

TOWN PLANNING BOARD

**Minutes of 788th Meeting of the
Metro Planning Committee held at 9:00 a.m. on 22.5.2026**

Present

Director of Planning
Mr Anthony K.O. Luk

Chairperson

Ms Sandy H.Y. Wong

Vice-chairperson

Professor Bernadette W.S. Tsui

Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan

Mr Daniel K.W. Chung

Dr Tony C.M. Ip

Professor Simon K.L. Wong

Mr Derrick S.M. Yip

Professor Janet K.Y. Chan

Mr Vincent K.C. Cheung

Professor Herbert P.K. Chia

Dr Chris K.T. Lam

Assistant Commissioner/Urban,
Transport Department
Mr Vico P. Cheung

Chief Engineer (Works),
Home Affairs Department
Mr Bond C.P. Chow

Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Territory South),
Environmental Protection Department
Ms Marlene Y.H. Ho

Assistant Director/Regional 1,
Lands Department
Ms Catherine W.S. Pang

Deputy Director of Planning/District
Ms Donna Y.P. Tam

Secretary

Absent with Apology

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

In Attendance

Assistant Director of Planning/Board
Ms Caroline T.Y. Tang

Chief Town Planner/Town Planning Board
Mr K.K. Lee

Town Planner/Town Planning Board
Ms Helena Y.S. Pang

Agenda Item 1

Confirmation of the Draft Minutes of the 787th MPC Meeting

[Open Meeting]

1. The draft minutes of the 787th MPC meeting held on 8.5.2026 were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2

Matters Arising

[Open Meeting]

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

Deferral Case

Section 16 Application

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Sessions only)]

Presentation and Question Sessions

3. The Committee noted that there was one case requesting the Town Planning Board to defer consideration of the application. Details of the request for deferral were in **Annex**.

Deliberation Session

4. After deliberation, the Committee decided to defer a decision on the application as requested by the applicant pending submission of further information, as recommended in the Paper.

Kowloon District

Agenda Item 3

Section 16 Application

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Sessions Only)]

A/K14/839 Further Consideration of Section 16 Application
Proposed Hotel (Student Hostel) in “Other Specified Uses” annotated
“Business” Zone and area shown as ‘Road’, 31 Chong Yip Street, Kwun
Tong
(MPC Paper No. A/K14/839A)

5. The Secretary reported that the application was submitted by Allied Nice Enterprise Limited and the application site (the Site) was located at Chong Yip Street, Kwun Tong. The following Members had declared interests on the item:

Mr Vincent K.C. Cheung - for knowing the director of the applicant
(i.e. Allied Nice Enterprise Limited); and

Professor Herbert P.K. Chia - for his business partner renting a unit in the
vicinity of the Site.

6. As Mr Vincent K.C. Cheung had no discussion with the director of the applicant on the application and the interest declared by Professor Herbert P.K. Chia was considered indirect, the Committee agreed that they could stay in the meeting.

Presentation and Question Sessions

7. The following government representatives were invited to the meeting at this point:

Development Bureau (DEVB)

Mr Mann M.H. Chow - Head of Development Projects Facilitation
Office (DPFO)

Ms Candy Y.M. Wong - Senior Building Surveyor (Planning & Lands)

Planning Department (PlanD)

Ms Vivian M.F. Lai - District Planning Officer/Kowloon (DPO/K)

Ms Charlotte P.S. Ng - Senior Town Planner/Kowloon

Mr Jeff C.N. Leung - Town Planner/Kowloon (TP/K)

8. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Jeff C.N. Leung, TP/K, briefed Members on the background of the application, the proposed development under the Hostels in the City Scheme (the Scheme), the Committee's previous considerations on 17.4.2026, the revised scheme featuring some layout improvements as proposed by the applicant in response to Members' previous concerns, departmental comments, and the updated planning considerations and assessments as detailed in the Paper. PlanD maintained its previous view of having no objection to the application.

[The Vice-chairperson and Professor Simon K.L. Wong joined the meeting during PlanD's presentation.]

9. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Mann M.H. Chow, Head of DPFO, DEVB briefed Members on the policy objective and the facilitation measures of the Scheme, covering the following main points:

- (a) the policy objective of the Scheme was to create a clear and easy-to-follow policy and regulatory framework with low compliance cost so as to leverage the market to increase the supply of student accommodation, while putting in place safeguards to ensure quality hostel accommodation. It was the mutual goal of the Government and the Town Planning Board (the Board) for the provision of quality hostel accommodation for the post-secondary sector, which complied with safety and health standards and could suitably cater for students' needs;
- (b) by streamlining the planning procedures, the Board had expanded the definition of 'Hotel' use under the planning regime to include eligible student hostels supported by Government under the Scheme. As a result, no planning procedures would be required for developing new student hostels

or converting existing commercial buildings into student hostels in the case of most commercial sites. Only in certain cases such as the subject proposed student hostel, which fell within the “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Business” (“OU(B)”) zone that planning permission would be required;

