

**Minutes of 1327<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Town Planning Board held on 1.11.2024, 4.11.2024 and 5.11.2024**

**Present**

Permanent Secretary for Development  
(Planning and Lands)  
Ms Doris P.L. Ho

Chairperson

Mr Stephen L.H. Liu

Vice-chairperson

Mr Daniel K.S. Lau

Mr Stanley T.S. Choi

Mr K.W. Leung

Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong

Mr Ricky W.Y. Yu

Professor Roger C.K. Chan

Mr Vincent K.Y. Ho

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

Mr Timothy K.W. Ma

Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan

Mr Daniel K.W. Chung

Mr Ryan M.K. Ip

Mr Rocky L.K. Poon

Mr Derrick S.M. Yip

Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong  
Transport Department  
Mr Sammy C.Y. Wong

Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong  
Transport Department  
Ms Jodie K.Y. Chan

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

Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment)  
Environmental Protection Department  
Mr Gary C.W. Tam

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

Director of Lands  
Mr Maurice K.W. Loo

Deputy Director/General  
Lands Department  
Ms Jane K.C. Choi

Director of Planning  
Mr Ivan M.K. Chung

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

Secretary

**Absent with Apologies**

Ms Sandy H.Y. Wong

Dr Venus Y.H. Lun

Professor Bernadette W.S. Tsui

Dr C.M. Cheng

Dr Tony C.M. Ip

Professor B.S. Tang

Professor Simon K.L. Wong

Mr Simon Y.S. Wong

**In Attendance**

Assistant Director of Planning/Board

Ms Caroline T.Y. Tang

Chief Town Planner/Town Planning Board

Ms W.H. Ho (1.11.2024 a.m. and 5.11.2024 p.m.)

Mr Edward H.C. Leung (1.11.2024 p.m.)

Ms Katy C.W. Fung (4.11.2024 a.m. and 5.11.2024 a.m.)

Mr Chesterfield K.K. Lee (4.11.2024 p.m.)

Senior Town Planner/Town Planning Board

Mr Thomas C.S. Yeung (1.11.2024 a.m.)

Ms M.L. Leung (4.11.2024 a.m.)

Ms Karen F.Y. Lam (4.11.2024 p.m.)

Mr Kenny C.H. Lau (5.11.2024 a.m.)

Ms Bonnie K.C. Lee (5.11.2024 p.m.)

1. The following Members and the Secretary were present in the morning session on 1.11.2024:

Permanent Secretary for Development  
(Planning and Lands)  
Ms Doris P.L. Ho

Chairperson

Mr Stephen L.H. Liu

Vice-chairperson

Mr Daniel K.S. Lau

Mr Stanley T.S. Choi

Mr K.W. Leung

Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong

Mr Ricky W.Y. Yu

Professor Roger C.K. Chan

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

Mr Timothy K.W. Ma

Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan

Mr Daniel K.W. Chung

Mr Ryan M.K. Ip

Mr Derrick S.M. Yip

Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong  
Transport Department  
Mr Sammy C.Y. Wong

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

Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment)  
Environmental Protection Department  
Mr Gary C.W. Tam

Director of Lands  
Mr Maurice K.W. Loo

Director of Planning  
Mr Ivan M.K. Chung

**Agenda Item 1**

[Open Meeting]

Confirmation of Minutes of the 1326<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 18.10.2024

[The item was conducted in Cantonese.]

2. The draft minutes of the 1326<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 18.10.2024 were confirmed without amendment.

**Agenda Item 2**

[Open Meeting]

Matters Arising

[This item was conducted in Cantonese.]

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

**Hong Kong District**

**Agenda Item 3**

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Sessions only)]

Consideration of Representations in respect of the Draft Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H10/22

(TPB Paper No. 10987)

[The item was conducted in Cantonese and English.]

4. The Secretary reported that the major amendment on the draft Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H10/22 (the draft OZP) involved the rezoning of a site on Pok Fu Lam Road (PFLR) (Item A Site) from “Green Belt” (“GB”), “Residential (Group C)6” (“R(C)6”) and an area shown as ‘Road’ to “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Global

Innovation Centre” (“OU(Global Innovation Centre)”) to facilitate the development of the Global Innovation Centre (the Centre) by the University of Hong Kong (HKU) for deep technology research (Item A). Representations were submitted by HKU (R1), the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) (R264), Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (R265), The Conservancy Association (CA) (R3637) and MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) (R3662). The following Members had declared interests on the item:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr Stephen L.H. Liu<br>( <i>Vice-chairperson</i> ) | - co-owning with spouse properties in Pok Fu Lam;   |
| Ms Sandy H.Y. Wong                                 | - being an independent non-executive director of MTRCL;   |
| Mr K.W. Leung                                      | - being a former executive committee member of HKBWS and a former chairman of Crested Bulbul Club Committee under HKBWS;  |
| Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong                       | - having close relative living in Pok Fu Lam;   |
| Professor Roger C.K. Chan                          | - being an Honorary Associate Professor of Department of Urban Planning and Design of HKU;  |
| Dr Venus Y.H. Lun                                  | - being a special project director of a research and development centre which was hosted by HKU and other two universities, and an external examiner of one of HKU’s programmes;                                  |
| Mr Ben S.S. Lui                                    | - co-owning with spouse a property in Pok Fu Lam, his spouse owning a car parking space in Pok Fu Lam, and he and his spouse being directors of a company owning properties and car parking spaces in Pok Fu Lam; |

- Professor Bernadette W.S. Tsui - being an Adjunct Professor of Department of Social Work and Social Administration of HKU, and having close relative living in Pok Fu Lam;
- Dr Tony C.M. Ip - being an Adjunct Associate Professor of School of Biological Sciences of HKU, and having current business dealings with CA;
- Mr Ryan M.K. Ip - being the vice-president cum co-head of Public Policy Institute of Our Hong Kong Foundation which had received donations from Kadoorie family and being acquainted with some representers;
- Professor B.S. Tang - being a Honorary Professor of Department of Urban Planning and Design and Department of Real Estate and Construction of HKU;
- Professor Simon K.L. Wong - his spouse being a programme director of Master in Statistics of HKU;
- Mr Simon Y.S. Wong - being a close relative of some representers; and
- Mr Derrick S.M. Yip - being a consultant of a football league which had potential collaboration with HKU and a member of the Advisory Board of the Gleneagles Hospital which was partnering with HKU to provide medical services.

