

TOWN PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of 721st Meeting of the Metro Planning Committee held at 9:00 a.m. on 23.6.2023

Present

Director of Planning
Mr Ivan M. K. Chung

Chairman

Mr Wilson Y.W. Fung

Vice-chairman

Ms Sandy H.Y. Wong

Mr Franklin Yu

Mr Stanley T.S. Choi

Mr Daniel K.S. Lau

Ms Lilian S.K. Law

Mr Ricky W.Y. Yu

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

Mr Timothy K.W. Ma

Ms Bernadette W.S. Tsui

Assistant Commissioner/Urban, Transport Department
Mr. Chow Bing Kay

Chief Engineer (Works), Home Affairs Department
Mr Paul Y.K. Au

Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Territory S),
Environmental Protection Department
Miss Queenie Y.C. Ng

Assistant Director/Regional 1, Acting
Lands Department
Mr Lawrence S.C. Chan

Deputy Director of Planning/District
Mr C.K. Yip

Secretary

Absent with Apologies

Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong

Professor Roger C.K. Chan

In Attendance

Assistant Director of Planning/Board
Ms Lily Y.M. Yam

Chief Town Planner/Town Planning Board
Ms Josephine Y.M. Lo

Town Planner/Town Planning Board
Ms Sandy S.Y. Yik

Agenda Item 1

Confirmation of the Draft Minutes of the 720th MPC Meeting held on 9.6.2023

[Open Meeting]

1. The Secretary reported that subsequent to the circulation of the draft minutes of the 720th MPC meeting to Members, amendments to paragraph 12 incorporating a Member's comments and as shown on the screen were proposed. The Committee agreed that the minutes were confirmed with incorporation of the said amendments.

Agenda Item 2

Matter Arising

[Open Meeting]

2. The Secretary reported that there were no matters arising.

Tsuen Wan and West Kowloon District

[Mr Michael K.K. Cheung, Senior Town Planner/Tsuen Wan and West Kowloon (STP/TWK), and Ms Annie S.W. Kong, Town Planner/Tsuen Wan and West Kowloon (TP/TWK), were invited to the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 3

Section 16 Application

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Sessions only)]

A/TW-CLHFS/2 Proposed Hotel Use and Minor Relaxation of Plot Ratio and Building Height Restrictions in “Recreation” Zone, Tsuen Wan Town Lot No. 389 (Part) and Adjoining Government Land, Chuen Lung, Tsuen Wan, New Territories
(MPC Paper No. A/TW-CLHFS/2A)

3. The Secretary reported that Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong Limited (ARUP) and Singular Studio Limited (Singular Studio) were two of the consultants of the applicants. Mr Franklin Yu had declared an interest on the item for being a director and shareholder of Singular Studio and having current business dealings with ARUP. As the interest of Mr Franklin Yu was direct, the Committee agreed that he should be invited to leave the meeting temporarily for the item.

[Mr Franklin Yu left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

Presentation and Question Sessions

4. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Michael K.K. Cheung, STP/TWK, briefed Members on the background of the application, the proposed development, departmental and public comments, and the planning considerations and assessments as detailed in the Paper. The Planning Department had no objection to the application.

5. Some Members raised the following questions:

Planning Intention and Justifications for the Proposed Development

- (a) whether phasing out brownfield operation in the area was a justification in support of the application given the economic contribution of brownfield operation;
- (b) noting some similar applications for converting hotel development for residential use previously considered by the Town Planning Board (TPB) such as Rambler Crest, whether the application site (the Site) would be changed from hotel to residential use later; whether the applicant had indicated intention to use the Site for residential development; and given the prevailing policies of optimizing site utilisation and boosting housing supply, whether residential development would be considered appropriate within the subject “Recreation” (“REC”) zone;

Proposed Development Scheme

- (c) the number of hotel rooms and the size of the resort villas proposed by the applicants, and whether there was any similar resort hotel in Hong Kong;
- (d) the rationale for reserving a 7.5m-wide buffer area along the northern boundary of the Site adjoining Tai Lam Country Park (TLCP);
- (e) referring to Drawing A-12 of the Paper, whether there was scope to enhance the façade design (e.g. avoiding the use of glass and steel material) to enhance the visual compatibility of the proposed development and the surrounding rural setting;
- (f) whether there was any access road to Ma Tong for public use;

Others

- (g) the reason for not operating the completed recreational club at the Site;
- (h) whether the proposed development would affect the future operation of the existing vehicle repair workshop located on the unacquired lot encircled by the Site; and
- (i) noting some concerns raised by Chuen Lung Village, whether there was any relationship between the Site and that village.