- (c) eligible student hostels under the Scheme could be treated as non-domestic buildings for plot ratio and site coverage calculations. For conversion cases, facilities previously exempted from gross floor area (GFA) calculations before conversion could be retained and continued to be exempted from GFA calculations. The developers/operators might flexibly convert existing exempted facilities into supporting facilities for the student hostels to better suit the needs of student residents;
- (d) to ensure the livability of the converted hostels, the student hostels should comply with the same natural lighting and ventilation standards and the fire safety requirements that were applicable to domestic buildings. The Buildings Departments (BD) had issued the Practice Note for Authorized Persons, Registered Structural Engineers and Registered Geotechnical Engineers APP-173 in July 2025; and
- (e) since the leases of most commercial buildings did not prohibit the use of student hostel, it was anticipated that conversion of commercial buildings into student hostels did not require lease modification or waiver application in most cases.

[Professor Bernadette W.S. Tsui and Mr Vico P. Cheung joined the meeting during DEVB’s presentation.]

Minimum Room Size Requirement

10. While appreciating the effort made by the applicant to increase the room size in the revised scheme, which was one of the major concerns raised by Members at the previous meeting, a Member asked whether there was a minimum room size requirement for student hostels under the Scheme, similar to the minimum internal floor area standard for Basic

Housing Units. In response, Mr Mann M.H. Chow, Head of DPFO, DEVB, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) the Scheme was primarily set out to provide facilitation measures to encourage post-secondary student hostel development by the private sector, thereby increasing the supply of such student accommodation. As deliberated with the Education Bureau (EDB) while devising the Scheme, there was no minimum standard set for room size and provision of hostel facilities. Instead of being prescriptive, it was intended to leave it to the market to provide different types of quality hostel accommodation while students/their dependents could make their choices accordingly. Given the various building layout constraints in particular for conversion cases, sufficient flexibility should be allowed for market innovation while considering the business viability of these hostel projects; and
- (b) student hostels were also regulated in other regimes, including the natural lighting and ventilation requirements under the buildings regime, which were equally applied on domestic buildings and hotels. On provision of adequate window areas and the distance between the required window and any parts of a hostel room, the required standards were the same between student hostels and residential development/hotels.

Air Ventilation

11. Noting that the windows in the hostel rooms in the subject application could only be opened by the management staff during emergency or exceptional circumstances, a Member enquired about the actual operation of window opening when, for instance, there was a malfunction in the air-conditioning system; and whether it was similar to the operation of window opening in domestic units (including hotels). In response, Mr Mann M.H. Chow, Head of DPFO, DEVB clarified that student hostel rooms and domestic units shared the same ventilation requirement in that windows should be openable. Since the proposed student hostel would be installed with a split unit air-conditioning system, the windows in the hostel rooms would generally remain closed during operation. Nevertheless, similar to hotel rooms, the windows could be opened by the management staff as a contingency arrangement.

12. Ms Vivian M.F. Lai, DPO/K, PlanD supplemented that as the proposed student hostel was located in the Kwun Tong Business Area and surrounded by various commercial and industrial operations, it adopted split unit air-conditioning and fresh air ventilation systems in compliance with the relevant building design and air quality requirements set by BD and the Environmental Protection Department respectively. In the event that any technical issues arose with the air-conditioning system, the fresh air units could be used. Should the air-conditioning system and fresh air units both fail to operate, the windows could be opened to provide fresh air ventilation during repair works.

Internal Layout

13. The Vice-chairperson raised the following questions:

- (a) the number of student hostel applications submitted under the Scheme that did not require planning permission, and the relevant safety, environmental and air quality-related measures that would be adopted for those student hostels;
- (b) the location of the study rooms proposed in the subject student hostel; and
- (c) whether the provision of hostel facilities under the subject application could serve as a general reference standard when reviewing future planning applications for student hostels.

14. In response, Mr Mann M.H. Chow, Head of DPFO, DEVB and Ms Vivian M.F. Lai, DPO/K, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) since the launch of the Scheme in July 2025, the EDB had received 37 applications (involving about 8,400 bedspaces), of which 34 applications (involving about 7,200 bedspaces) had been confirmed as eligible under the Scheme. Among the 37 applications, eight would require planning permission. One such application (for a proposed student hostel in Mong Kok) was already approved by the Committee, while the remaining six cases (excluding the subject application) were still under processing and would be

submitted to the Committee for consideration shortly;

- (b) the hostel rooms on each floor were arranged with respect to the building orientation, with all rooms located by the windows, while the supporting hostel facilities, such as study rooms, pantries and store rooms, were clustered in the centre lift core area of the floor away from the windows. Such a layout was in line with the relevant design requirements of BD;
- (c) through processing more applications for student hostels, EDB and DEVB would be able to gain more information about how the development market put forward proposals for converting existing commercial buildings for/developing post-secondary student hostels. However, given the difference in circumstances of each application and that the proposal should be considered holistically, the precedent-setting effect of individual elements within different applications might not be direct but they could certainly serve as references; and
- (d) as illustrated in the present case, the implementation of the Scheme would be particularly challenging for the conversion of non-domestic buildings for domestic use.