5. Members noted that Dr Venus Y.H. Lun, Professor B.S Tang, Professor Bernadette W.S. Tsui, Professor Simon K.L. Wong, Ms Sandy H.Y. Wong, Dr Tony C.M. Ip and Mr Simon Y.S. Wong would not attend/had tendered apologies for being unable to attend the meeting. Members agreed that as the interests of Professor Roger C.K. Chan and Mr Derrick S.M. Yip were indirect, Mr K.W. Leung had no involvement in the submission of the relevant representation(s), Mr Ryan M.K. Ip had no involvement in the project(s) under the sponsorship



of Kadoorie family in relation to Item A and the submission of the relevant representation(s), and the concerned properties owned/co-owned by Mr Stephen L.H. Liu, Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong's relative and Mr Ben S.S. Lui, his spouse and his company had no direct view of the amendment item sites, they could stay in the meeting.

6. The Secretary also said that the meeting would be conducted with video conferencing arrangement.

#### Presentation and Question Sessions

7. The Chairperson said that reasonable notice had been given to the representers inviting them to attend the hearing, but other than those who were present or had indicated that they would attend the hearing, the rest had either indicated not to attend or made no reply. As reasonable notice had been given to the representers, Members agreed to proceed with the hearing of the representations in their absence.

8. The following government representatives, representers and/or their representatives were invited to the meeting at this point:

#### **Government Representatives**

##### ***Planning Department (PlanD)***

- |                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Ms Janet K.K. Cheung | - | District Planning Officer/Hong Kong (DPO/HK) |
| Mr Ronald C.H. Chan  | - | Senior Town Planner/Hong Kong (STP/HK)       |

#### **Representers and Representers' Representatives**

##### R1 – The University of Hong Kong

- |                       |   |                             |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Professor Zhang Xiang | - | Representer' Representative |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|

##### R10 – Wan Qiangyong

- |                  |   |             |
|------------------|---|-------------|
| Mr Wan Qiangyong | - | Representer |
|------------------|---|-------------|

R12 – Lam Wai Yin Michelle

Ms Lam Wai Yin Michelle	-	Representer
Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung	]	
Ms Fan Mei Mary	]	
Mr Kong Kai Chung	]	Representer's Representatives
Mr Lim Wan Fung Bernard Vincent	]	
Mr Chan Kim On	]	

R55 – Yip Che Shing Jason

Mr Yip Che Shing Jason	-	Representer
------------------------	---	-------------

R256 – The Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired Limited

Mr Yuen Sik Kiu Heather	]	Representer's Representative
-------------------------	---	------------------------------

R259 – The Incorporated Owners of No. 6 and 10 Mount Davis Road

Mr Ronald Duxbury Taylor	-	Representer's Representative
--------------------------	---	------------------------------

R260 – One-Three-Eight Limited

Ms Chan Mou Yin Cynthia	]	Representer's Representatives
Mr Chow Lik Wah	]	

R261 – Goreway Limited

Ms Kira Loren Whitman	]	
Mr Ian Brownlee	]	Representer's Representatives
Mr Mung Kin Fai	]	

R263 – Designing Hong Kong

R834 – Catherine J Nunan

Mr Paulus Johannes Zimmerman	]	Representers' Representatives
Mr Wong Wan Kei Samuel	]	

R318 – Khoo Cheng Kwee

Ms Khoo Cheng Kwee	-	Representer
--------------------	---	-------------

R1734 – Tsang Pang Sum

Mr Tsang Pang Sum - Representer

R2386 – Ho Ying Kei

Mr Ho Ying Kei - Representer

R3251 – Loke Han Pin

Mr Loke Han Pin - Representer

9. The Chairperson extended a welcome and briefly explained the procedures of the hearing. She said that as about 100 representers had indicated to attend the hearing, the hearing would be conducted in three days on 1, 4 and 5.11.2024. The representatives of PlanD would first be invited to brief Members on the background of the representations at this session of the meeting. The video recording of the presentation would be uploaded to the Town Planning Board (TPB/the Board)'s website for viewing by other representers. The same presentation would not be made on the following days of hearing. After the presentation of PlanD, the representers and/or their representatives would be invited to make oral submissions. To ensure efficient operation of the hearing, each representer would be allotted 10 minutes for making presentation. There was a timer device to alert the representers and/or their representatives two minutes before the allotted time was to expire, and when the allotted time limit was up. A question and answer (Q&A) session would be held for each morning and afternoon session after the attending representers and/or their representatives had completed their oral submissions. It would also provide the opportunities for Members to direct their questions to the government representatives, the representers and/or their representatives in each session. After the Q&A session, the government representatives, the representers and/or their representatives would be invited to leave the meeting. After the hearing of all the oral submissions from the representers and/or their representatives, the Board would deliberate on the representations in closed meeting and would inform the representers of the Board's decision in due course.

10. The Chairperson then invited the representatives of PlanD to brief Members on the representations.

11. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Ronald C.H. Chan, STP/HK, PlanD

briefed Members the background of the amendments to the OZP, grounds/views/proposals of the representers, government responses, planning assessments and PlanD's views on the representations as detailed in TPB Paper No. 10987 (the Paper).

12. The Chairperson recapitulated some major points of the Paper. The amendments on the draft OZP were exhibited for public inspection on 22.3.2024. During the two-month exhibition period, 3,677 valid representations were received, raising concerns on site selection, environmental, ecological, traffic and landscape aspects and lack of consultation, etc. in relation to the rezoning of the Item A Site from mainly "GB" to "OU(Global Innovation Centre)". HKU, as the project proponent of the Centre, announced through a press statement on 3.10.2024 that it had decided to take some time to strategically review and amend the development plan of the Centre, e.g. reducing the density of the proposed development and bulk of the building(s), increasing the setback area from neighbouring buildings, designating more green spaces, etc. to address stakeholders' opinion as much as practicable. HKU also announced that the project team would endeavour to step up engagement with the community through various channels so as to improve the development proposal and provide timely project updates in the upcoming process. In view of the above, PlanD recommended that the Item A Site be rezoned from "OU(Global Innovation Centre)" to "Undetermined" ("U") zone to allow time for HKU to review the development plan, adjust it in response to views as expressed by stakeholders and step up engagement with the community. Upon HKU's submission of a revised proposal, it would be scrutinised by relevant government bureaux/departments. If the revised proposal was considered acceptable by Government, PlanD would identify an appropriate zoning to replace "U" for HKU to take forward the revised proposal. Subject to the Board's agreement to the proposed change from "U" to the appropriate zoning, the rezoning would then be subject to another round of statutory town planning procedures whereby the appropriate zoning would be published for representations and representers would be invited to attend TPB meetings to present their views before Members directly. Meanwhile, for the current exercise, after hearing the oral submissions from the representers on 1, 4 and 5.11.2024, Members would be invited to consider whether to accept PlanD's recommendation to rezone the Item A Site to "U".