6. In response, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, Mr Michael K.K. Cheung, STP/TWK made the following main points:

Planning Intention and Justifications for the Proposed Development

- (a) given the existing site context, the proposed development could act as a catalyst to phase out the workshop uses in the surrounding areas of the Site and hence, improve the local rural environment. In the long run, it could help promote eco-tourism. While the continuation of the workshop operations highly hinged on the operators' intentions, the scattered workshop uses in the area might be gradually closed down and the sites be acquired and congregated for a holistic recreational development;
- (b) the Site was the subject of an application submitted by the same applicants for a proposed residential development in 2017 which was rejected by the TPB upon review at that time. The applicants did not indicate the intention to develop the Site for residential use at the current juncture. Given the surrounding rural context, the applicants might consider hotel use more suitable for the Site. 'Flat' was a Column 2 use for the subject "REC" zone. Should the applicants intend to change the use of the Site from hotel to residential development, they needed to submit a fresh planning application to the TPB for consideration and substantiated with planning justifications;

Proposed Development Scheme

- (c) according to the proposed hotel development scheme, there would be 197 hotel rooms. While information on the dimensions of the resort villas had not been provided, the drawings submitted by the applicants indicated that the size of each resort villa would be similar to that of a village house. The development scale of the proposed resort hotel would be similar to that of Silvermine Hotel in Mui Wo in terms of the number of hotel rooms to be accommodated and the development intensity;
- (d) a 7.5m-wide green buffer area along the northern boundary of the Site adjoining TLCP was proposed by the applicants to allow sufficient space for provision of greenery, including one to two rows of trees of native species to screen off the proposed development from TLCP. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had no adverse comment on the application and the proposed buffer area;
- (e) according to the applicants' submission, the applicants intended to adopt soft tone painting and transparent materials to achieve compatibility with the existing rural setting;
- (f) there was an existing vehicular access road passing through the central part of the Site connecting Ma Tong (located to the northwest of the Site) and Route Twisk (Plan A-2 of the Paper) which was required to be opened for public use under the lease. The access road would remain for public use even after completion of the proposed development;

Others

- (g) occupation permit for the recreational club development with golf driving range was granted in 2009. According to the applicants, the club had never been in operation and the applicants had not provided any reasons in this regard;

- (h) the unacquired lot encircled by the Site was held by Tsang Tso/Tong, and was not included as part of the proposed development. The unacquired lot was accessible by an existing vehicular access passing through the central part of the Site as mentioned before. As the access would remain open for public use, the operation of the vehicle repair workshop on the unacquired lot would not be affected by the proposed development; and
- (i) Chuen Lung Village was located to the further southeast of the Site across Route Twisk, and the villagers expressed concerns on the potential adverse traffic impact and deterioration of living environment arising from the proposed development.

[Ms Bernadette W.S. Tsui joined the meeting during the question and answer session.]

Deliberation Session

7. The Chairman recapitulated that the Site was once designated as “Unspecified Use” on the draft Chuen Lung and Ha Fa Shan Development Permission Area Plan in 2013, and was later rezoned to “REC” to reflect the permitted recreational club building and golf driving range with occupation permit issued in 2009. The Site was considered suitable for “REC” zoning, which was intended for recreational development, taken account of its proximity to TLCP and the surrounding rural landscape character. Despite that the previously approved recreational club building and golf driving range had never been operated, the application was considered acceptable in that the proposed resort hotel use was generally in line with the planning intention of “REC” zone, and the proposed development intensity, i.e. minor relaxation of plot ratio from 0.4 to 0.6, was not incompatible with the adjacent TLCP and AFCD had no objection to the application. Other relevant government departments also had no objection to or adverse comment on the application on technical aspects such as drainage and water supplies.