Deliberation Session

15. The Chairperson recapitulated that following the Committee's previous decision to defer a decision on the application, the applicant submitted a revised scheme in response to Members' concerns. The Scheme was a recent policy initiative launched by the Government to address the pressing demand of student accommodation in Hong Kong. Leveraging unified ownership, the conversion of the subject commercial building would allow for a student hostel with central management and a separate entrance. In the revised scheme, the applicant had made notable improvements in the internal design of the student hostel in response to Members' previous views, including increasing the minimum room size, providing each room with a private toilet/bathroom, and enhancing the provision of supporting facilities. On the management side, the applicant clarified that the proposed student hostel would have no mixed-gender floors, the use of open flames for cooking would be strictly prohibited, and loading/unloading activities would be centrally managed. Based on the assessments as

detailed in the Paper, and taking into consideration that the proposed student hostel would comply with the relevant ordinances and regulations, PlanD maintained its previous view of having no objection to the application.

16. The Vice-chairperson and Members generally supported the application and appreciated the applicant's efforts to take into account their previous views and suggestions in revising the scheme to improve the living environment of the student residents. In addition, they expressed the following major views:

Hostel Standards

- (a) noting that the majority of applications submitted under the Scheme did not require planning approval, it would not be ideal if those applications subject to scrutiny by the Board were held to higher standards, while those not requiring planning approval were not. On the other hand, as student hostels with different standards would cater for different needs in the market, a rigid set of benchmarks applied to all cases might not be necessary;
- (b) while it was not possible to change the existing student hostels with varied standards that had already been completed, the Committee had the responsibility to critically consider the planning applications for student hostels which would have a bearing on improving the future design of such student hostels;

Design Requirements

- (c) the standards on air ventilation, natural lighting, hygienic conditions and occupancy density applicable to domestic buildings should equally apply to converted student hostels which were essentially domestic in nature;
- (d) to strengthen the reputation of the "Study in Hong Kong" brand, EDB and DEVB were suggested to take into consideration relevant design elements when reviewing student hostel applications, including the various room sizes of the student hostels and facilities provided, no matter if they were provided

by University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions or private operators; and

Formulation of “Good Practice” Guidelines

- (e) there were differences between the student hostels provided under the Scheme and those operated by the UGC-funded institutions, noting that the former were market-driven with the aim of providing more accommodation for students, while the latter focused more on fostering traditional hall living and culture. It was therefore considered unreasonable to apply the same provision standards of on-campus student halls to the privately-run student hostels. Nevertheless, even without a set of prescriptive design standards, EDB and DEVB were suggested to draw on the proposals and experiences from applications under the Scheme, including the subject application, to formulate a set of “good practice” guidelines for general reference by future student hostel applicants and operators.

Mental Health and Social Support

17. Noting that most residents of the student hostels under the Scheme would be non-local students, a Member raised concern about the mental health and social support for such students. Another Member opined that while mental health and social support issues were outside the purview of the Board, the obligations in protecting student residents’ well-being and mental health should not be overlooked, given the long-stay nature of student hostels, which should be treated differently from managing short-term stay visitors in hotels.

18. The Committee noted that all full-time local or non-local students enrolled in relevant programmes of any of the 31 eligible institutions were eligible to apply for residency at the student hostels provided under the Scheme. Although student hostels under the Scheme were not mandated to provide mental health and social support services to their residents, as observed in existing privately-run student hostels, regular activities were organised by the operators to support the social lives of the students. The operators had been reminded to maintain high service standards to uphold the reputation of the Scheme and the “Study in Hong Kong” brand.

19. The Chairperson concluded that Members were generally supportive of the proposed student hostel development as Members' previous concerns had been addressed. The Chairperson appreciated the views expressed by Members on the proposal from multiple perspectives.

20. After deliberation, the Committee decided to approve the application, on the terms of the application as submitted to the Town Planning Board. The permission should be valid until 22.5.2030, 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 approval conditions stated in the Paper. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant to note the advisory clauses as set out in the appendix of the Paper.

[The Chairperson thanked the government representatives for attending the meeting. They left the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 5

Any Other Business

[Open Meeting]

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

**Minutes of 788th Meeting of the Metro Planning Committee
(held on 22.5.2026)**

Deferral Case

Request for Deferment by Applicant for 2 Months

Item No.	Application No.*	Time of Deferment
4	A/K22/48	1 st

* Refer to the agenda at https://www.tpb.gov.hk/en/meetings/MPC/Agenda/788_mpc_agenda.html for details of the planning application.