized columbarium developments (i.e. a recent suspected case has been identified at Po Toi; please see **Figure 2**). We would like to mention that most of these developments would have violated the land lease conditions/ other statutory requirements; some recent cases have been confirmed by LandsD (i.e. Po Toi, Ma Shi Chau).

It is very clear that any “destroy first, build later” activities should not be tolerated (<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201107/04/P201107040255.htm>). We urge that once the applicant/ application site is found relating to these activities (no matter in the past or ongoing), the application should be rejected by FHB and/ or the future Licensing Board.

### Environmental impacts related to columbarium development

The Convention on Biological Diversity was applied to Hong Kong by the Central People’s Government on 9 May 2011 and together with its Conferences of Parties Decisions must now be complied with. Sustainable use of biodiversity resources is one of the three key objectives of the Convention. Under this objective, the Government is required to regard our natural resources as a precious heritage of Hong Kong. Since columbaria can cause many environmental impacts (i.e. sewage, air quality, traffic, light and noise) and ecosystems can be greatly affected by activities relating to their operation, we sincerely hope that FHB and/ or the future Licensing Board can thoroughly consider the effect on our natural environment potentially caused by all applications before granting the approval/ license.

### Risk of hill fire

The present consultation document has not considered the management issue of the columbarium as a main concern. We would like to mention that burning of joss sticks/ joss paper would be an everyday practice in most columbaria. When this is done in an unsupervised countryside location, hill fires could become a serious problem, causing not just ecological impacts but also threatening human life. The FHB and/ or the future Licensing Board should ask each applicant to provide a detailed management plan for every application. And impacts on the environment should be one of the main concerns during the decision-making process by FHB/ the Licensing Board.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,



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Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden Corporation

Philip S. H. Yip  
Conservation Officer  
Ecological Advisory Programme  
Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden

cc.

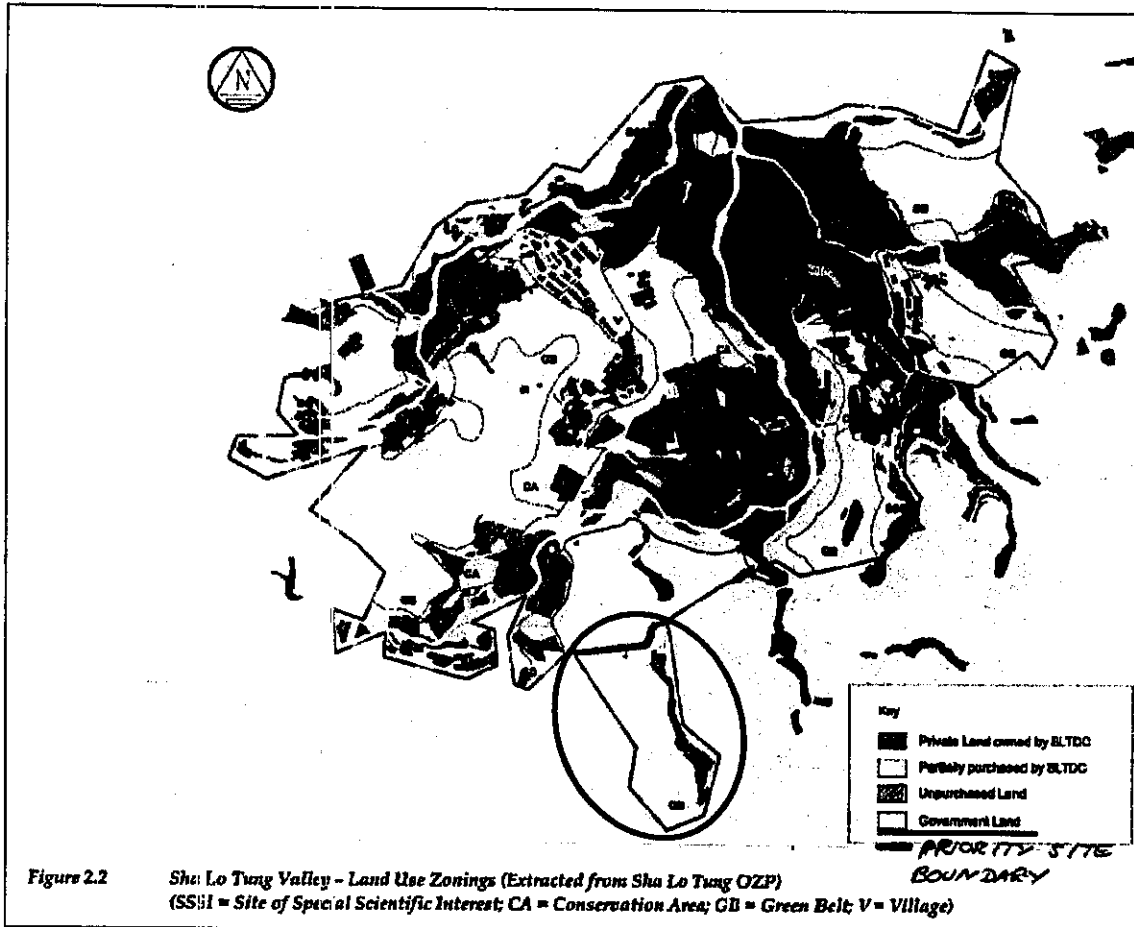
Lands Department (email: [landsd@landsd.gov.hk](mailto:landsd@landsd.gov.hk))

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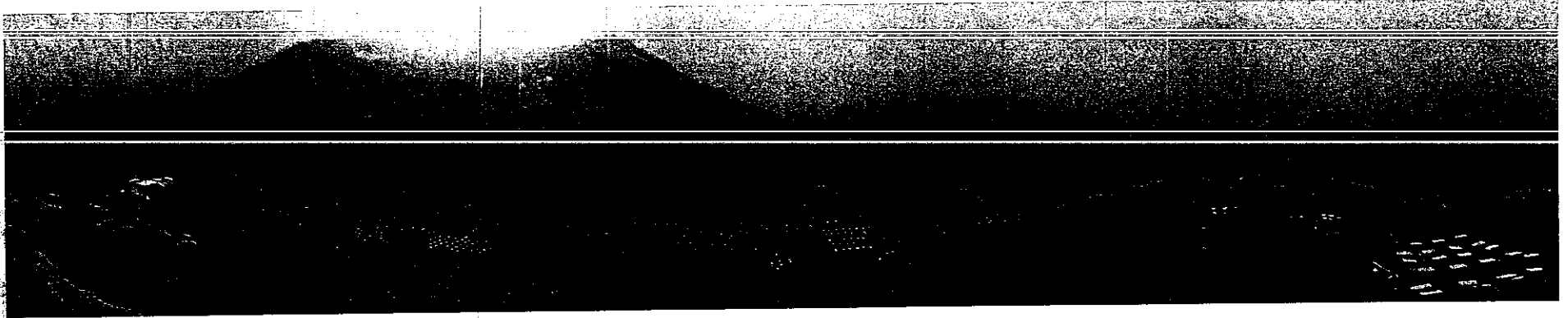
Figure 1. Map showing the land ownership at Sha Lo Tung (red circle indicates the development site).





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Figure 2. At Po Toi, natural landscape has been severely impacted by the suspected unauthorized columbarium development.



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