8. Members generally considered the proposed resort hotel use for the Site and its intensity acceptable, having taken account that the proposed development would not generate significant traffic impact and was compatible with the surrounding rural environment, and the access road to Ma Tong in the central part of the Site would remain open for public use.

Members were also of view that the Site, which had been left unused for years, could be better utilized for tourism development.

9. Some Members expressed the following views/concerns:

- (a) albeit developed for a recreational club with golf driving range, the development had not been in use and the Site was left idle for many years, which was not efficient and cost-effective in respect of land use resources and site utilization. Given such background as well as the inconvenient location of the Site and uncertainty in future market need, there was some doubt on the genuine use of the Site; and
- (b) to optimize land resources and expedite the proposed development, the planning permission, if approved, should be duly implemented within a specified period of time. The number of planning approval conditions imposed should be duly fulfilled and monitored to avoid slippage of the development programme.

10. The Chairman concluded that Members had generally no objection to the application. On Members' concerns on the genuine use of the Site, the Chairman remarked that the application, if approved, would be scheme based with various approval conditions imposed and lease modification for implementation of the approved scheme would be dealt with separately. Should there be any changes to the use of the Site from hotel to residential development, a fresh planning application was required. Given the Site being in close proximity to TLCP, the Chairman suggested and Members agreed to include an advisory clause to invite the applicants to review the design of the proposed development at the detailed design stage with a view to enhancing visual compatibility with the surrounding rural landscape character.

11. After deliberation, the Committee decided to approve the application, on the terms of the application as submitted to the TPB. The permission should be valid until 23.6.2027, and after the said date, the permission should cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted was commenced or the permission was renewed. The permission was subject to the following conditions:

- “(a) the submission of the design and provision of vehicular access, car parking and loading/unloading facilities to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Transport or of the TPB;
- (b) the submission of an updated Environmental Assessment to the satisfaction of the Director of Environmental Protection or of the TPB;
- (c) the implementation of preventive, mitigation, control and contingency measures as proposed in the updated Environmental Assessment to the satisfaction of Director of Water Supplies or of the TPB;
- (d) the submission of an updated Sewerage Impact Assessment to the satisfaction of the Director of Environmental Protection or of the TPB;
- (e) the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures identified in the updated Sewerage Impact Assessment under approval condition (d) to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the TPB;
- (f) the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures identified in the Ecological Impact Assessment to the satisfaction of the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation or of the TPB;
- (g) the submission of a Quantitative Risk Assessment and implementation of the mitigation measures identified therein to the satisfaction of the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services or of the TPB; and
- (h) the submission of a Natural Terrain Hazard Study and implementation of the mitigation measures recommended therein outside Tai Lam Country Park to the satisfaction of the Director of Civil Engineering and Development or of the TPB.”

12. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicants to note the advisory clauses as set out at Appendix V of the Paper with the following additional advisory clause:

“to review the design of the proposed development at the detailed design stage with a view to enhancing visual compatibility with the surrounding rural landscape character.”

[Mr Franklin Yu joined the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 4

Section 16 Application

[Open Meeting]

A/TWW/127 Proposed Minor Relaxation of Plot Ratio Restriction for a Permitted House Redevelopment in “Residential (Group C)” Zone, Lot No. 407 in D.D. 399, Ting Kau, Tsuen Wan West, New Territories
(MPC Paper No. A/TWW/127)

13. The Committee noted that the applicant’s representative requested on 9.6.2023 deferment of consideration of the application for two months so as to allow more time for preparing further information to address departmental comments. It was the first time that the applicant requested deferment of the application.

14. After deliberation, the Committee decided to defer a decision on the application as requested by the applicant pending the submission of further information from the applicant. The Committee agreed that the application should be submitted for its consideration within two months from the date of receipt of further information from the applicant. If the further information submitted by the applicant was not substantial and could be processed within a shorter time, the application could be submitted to an earlier meeting for the Committee’s consideration. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant that two months were allowed for preparation of the submission of further information, and no further deferment would be granted unless under very special circumstances.

[The Chairman thanked Mr Michael K.K. Cheung, STP/TWK, and Ms Annie S.W. Kong, TP/TWK, for their attendance to answer Members’ enquiries. They left the meeting at this

point.]