13. The Chairperson then invited the representers and/or their representatives to elaborate on their representations.

R1 – The University of Hong Kong

14. Professor Zhang Xiang made the following main points:

- (a) HKU had been working on the development of the Centre, which could serve as a catalyst for emerging scientists and researchers to advance their research to a higher level. This project was consistent with the macro agenda of the Mainland and Hong Kong to foster long-term economic growth and the advancement of innovation and technology (I&T). The Centre would also boost upstream and basic research, enhance the strength of HKU and provide stronger support to the domestic I&T ecosystem;
- (b) HKU received constructive feedback and views from a variety of stakeholders during this initial stage of the project. After a thorough examination of the views, HKU decided to strategically review and amend the development plan of the Centre such as reducing of density and bulk of the buildings, increasing the setback areas from neighbouring buildings, designating more green spaces, etc.;
- (c) the Centre would be an upstream research hub where scholars and scientists would engage in upstream or basic research activities. As the researchers would also participate in occasional education activities at HKU, it was crucial for the Centre to be located close to HKU's Main Campus. This would allow scientists' work to benefit students and new generations and enable them to make good use of the resources. The research atmosphere in Pok Fu Lam was well-established with the support of HKU, Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) and Cyberport. Development of the Centre would boost the upstream and basic research in the area, enhancing the local I&T ecosystem. Establishing research facilities in close proximity to university campuses was common among universities in advanced countries, e.g. Silicon Valley near Stanford University, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory near the University of California, Berkeley, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Lincoln Laboratory near MIT;

- (d) as the Northern Metropolis (NM) prioritised in midstream and downstream research to leverage support from Shenzhen, establishing the Centre, which focused on upstream and basic research, in NM would be less strategic and complementary. Given the urgency to fostering I&T development, it was more reasonable to develop the Centre close to HKU's Main Campus, such that its initial operations could be well-supported to generate early tangible research results; and
- (e) HKU was committed to developing deep technology research with the Centre as a crucial component. During the amendment to the development proposal, HKU would more actively engage the stakeholders to address their concerns as much as practicable.

[Mr Paul Y.K. Au left this session of the meeting temporarily during R1's presentation.]

R55 – Yip Che Shing Jason

15. Mr Yip Che Shing Jason made the following main points:

- (a) he was a final-year student studying Information Management at HKU. While he supported Item A on the draft OZP, he would like to express some additional views;
- (b) HKU had several developments in Pok Fu Lam. A section 12A (s.12A) application (No. Y/H1/2) for an academic complex development at Pokfield Road (Pokfield Campus) with a building height (BH) similar to the Centre was approved by the Board in 2022. Given the complaints from nearby residents about air and noise pollution due to the construction at Pokfield Campus, more consultation should be conducted for similar projects to address local residents' concerns; and
- (c) while locating the Centre near HKU's Main Campus could create synergy, the potential adverse impacts on the surrounding environment should also be

considered. Currently, students commuting to the Medical Campus of HKU (HKUMed) on Sassoon Road had resulted in high shuttle bus patronage, particularly during peak hours. The development of the Centre would further increase the demand for shuttle bus services between HKU campuses. The traffic issue, together with the planning intention of the “GB” zone and the concerns of local residents, should be considered when developing the Centre at the Item A Site. To strike a balance amongst synergy, conservation and local concerns, alternative locations including those near other HKU properties should be explored.

R259 – The Incorporated Owners of No. 6 and 10 Mount Davis Road

16. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Ronald Duxbury Taylor made the following main points:

- (a) he was the first presenter of the HKU Global Innovation Centre Public Representation Group (the GIC PRG), which represented 21 residential properties and around 20,000 residents in Pok Fu Lam. They supported the development of the Centre at the right place, but not in Pok Fu Lam;
- (b) the existing residential developments in Pok Fu Lam had been restricted from redevelopment to a higher intensity via lease modification due to the Pok Fu Lam Moratorium (PFLM) which was introduced in 1972. Although PFLM was initially intended as a short-term measure to control traffic in the area, it had remained in effect for more than 50 years. The owners of the existing residential developments had reasonable expectations that the available traffic capacity would support the redevelopment of their buildings to the extent permitted under the OZP. However, the capacity had now been allocated to HKU for a project that would generate more traffic flow and was not anticipated due to traffic constraints in the area. This approach had been criticised in the judgment of the Court of First Instance (HCAL 27/2012);
- (c) according to the 2021 Policy Address (PA), a site in Pok Fu Lam was reserved for HKU, but not allocated or granted to HKU. HKU was required to

conduct local consultations for the development of the Centre but it failed to engage with the community at large in the past three years;

- (d) the original reservation of 4.72 hectares (ha) of land was more than necessary for the development of the Centre. As HKU had committed to scaling down the project, the Centre could be accommodated within the existing “R(C)6” zone between Ebenezer School and Woodbury Court. There was no longer adequate justification for utilising the 4.72 ha of “GB” zone covering mature natural woodland for such a large-scale development;
- (e) the phased construction of the Centre would imply a prolonged disturbance to local residents. The Centre should be located in areas outside Pok Fu Lam, where construction costs would be lower, and the construction time shorter. Moreover, the proposed amendment to the “U” zone only meant that the details of the development remained uncertain; and
- (f) according to the 2022, 2023 and 2024 PAs, the focus for I&T development would be in NM, with no mention of Pok Fu Lam. The 2023 PA also announced that as adequate land had been identified for housing, industry and other developments for the coming 30 years, the Government had no plan for the time being to further use the “GB” areas for large-scale development. Rezoning the “GB” in Pok Fu Lam for the development of the Centre would contravene the 2023 PA and deviate from the Board’s previous decision to create a critical mass for I&T development in San Tin Technopole (STT) in collaboration with the Mainland, which might have legal consequences. The Centre should be located in NM to align with the Central Government’s policy for an I&T hub in the area, allowing for faster, more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable development.

