



## Island work is for green project, says landowner

Cheung Chi-fai

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Unauthorised works on an island site were for a greening project to attract tourists and most parts complied with the law, the site's owner said yesterday.

But the owner admitted that some of the drainage work on Ma Shi Chau in Tolo Harbour might have encroached on government land and said they were willing to dismantle it to rectify the problem.

The response came a day after a geological conservation group exposed the unauthorised works at Shui Mong Tin, a site of special

scientific interest on Ma Shi Chau.

The Lands Department said the works, while mostly on private land, still occupied some government land and the contractor had started clearing some unauthorised structures on that land.

*A South China Morning Post* investigation revealed that the work was closely related to a local politician.

Government land records show the site is owned by Union Lucky Development, which has two directors: Lo Sam-shing, a Tai Po district councillor; and Cheung Bik-fong.

The company bought the two lots for HK\$1 million each in September last year from Mr Lo, who had inherited one from his father and had bought the other lot.

Mr Lo said they were responsible for the works, which were part of a greening project. His business partner, Ms Cheung, said the site would be planted with valuable trees such as Buddhist pines and tourists would be charged to visit.

She said they had told the Environmental Protection Department about the greening project, but the department denied it had been contacted.

"Why has no one ever come to stop the work after we began last September?" she said. Ms Cheung said the greening plan been planned for a long time and the land clearance was in line with private land use for agricultural land, although she admitted some drainage work could have encroached on government land.

"We never had any plan to build houses or turn the site into a barbecue area," she said. "They are all polluting developments and we indigenous villagers won't do that."

Ms Cheung, who is not an indigenous villager, insisted that no rocks were damaged, although two trenches on the shell beach had been filled to make it safer to walk on.

"The villagers are always protecting the rocks," she said. "Without them, the rocks could not remain the same as they were a million years ago." No old trees had been cut down, she added.

Alan Leung Sze-lun, senior conservation officer from WWF Hong Kong, said the government should look into conservation problems on private land within and close to country parks or special areas.

"In the short term, the government should extend the outline zoning plan to cover the site of Shui Mong Tin and, in the long term, it should consider buying out the private land on the island," he said.