Hong Kong District

[Mr Mann M.H. Chow, District Planning Officer/Hong Kong (DPO/HK), and Mr Elton H.T. Chung, Senior Town Planner/Hong Kong (STP/HK), were invited to the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 5

Section 16 Application

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Sessions Only)]

A/H8/437 Proposed Public Utility Installation (Dry Weather Flow Interceptor) in
“Open Space” Zone and area shown as “Road”, Victoria Park adjacent
to Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong
(MPC Paper No. A/H8/437A)

Presentation and Question Sessions

15. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Elton H.T. Chung, STP/HK, briefed Members on the background of the application, the proposed development, departmental and public comments, and the planning considerations and assessments as detailed in the Paper. The Planning Department had no objection to the application.

16. Some Members raised the following questions:

Building Bulk and Design

- (a) with reference to a proposed public utility installation, with most of the facilities to be accommodated underground, at Morse Park recently considered by the Committee, whether the proposed dry weather flow interceptor (DWFI) could be accommodated entirely underground or with more aboveground facilities accommodated underground with a view to

fully utilizing the land resources and minimizing the visual impact on the surrounding environment of the Victoria Park;

- (b) how large the catchment area of the proposed DWFI was, and whether there was scope to reduce the size of the proposed DWFI by scaling down its catchment area proportionately and to provide a number of smaller size interceptor to serve the respective need;
- (c) making reference to the design concept of the visitor centre of Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan for its distinctive integration with the natural environment and considering the prominent location of the application site (the Site), whether there was scope to enhance the design including the colouring, façade and landscaping of the proposed DWFI with the co-use concept for public enjoyment, such that it could integrate and blend in better with the surroundings, especially the green backdrop of the Victoria Park;
- (d) the party responsible for the landscape treatments of the proposed DWFI, which should be commensurate with the existing landscape setting of the surroundings;
- (e) the party responsible for the architectural design of the proposed DWFI and whether the applicant would take into account the comments of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) on architectural treatment during the detailed design stage; and

Location

- (f) noting there were public comments objecting to the location of the proposed DWFI, whether the applicant had explored other alternative sites such as spaces underneath existing flyovers.

17. In response, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, Mr Mann M.H. Chow, DPO/HK, made the following main points:

Building Bulk and Design

- (a) as compared with the earlier batch of DWFI which had no on-site filtering station and could only intercept all dry weather flow to existing sewerage system, the proposed DWFI at the Site, comprising a filtering station and a flow intercepting device with an underground emergency bypass box culvert, was designed with up-to-date standard. Dry weather flow would be intercepted and filtered at the filtering station prior to discharging to stormwater drains and then the Victoria Harbour. While all filtering-related facilities were accommodated underground, due to operational requirement, fire services requirement and flood susceptibility, some ancillary facilities, such as electrical and mechanical rooms, could not be accommodated underground. The applicant had endeavoured to optimise the footprint and building height of the proposed DWFI, with only one storey aboveground, in order to minimise the adverse impact on existing trees and the Victoria Park as a whole;
- (b) the proposed DWFI would serve a specific catchment area covering the harbourfront area of Causeway Bay to the North, Jardine's Lookout to the south, Leighton Hill to the west and Tai Hang to the east. The recommendation for construction of DWFIs along the Victoria Harbour (appropriately 11 DWFIs at a territorial level) was one of major initiatives under a feasibility study, namely Further Enhancing Quality of Coastal Waters of Victoria Harbour commissioned by the Environmental Protection Department to address the pollution and odour nuisance in urban coastal waters. With regard to the proposed footprint, as indicated on the basement floor plan (Drawing A-2 of the Paper), dry weather flow was intercepted and filtered with various processes including filtering of solid waste, sands and rocks and sludge. Semi-solid remains were then discharged to a nearby sewerage system for proper treatment and disposal. To serve the designated catchment area, the proposed footprint of DWFI was already compact in terms of spatial design with due consideration to operational requirements of the above filtering processes and accommodation of associated facilities;