#### R260 – One-Three-Eight Limited

17. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation and a video clip, Ms Chan Mou Yin Cynthia and Mr Chau Lik Wah made the following main points:



- (a) they represented an owner of 138 PFLR to make a presentation. Their concern about the visual impact of the Centre was related to public views rather than private views;
- (b) the proposed building height restriction (BHR) of 158mPD for the Centre was formulated with reference to the BHs of some existing developments that were not relevant. Buildings on the seaward side of PFLR with BHs exceeding the street level were either completed before the publication of the first Pok Fu Lam OZP in 1986 or approved through s.12A applications. According to the Urban Design Guidelines, the sectional profile of developments should echo the natural topographical profile. Gradation of height profiles should be created in relation to topography. Hence, the proposed BH of the Centre, which was located on the seaward side of PFLR, was not comparable to those on the landward side of PFLR;
- (c) the visual impact of the Centre on the existing low-rise buildings, including 138 PFLR, on the landward side of PFLR had not been adequately assessed in the visual impact assessment (VIA) conducted by HKU or mentioned in the Metro Planning Committee (MPC) Paper for the proposed amendments prepared by PlanD;
- (d) important public views from the section of PFLR adjacent to the Centre, looking southwest towards the sea, was not included in the VIA. It was not in line with the planning intention as stated in the Explanatory Statement (ES) of the draft OZP to keep developments below the level of PFLR as far as possible in order to preserve public view and amenity and also the general character of the area. Besides, it did not meet the requirement stipulated in the TPB Guidelines No. 41 on Submission of VIA for Planning Applications to the Board (TPB PG-No. 41) in that VIA should primarily assess the impact on sensitive public viewers from the most affected viewing points, which included prominent travel routes where travellers' visual attention might be drawn to the proposed development;
- (e) as shown in the video clip provided by the representer, claiming to be the

view from the height of a tourist bus at a viewing point on PFLR adjacent to the Item A Site, distant views of Sandy Bay, Cyberport and the existing natural hillslopes were visible. The view, which was unique and aesthetically appealing, was currently enjoyed by local residents and tourists. The Centre, with a proposed BH of 158mPD, would create a significant visual impact and obstruct most of the open sea views. It would also block the view from another viewing point at a bus stop adjacent to the Item A Site. The adverse visual impact could not be mitigated by merely creating view corridors between the buildings as proposed in the VIA;

- (f) the visual impact of the Centre could be reduced by lowering the BH of the proposed development. Under the indicative scheme, the proposed development was not designed sensibly to minimise the building bulk on the slope between PFLR and Victoria Road. For example, the first usable floor (P7/F) was unnecessarily raised by 17m to 30m above the level of Victoria Road and there was an unnecessary setback from Victoria Road for the high and mid zones. Felling trees in the “GB” zone and leaving a blank retaining wall along Victoria Road would result in a poor aesthetic effect. By optimising the mid and low zones of the proposed development through cutting onto the slope and reducing the setback from Victoria Road, the BH of the Centre could be reduced to 137mPD, which would help preserve the existing public views on PFLR and enhance the streetscape along Victoria Road; and
- (g) in the absence of a revised scheme from HKU, the Item A Site should be reverted to “GB” zone. Should the site be rezoned, a BHR of 137mPD, the same as the adjacent “R(C)6” zone, should be stipulated. Besides, a requirement on the submission of a layout plan through a section 16 (s.16) application should be imposed to ensure that the revised scheme would not create adverse visual impacts by implementing suitable mitigation measures.

[Mr Stanley T.S. Choi left this session of the meeting temporarily during R260’s presentation.]

R261 – Goreway Limited

18. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Ian Brownlee made the following main points:

- (a) R261's site (i.e. 138 PFLR), with three low-rise houses recently completed, was situated on the opposite side of PFLR to the Centre. The representer had a legitimate expectation that the planning principles stated in the ES of the draft OZP would be followed;
- (b) the Board was an independent statutory decision-making body which had a responsibility to take into account a wide range of relevant matters within the ambit of town planning but not irrelevant matters. Consideration of policy objectives was only a matter of peripheral importance and the Board should assess the likely planning impact of the proposal. The Board should exercise its independent planning judgement on the suitability of the Item A Site for the development of the Centre, taking into consideration other sites zoned for similar purposes on the STT OZP and the Hung Shui Kiu and Ha Tsuen OZP, which would be more suitable for the proposed use and could be made available for the proposed development in a short time;
- (c) as stated in the 2021 PA, while the Government had accepted in principle the proposal from HKU, it was only a starting point and should be followed by detailed technical assessments to be conducted by HKU. It was clear from the public reaction that the Item A Site was not suitable for the Centre and should be reverted to the original zonings, i.e. "GB" and "R(C)6";
- (d) the description of land use compatibility in the Paper was inaccurate as the south-eastern part of the Item A Site was in fact located far from the existing HKU facilities and QMH in the north. The Centre was an intrusion of incompatible high-density, high-rise, non-residential developments into a residential neighbourhood with low-rise government, institution and community facilities. The Board was obliged to consider local views, which

were overwhelmingly opposing the development of the Centre with valid planning reasons related to its impacts on the neighbourhood;

- (e) the ES of the draft OZP stated that on the seaward side along the section of PFLR to the north of its junction with Chi Fu Road, it was intended to keep developments below the level of PFLR as far as possible in order to preserve public view and amenity and also the general character of the area. However, no assessment was made for any public view from PFLR in the VIA. The existing public views from PFLR were scarce and should be protected by the Board;
- (f) as the BHR of the “R(C)6” zone on the seaward side of PFLR was restricted to 137mPD to achieve the planning objective, the same approach should be applied to the Centre. The proposed BHR of 158mPD for the Centre, which was considered excessive and not justified with public planning gains, should be reduced to 137mPD;
- (g) the Board should exercise control in the public interest by requiring the submission of a s.16 application along with a layout plan for its approval, such that issues related to compatibility with the neighbourhood, disposition of buildings, views and visual amenity, vehicle access arrangements, landscaping and protection of vegetation could be adequately addressed;
- (h) only a week before the TPB meeting, the Item A Site was proposed to be rezoned to “U”, a zone without any planning intention nor statutory development control. According to the proposed revisions to the covering Notes of the draft OZP (Annex IX of the Paper), for the “U” zone, all uses or developments except those minor/government uses/works required planning permission from the Board. This would allow HKU to proceed with the original scheme via a s.16 application. In addition, paragraph 7.9.1 of the proposed ES of the draft OZP (Annex X of the Paper) should be deleted as it provided the basis for the submission of a s. 16 application. Paragraph 7.9.2 of the proposed ES should be revised as the current proposed wording might

give an impression that HKU, rather than the Board, was the one to decide on the development of the Centre;

- (i) HKU should thoroughly explore alternative sites rather than merely reviewing the Item A Site for the development of the Centre. The Item A Site should be reverted to “GB” and “R(C)6” zones. If HKU decided to proceed with the proposal on the Item A Site, a s.12A application should be submitted such that the revised proposal could be scrutinised by the Board; and
- (j) while HKU was advised to undertake more consultations with the stakeholders, HKU had a poor reputation for engaging with the public. There were doubts about whether HKU could achieve meaningful community engagement.

