



香港地貌岩石保育協會
Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong

17 March, 2020

Private Columbaria Appeal Board
Hong Kong

By Email: secretariat@pcab.gov.hk

Dear Secretariat

Comments on appeal by the Private Columbarium “Oasis” on Po Toi Island

The Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong, committed to conserving geological heritage, natural and rural scenery in Hong Kong, writes to object the columbarium development on Po Toi Island.

Po Toi is an excellent outdoor classroom for studying granitic landforms. The Po Toi Granite forming nearly all of Beaufort Island, Po Toi and Sung Kong are the last large magma intrusion in Hong Kong dated back to 140 million years ago. Megacrysts, pegmatitic veins and dykes, intrusions of fine grained granite into medium grained granite which intrudes into coarse grained granite are commonly found. Most spectacular are the unique outcrops shaped by various weathering including the block disintegration and sheet weathering processes. As a result, Po Toi is renowned for the Buddha’s Palm Cliff, Tortoise Rock, Tortoise Egg, Monk Rock, Coffin Rock, BB rock while the resemblance of Waglan as a key are of very high aesthetic and landscape value.

Po Toi also offers spectacular panoramic landscape view. From the 188 meters highest accessible peak, the beautiful landscapes such as Ma On Shan and Pat Sing Leng in the north, the Lantau Island peaks in the west, the islands of Wanshan Qundao to the south and the South China Sea to the east can be seen on a clear day.



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Ecologically, Po Toi is important for many migratory birds due to its special geographic location and the diversity of habitats. Habitats such as secondary forest, rocky coastal areas, scrubland and wetlands provide suitable habitats and food supply for a wide range of migratory birds. Po Toi Island is therefore of great scientific importance as a prime site for studying bird migration.

Po Toi is one of the four natural habitats in Hong Kong for the Endemic and Endangered Romer's Tree Frog as well as the habitats of over 60 species of butterflies. The waters around Po Toi are of conservation importance because Finless Porpoises can be found. Waglan Island has a breeding colony of terns.

Po Toi also possess attractive cultural heritage including the over 3000 years old rock carving which has been declared as monuments; the annual Da Jiu (Spring Festival) and the traditional coastal collection of sea weeds.

Po Toi is a rare natural site offering attractions for hiking and leisure walking to the general public as well as bird watching, eco touring, appreciation and research study of geology and geomorphology.

In 2012, the unscrupulous developments at the southwestern part of Po Toi near Wan Tsai where land excavation, vegetation clearance, tree felling, streams diversion and laying of concrete slabs had seriously impacted the natural environment. We had therefore strongly objected all “destruction first, application later” acts and had urged respective Government Departments to immediately exercise their rights to prosecute the offenders and to restore the destroyed areas.

Currently, the application site is zoned as Conservation Area under the approved Po Toi Islands Outline Zoning Plan. The land use of columbarium is not within the approved usage and if approved, is incompatible with the natural environment. Moreover, the potential significant increase in visitation as well as the burning of joss sticks and paper offerings which may increase fire risk during the Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festival will have adverse impact on the natural environment.



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We have been urging the Government to designate Po Toi as a country park to further protect the area due to its unique and invaluable geological, geomorphological, ecological, and cultural significance. Any haphazard developments on Po Toi may cause adverse and irreparable impact on the island. Our Association thus objects to the columbarium development on Po Toi Island.

We request the Private Columbaria Appeal Board to kindly consider our comments and reject the appeal of “Oasis”.

Best regards,

Cindy Choi (signed)

Chairman

Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong

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