- (c) Members' concerns and views on the design of the proposed DWFI, which were similar to those of the Harbourfront Commission, would be conveyed to the applicant (i.e. the Drainage Services Department (DSD)) to follow up with a view to enhancing the aesthetic design of the DWFI as an integral part of the Victoria Park;
- (d) with reference to some other public works projects along the harbourfront in Wan Chai, DSD, with concerted efforts of their landscape team, would strive to soften the visual impact on the surrounding environment and to achieve better integration with the existing landscape setting of the Victoria Park with appropriate landscape treatments;
- (e) there were consultants/architects involved in the preliminary design of the proposed DWFI as submitted in the application. Subject to confirmation at the subsequent funding arrangement and approval from the Legislative Council, either DSD or his work agent (i.e. ArchSD) would work on the detailed design. Members' and ArchSD's comments in respect of architectural treatment would be conveyed to DSD for consideration; and

Location

- (f) DSD had undertaken a thorough site selection exercise near Victoria Park West Box Culvert for the proposed DWFI, including areas (i) underneath Island Eastern Corridor and (ii) Gloucester Road Flyover, (iii) in Tung Lo Wan Garden and (iv) near the South Pavilion Plaza/Water Fountain Plaza within the Victoria Park. While the alternatives (i) and (ii) were constrained due to insufficient headroom and area, alternatives (iii) and (iv) were currently densely vegetated and frequented by visitors/park users, respectively. The Site, on the fringe of the Victoria Park, was considered suitable due to its adequate site area, minimal impact on existing trees and park users, as well as accessibility by public road for future operation, maintenance and fire services.

Deliberation Session

18. The Chairman remarked that the application was considered justifiable taking into account the functional and genuine needs in enhancing the quality of urban coastal waters, and the site search conducted in ascertaining the suitability of the Site for the proposed DWFI. Should the application be approved, as echoed with the comments of ArchSD and the Harbourfront Commission, the aesthetic design and landscape treatments of the proposed DWFI should be refined and enhanced during the detailed design stage. The applicant and relevant government departments should continue to work closely to improve the landscape and architectural treatments for the proposed DWFI so as to alleviate the visual impacts on the surrounding environment and to achieve better integration with the existing landscape setting of the Victoria Park.

19. Members generally supported the application in considering the genuine need for the proposed DWFI to improve the water quality, which could contribute to vibrancy of the harbour. Moreover, given the prominent location of the Site being part of the Victoria Park and in proximity to one of the major entrances of the Park, the applicant, apart from achieving the operational requirements, should endeavour to enhance the landscape treatment and architectural design with an integrated approach, such as incorporation of more vertical and rooftop greening and adoption of oval or curvy layout/block design, with a view to making the proposed DWFI an integral part of the Victoria Park in terms of visual compatibility and aesthetic quality, as well as to ensure that the accessibility of the public to the Park would not be affected. A Member said that consideration could also be given to allowing public access to the proposed DWFI given its prominent location within the Victoria Park.

20. In view of Members' comments, the Chairman proposed and Members agreed to incorporate two additional advisory clauses to invite the applicant (i) to review and enhance the landscape treatment and architectural design of the proposed DWFI at the detailed design stage with a view to making it an integral part of the Victoria Park in terms of visual compatibility and aesthetic quality; and (ii) to ensure that the proposed DWFI would not affect the accessibility of the public to the Victoria Park.

21. After deliberation, the Committee decided to approve the application, on the

terms of the application as submitted to the Town Planning Board (TPB). The permission should be valid until 23.6.2027, and after the said date, the permission should cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted was commenced or the permission was renewed. The permission was subject to the following condition:

“ the submission and implementation of water supplies for fire fighting and the fire service installations to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the TPB.”

22. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant to note the advisory clauses as set out at Appendix IV of the Paper with the following additional advisory clauses:

“to review and enhance the landscape treatment and architectural design of the proposed DWFI at the detailed design stage with a view to making it an integral part of the Victoria Park in terms of visual compatibility and aesthetic quality; and

“to ensure that the proposed DWFI would not affect the accessibility of the public to the Victoria Park.”

[The Chairman thanked Mr Mann M.H. Chow, DPO/HK, and Mr Elton H.T. Chung, STP/HK, for their attendance to answer Members’ enquiries. They left the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 6

Any Other Business

23. There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 10:30 a.m..