R263 – Designing Hong Kong

R834 – Catherine J Nunan

19. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Paulus Johannes Zimmerman made the following main points:

- (a) he was a former district council member representing the Pok Fu Lam constituency in the Southern District for over 12 years;
- (b) while HKU promised to consult local residents in a meeting with the Southern District Council members in May 2022, a notice for a briefing session was only sent to the Management Office of Baguio Villa on 22.4.2024 without mentioning the plan-making process in respect of Pok Fu Lam OZP. Local residents were not informed of the amendment items on the draft OZP until his email to local residents informing them about the proposed amendments to the OZP, resulting in a surge of representations near the end of the publication period, reflecting the failure to adequately inform local residents regarding the publication of the draft OZP;

- (c) HKU had not explored alternative locations for the Centre which could avoid significant adverse landscape and visual impacts on Pok Fu Lam. Development of the Centre would result in the vegetated slope along Victoria Road being cleared and replaced by a concrete retaining wall, significantly altering the outlook of the area. The decorative planters along Victoria Road could not mitigate the visual impact of the large concrete structure. The video clip presented by R260's representatives also showed that the existing public sea view along the section of PFLR near the Centre would be obstructed by the development of the Centre;
- (d) there were no central dividers and bus lay-bys on PFLR, resulting in frequent traffic congestion and accidents. Sassoon Road was a steep and narrow two-lane single carriageway with limited capacity. The junction of PFLR and Sassoon Road, which was crucial for emergency access to QMH, had limited potential for improvement and often led to queues on the connecting roads. Developing the Centre at the Item A Site would further aggravate the traffic conditions in the area;
- (e) there were flaws and errors in the traffic impact assessment (TIA) conducted by HKU. The traffic survey was conducted in 2022, a year of abnormal traffic conditions due to COVID. The design year of 2032 had not fully considered the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and the phased expansion of QMH. The TIA also failed to address the traffic impact on access to QMH. Besides, the limited capacity for pedestrians along PFLR had been ignored. Pedestrian connectivity to the Cyberport and the waterfront park could be further improved; and
- (f) in case the development of the Centre proceeded, the site boundary should be adjusted to eliminate the residential block between Woodbury Court and Baguio Villa such that the negative impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood could be significantly reduced.

[Mr Paul Y.K. Au rejoined this session of the meeting during R263's presentation.]

R1734 – Tsang Pang Sum

20. Mr Tsang Pang Sum made the following main points:

- (a) he was a resident of Upper Baguio Villa and had previously lived on Sassoon Road. Having lived in the area for over 40 years, he was well-acquainted with the neighbourhood. While he supported the establishment of the Centre, he was shocked to know that no alternative locations had ever been considered and that the scale of the Centre could be reduced within a short time. The possibility for abrupt change in the development scale implied that the original proposal might not have been carefully planned;
- (b) the Item A Site was situated on a steep and vegetated slope in an elongated shape between PFLR and Victoria Road, adjacent to a number of residential developments, particularly Blocks 19 and 20 of Baguio Villa. The section of PFLR near the Item A Site was narrow and served as vehicular access to QMH, meaning that any traffic congestion could pose a risk in case of an emergency;
- (c) the expansion of Cyberport and the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate had resulted in frequent trips by construction vehicles including dump trucks. Developing the Centre at the Item A Site would further increase traffic flow on Victoria Road and aggravate the traffic conditions; and
- (d) HKU should address the objections and actively explore alternative locations for the Centre, such as sites in Aberdeen, Wong Chuk Hang, Brick Hill and the North District, with a view to identifying a suitable site that could minimise excavation and avoid adverse traffic and visual impacts on the surrounding areas.

[Mr Stanley T.S Choi rejoined this session of the meeting during R1734's presentation.]

R3251 – Loke Han Pin

21. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Loke Han Pin made the following main points:

- (a) he came to Hong Kong 18 years ago and was currently a resident in Pok Fu Lam. He was currently a business entrepreneur and investor and a former senior information technology executive. Although he supported the establishment of the Centre, there were other feasible options for creating a mutually beneficial and optimised facility;
- (b) no public consultation had been conducted by HKU before arriving at the initial design. While two briefing sessions were conducted by HKU for residents of Baguio Villa and surrounding neighborhoods on 13 and 14.5.2024, it was only 1.5 weeks before the deadline for submission of representations to the Board. The briefing sessions were one-way communication processes where residents were informed rather than consulted. The genuineness of the enhanced communication proposed by HKU was questionable. HKU should improve transparency by sharing more information with the public and conduct more consultations to foster better two-way communication with local residents. The “GB” zoning on the OZP should remain unchanged until a proper public consultation was conducted;
- (c) while the Centre would focus on upstream and basic research, only 39% of the gross floor area (GFA) (i.e. 87,400m<sup>2</sup>) was proposed for research purpose. The remaining 61% of the GFA was proposed for academic, conference/exhibition and office uses. Considering the surplus of office spaces in the territory and the availability of other conference/exhibition facilities in Cyberport and nearby hotels (e.g. Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel and Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel), the Centre should explore partnerships with existing businesses. In addition, as HKU owned a number of residential properties in Pok Fu Lam, the need for extra accommodations in the Centre was questionable. The Centre should prioritise research



facilities, and additional information was required to justify the inclusion of non-research facilities; and

- (d) the Item A Site was now a mature woodland. Clearing it for the development of the Centre with a communal open space of 12,000m<sup>2</sup> seemed illogical. A better option would be to reduce the scale of development and preserve the mature woodland by locating the Centre within the existing “R(C)6” zone abutting PFLR, between Ebenezer School and Woodbury Court.

[The meeting was adjourned for a 15-minute break.]

22. As the presentations of government representatives, the representers and/or their representatives in this session had been completed, the meeting proceeded to the Q&A session. The Chairperson explained that Members would raise questions and the Chairperson would invite the representers, their representatives and/or the government representatives to answer. The Q&A session should not be taken as an occasion for the attendees to direct question to the Board or for cross-examination between parties. The Chairperson then invited questions from Members.

### *Strategic Positioning*

23. A Member enquired about the international positioning and uniqueness of the deep technology research to be developed by HKU. In response, Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung, R12’s representative, said that deep technology was based on scientific discoveries of inventions and focused on knowledge production through interdisciplinary research and collaborations to tackle human grand challenges. It had recently emerged as a frontier in scientific and engineering breakthroughs. For example, recent advancements in vaccine development, material science and semiconductor design had offered solutions to global challenges and improved quality of life. Deep technology institutes worldwide usually focused on a specific area, e.g. new energy research at the University of California, Berkeley, new material research at the Weizmann Institute of Science, etc. For the Centre, it would act as a hub for basic research and a fountainhead for original discoveries with the proposed strategic research disciplines, including biotechnology, quantum technology, new materials, new energy, artificial

intelligence, computer science and financial technology. The Centre could lay a strong foundation for Hong Kong to enhance its upstream research capabilities and develop into an international I&T hub, facilitating transdisciplinary research and collaboration among researchers not only locally but also regionally and internationally. It would enhance existing strengths in generating new knowledge and advancing scientific breakthroughs, fostering the growth of innovation industries and catalysing economic development in Hong Kong.

### *Site Selection*

24. The Vice-chairperson and some Members raised the following questions:

- (a) while acknowledging the reasons behind HKU's choice of the Item A Site as the most suitable location for the Centre, whether the Centre's development would be affected if it was not located near HKU's Main Campus, such as in NM, as suggested by some representers;
- (b) given the Government's plan to develop a University Town in NM, whether there was any plan by HKU to capitalise on the new opportunity. If HKU was to extend its campus into NM and establish the Centre there, education and research facilities could be co-located, reducing the need for frequent travel to and from HKU's Main Campus;
- (c) from a scholar's perspective, it was questionable whether distance should be the primary consideration in placing upstream research facilities next to universities. The distance between research facilities and universities in the United States was comparable to that between HKU and NM. Since the Centre would collaborate with other universities both in Hong Kong and overseas, its proximity to HKU's Main Campus might not be a critical issue. Whether HKU had other considerations, such as extending the main campus in Pok Fu Lam area;
- (d) noting that HKU owned several residential properties such as Pine Grove, Pine Court and Tam Tower in Pok Fu Lam, whether some of them, along with the Stanley Ho Sports Centre, could be redeveloped with increased intensity to

facilitate the early implementation of the Centre; and

- (e) whether the Centre could be split into two sites, with one remaining at the Item A Site with reduced intensity and the other at the currently underutilised HKU sites.

25. In response, Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung and Ms Fan Mei Mary, R12's representatives, made the following main points:

- (a) HKU had considered several sites in Pok Fu Lam for the development of the Centre. The Item A Site was selected with due considerations to the site area, suitability, availability, accessibility and constructability. Regarding the I&T ecosystem, upstream research primarily conducted in laboratories, where researchers and scholars could collaborate closely on experimental or theoretical studies. On the other hand, midstream to downstream research focused more on transforming ideas into tangible outcomes. While NM was planned for I&T development in Hong Kong, it primarily focused on midstream to downstream research, and the timeline of its development was not yet confirmed. In establishing a deep technology research facility, factors such as collaboration with universities to form a research ecosystem were essential. According to international experiences, as pointed out by Professor Zhang Xiang, Silicon Valley had thrived due to strong collaboration among the research, academic and industrial sectors. Its success was primarily attributed to the talent and researchers of Stanford University. Other examples included Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley and Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot. All evidence suggested that facilities focused on upstream research would gain significant advantages from their proximity to universities, which enabled better support and resource sharing, allowing for more accessible connections among researchers, scholars and students. By capitalising on the clustering and synergy effects of talents, it promoted closer collaboration across the research, academic and industry sectors. Thus, HKU chose to align with international trends by developing the Centre near HKU's Main Campus. Other sites that were farther away from HKU's Main Campus might not be the best location for the Centre to reach its maximum potential;

- (b) In 2023, the Education Bureau held a briefing session for eight University Grants Committee-funded universities and other self-financing post-secondary institutions regarding development opportunities in NM. HKU was aware of the policy intent outlined in the 2024 PA to develop the NM University Town and publish its development conceptual framework in the first half of 2026. HKU was exploring how to take advantage of that opportunity to enhance its overall development. As upstream research closely resembled the research and education conducted at universities, it was believed that building the Centre near HKU, which was ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in the 2025 Quacquarelli Symonds World University Ranking and had been established in Pok Fu Lam for over a century, would be ideal;
- (c) the challenges faced by Hong Kong were quite different from those in other countries. Owing to its mountainous terrain, Hong Kong lacked the readily available flat land found in places like Silicon Valley and Stanford University in the United States. To mitigate the impacts of the proposed development as far as practicable, the development plan of the Centre would be strategically reviewed and amended as mentioned in HKU's press statement, e.g. reducing the density of the proposed development and increasing the setback from neighbouring buildings etc.. The Centre was not intended as an extension of HKU's Main Campus but served as a complementary initiative to provide a platform for upstream deep technology research;
- (d) HKU's residential properties in Pok Fu Lam mainly provided accommodations to professors and staff to support the university's overall talent recruitment strategy. Regarding the Stanley Ho Sports Centre, the football fields were essential for providing students with an all-rounded education and for team training and activities. Given the limited sports facilities at HKU, the feasibility of utilising the Stanley Ho Sports Centre site was quite slim at the moment. In fact, HKU had consistently optimised its land and facilities. For example, the Pokfield Campus development incorporated the Flora Ho Sports Centre into its plan for an academic complex. Given Hong Kong's limited land resources, HKU's project team would explore more strategies for achieving

‘single site, multiple uses’ in the upcoming revised scheme. Nevertheless, due to specific requirements such as low vibration and high floor loading for laboratories, co-locating the research and sports facilities might not be a feasible option; and

- (e) splitting the Centre into two separate locations would contradict the original intention of creating a self-contained facility. If all needs could be met in one place, the impact on external traffic would be minimal. Besides, if certain specialised functions were separated, HKU would need to consider the feasibility and connectivity issues. HKU remained open to all opportunities and would fine tune and optimise the scheme.

26. The Vice-chairperson asked whether HKU, like other universities, had off-site campuses in the Greater Bay Area (e.g. Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Guangzhou), other areas (e.g. Lok Ma Chau Loop, STT, overseas, etc.), or any site under planning. In response, Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung, R12’s representative, said that apart from the HKU Shenzhen Institute of Research and Innovation (香港大學深圳研究院) for some research cooperations, HKU currently had no off-site campus in the Mainland. Nevertheless, the management team was actively exploring opportunities for expansion beyond Hong Kong.

#### *Mix of Uses and Design of the Centre*

27. Two Members raised the following questions:

- (a) noting that only 39% of the Centre’s GFA was designated for research use and the remaining 61% was allocated for other uses (e.g. academic, conference/exhibition, office and staff quarters, etc.) which were available nearby (e.g. Cyberport) and in the market, whether HKU had conducted a marketing survey to justify the inclusion of those non-research uses at the Item A Site;
- (b) whether there was a genuine need to provide staff quarters within the Centre, and the possibility of providing accommodations elsewhere, such as in HKU’s own residential properties or in the private market; and

- (c) noting that the Centre would accommodate 1,500 research teams with 7,000 employees and assuming half of the GFA was reserved for research purposes, only about 100m<sup>2</sup> of floor space would be allocated to each research team, equivalent to about 20m<sup>2</sup> per employee, whether this provision would be considered substandard for a world-class facility.

28. In response, Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung, R12's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) facilities such as academic/conference/exhibition areas and offices were crucial for upstream deep technology research within the Centre. In addition to conducting research in laboratories, researchers required office spaces to consolidate research findings and prepare papers, as well as conference/exhibition/academic facilities for idea exchange and talent development. As the Centre would help connect Mainland's research and development institutes with international counterparts and bring together local, Mainland and overseas researchers in a unique geographical location, a self-contained centre with all necessary supporting facilities was essential. It could also minimise movement of people in and out of the Center, thereby reducing traffic impact on the surrounding community;
- (b) as the Centre was not an extension of HKU, it might not be appropriate to provide accommodations for the researchers in HKU's existing facilities. Many researchers might not stay long in Hong Kong, it would be more convenient for them to reside within the Centre. Besides, there were concerns about the availability of flexible leases for short-term rentals in the market. During the review of the proposal, HKU would also explore more options including the provision of accommodations; and
- (c) given the site constraints, HKU would review the scheme strategically in greater detail, including making better use of the site, exploring the potential for shared facilities and reviewing the necessary sizes for various components, etc. Regarding the opinions and suggestions provided by TPB Members, HKU's

project team would make a concerted effort to incorporate them into the revised scheme.

29. Noting that R260's representatives suggested an alternative scheme to reduce the BH of the proposed development by optimising floor space provision in the lower zone and reducing the building setback from Victoria Road, a Member asked whether HKU would consider the proposal. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R12's representative, said that for each piece of land, numerous considerations and challenges should be addressed before arriving at a design. As Victoria Road was a two-lane single carriageway, lowering the building structures towards the road and reducing the setback area would affect pedestrian circulation and create adverse visual impact along the road. That was why a setback was proposed to provide adequate visual relief for the public.

30. A Member further enquired why utilising the lower zone along Victoria Road would adversely affect pedestrian circulation and visual amenity. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R12's representative, said that the setback from Victoria Road would facilitate a wider footpath, creating a better environment for jogging and cycling. Besides, with two vehicular accesses proposed on Victoria Road, the road would need to be widened for safety reasons. Furthermore, as the existing watercourses would be preserved, lowering the building structures would reduce the effectiveness of building voids of the podium design to allow sunlight penetration and air ventilation. HKU's project team would further review the BH and building separation of the proposed scheme together with other aspects, and consult the public before re-submitting the proposal to the Board for consideration.

#### *Traffic Issue*

31. In view of some representers' concerns about the traffic impact along PFLR, Victoria Road and Sassoon Road, a Member asked for more information on the TIA, including impacts on traffic and pedestrian flows and mitigation measures.

32. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R12's representative, said that the TIA was conducted based on the proposed uses and corresponding development parameters, which included the accommodation for 7,000 employees with 1,500 research teams. Based on the experience at HKU's Centennial Campus, seminar and conference activities were usually

organised during off-peak hours and weekends. Besides, it was anticipated that researchers would mainly stay within the Centre and commute during off-peak hours. As such, the traffic impact of the Centre on the surrounding area was expected to be insignificant. Furthermore, the TIA had adopted a conservative approach without incorporating the South Island Line (West) in its assessment. Nevertheless, the TIA would be revised after the development plan of the Centre was strategically amended.

33. Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, supplemented that according to the TIA commissioned by HKU, all assessed junctions and roads links would operate satisfactorily during peak hours in the design year of 2032, except junctions J1, J8, J16 and J17. HKU proposed junction improvements for J1 and J8 to ensure adequate junction capacity. For J16 and J17, although they were more distant from the Centre and traffic generated/attracted by the proposed development would only create a negligible effect on the capacities of the junctions, HKU had proposed junction improvement measures for the junctions. According to the TIA, the Centre would not create adverse traffic impact on the local road network. The Commissioner for Transport had no adverse comment on the TIA and its assumptions.

34. Noting some representers' concerns about the potential adverse traffic impact of the Centre on the surrounding roads and the possible obstruction to ambulance services to QMH, a Member asked whether the design year of 2032 adopted in the TIA was reasonable and whether ambulance traffic had been taken into account. In responses, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, said that the TIA was based on a traffic survey which had taken into account ambulance traffic. The TIA was conducted with a design year of 2032, i.e. three years after the target completion year of Phase 1 of the Centre in 2028/2029. HKU had committed to undertake an updated TIA at the detailed design stage with completion year(s) of all phases, a construction traffic impact assessment, and a traffic review prior to project commissioning.

35. Mr Paulus Johannes Zimmerman, R263's representative, raised a concern that the TIA currently undertaken by HKU was not a full TIA as it did not cover the traffic impact upon full completion of the proposed development.



36. Two Members raised the following questions:

- (a) whether the figure of 7,000 employees included supporting staff including those responsible for general building management; and
- (b) whether shuttle bus services would be provided for the employees in the Centre to reduce traffic along PFLR.

37. Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung and Ms Fan Mei Mary, R12's representatives, made the following main points:

- (a) the Centre was designed to accommodate 1,500 research teams with a total of 7,000 employees. The figure included researchers and their supporting staff such as research assistants, technicians and postdoctoral students; and
- (b) the working hours and commuting patterns of researchers differed from those of the general office workers and administrative staff. They would not necessarily adhere to a 9-to-5 schedule. As such, the traffic impact on PFLR would not be significant.

38. The Vice-chairperson enquired if the Centre would be affected by PFLM and whether there were any traffic improvements in the area such that the restriction could be uplifted, and whether the TIA had taken into account all new developments in the area, including Cyberport Expansion, redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and the planned expansion of HKUMed next to Ebenezer School.

39. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, said that the Item A Site was located within areas restricted by PFLM, which was an administrative measure introduced by the Government since 1972. PFLM restricted lease modification and the sale of government land to control the amount of traffic generated within the Pok Fu Lam area. PFLM might be partially lifted if the development could demonstrate no adverse traffic impacts with the implementation of the necessary traffic improvement measures, and was deemed necessary to meet public needs. The Cyberport project and the Wah Kwai Estate public housing development were two examples of PFLM

being partially lifted in the past. For the Centre, HKU would need to demonstrate to the relevant authority that the existing transport infrastructure, along with the recommended traffic improvement measures or works, would be capable of coping with the traffic generated from the proposed development and that the development was necessary to meet public needs. Regarding the TIA, those planned/committed developments in the area had been included in assessing the cumulative traffic impact.

### *Visual Impact*

40. A Member asked if the VIA was conducted properly to support the Indicative Scheme. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R12's representative, said that the VIA was conducted by a professional consultant and the public viewing points were identified in consultation with PlanD. As the development plan for the Centre would be strategically amended, the VIA would be suitably reviewed in consultation with relevant government departments as appropriate.

41. Two Members raised the following questions:

- (a) the criteria for selecting the six public viewing points in the VIA and the comment on the viewing point suggested by R260's representatives; and
- (b) the weighting between kinetic and static viewing points in the VIA, and whether a kinetic viewing point, such as that from a tourist bus, would be regarded as important.

42. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) in conducting a VIA, the visual envelope should first be determined, having regard to the size of the proposed development, the distance of the development and its potential visibility from the selected viewing points, and the actual site and surrounding topographical conditions assessed through ground inspection. Visual impact should take into account views from key strategic and popular local vantage points, as well as local visual impacts on the adjacent

neighbourhood area. The viewing points could be kinetic or static, and included key pedestrian nodes, popular areas used by the public or tourists for outdoor activities, recreation, rest, sitting-out, leisure, walking, sightseeing, and prominent travel routes where travellers' visual attention might be drawn by the proposed development. The VIA conducted by HKU identified six representative viewing points to demonstrate local to district-wide context, including those from a footbridge connecting QMH, Pok Fu Lam No. 1 Fresh Water Service Reservoir, the Bethanie (a Declared Monument), near pavilion next to the bus stop at Victoria Road, Cyberport Waterfront Park, and an existing walkway adjacent to HKU Stanley Ho Sports Centre. When a revised VIA was conducted by HKU, the viewing points could be reviewed to assess the visual impact more comprehensively; and

- (b) the visual sensitivity of the public viewers from the viewing points could be qualitatively graded, taking into account the activity of the viewers, the duration and distance over which the proposed development would remain visible, and the public perception of value attached to the views being assessed. It was a qualitative assessment on the overall visual impact of the proposed development. The six viewing points included in the VIA generally addressed those considerations.

43. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr Ian Brownlee, R261's representative, supplemented that as the ES of the draft OZP specified the importance of preserving the public view on PFLR, the visual impact of the Centre should be assessed in a dynamic way, in addition to the static assessment where people gathered. He considered the approach adopted in the VIA unacceptable and commented that it did not adequately reflect the visual impact of the proposed development.

#### *Interim "U" Zoning*

44. Two Members raised the following questions:

- (a) the reason for designating the "U" zoning for the Item A Site in the interim, and any control in the interim period; and

- (b) given that further rezoning of the Item A Site would be required after the review by HKU, the difference between reverting the site to “GB” and rezoning it to “U” in the interim period.

45. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) designating a site as “U” zone on OZPs was not uncommon when the planning intention for a site was uncertain or while awaiting completion of a study or infrastructure facilities. For the Centre, the 2021 PA announced that the Government had accepted in principle the proposal from HKU to reserve a site in Pok Fu Lam for construction of deep technology research facilities to consolidate Hong Kong’s leading position in basic research. The technical assessments conducted by HKU confirmed the technical feasibility of the Centre and relevant bureaux/departments had no objection to or adverse comments on the proposal. In view of the adverse representations, HKU had committed to strategically review and amend the development plan of the Centre and endeavoured to step up engagement with the community through various channels so as to improve the development proposal. As such, it was considered not appropriate to maintain the current zoning of “OU(Global Innovation Centre)” with the stipulated BHR. Pending HKU’s review and revision of the development plan and further consultation with the local community, it was considered prudent to rezone the Item A Site to “U” in the interim period, allowing time for HKU to review its development plan and make amendments based on stakeholders’ feedback. Regarding development control under the “U” zone, a remark was included in the covering Notes of the draft OZP (Annex IX of the Paper) stating that all uses or developments except minor/government uses/works required planning permission from the Board; and
- (b) HKU had conducted various technical assessments to confirm the technical feasibility of the Centre. In terms of land use planning, the proposed research and academic uses at the Item A Site were considered not incompatible with the

surrounding educational, institutional, hospital and residential uses. The current issues were whether the scale of the development could be reduced and the layout design could be enhanced to address local concerns. As such, the land was proposed to be rezoned to “U” as a stopgap measure for HKU to enhance community engagement so as to refine the development proposal. Although the Item A Site was proposed to be rezoned to an interim “U” zoning, the intention to develop the Centre there remained unchanged, and it was proposed to retain such planning intention in the revised ES of the draft OZP (Annex X of the Paper).

### *Public Consultation*

46. Noting that HKU had been advised to strengthen communication with the local community when the proposed amendments to the OZP for the Centre were considered by MPC in March 2024, a Member enquired if HKU had undertaken any local consultation since then and how the local residents were informed of the proposed amendments in the plan-making process.

47. In response, Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung, R12’s representative, said that HKU consulted the Development Planning Committee of the Southern District Council (SDC) on 17.1.2024 and briefed SDC members on the development parameters of the Centre. To engage stakeholders and local community, two briefing sessions were conducted in Cyberport on 13 and 14.5.2024. Besides, a dedicated website had been set up to provide the public with the most up-to-date information and news of the Centre. For example, supplementary information in response to some representations was provided on 11.7.2024.

48. Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD explained the procedures for consulting the public under the statutory planning process. The amendments to the OZP were exhibited for public inspection for 2 months. A notice was published in the Gazette, two daily Chinese and one daily English local newspapers once a week and on the Board’s website to inform the public that the OZP was available for public inspection. Relevant DC members were also notified of the right to submit representations regarding the amendments.

49. In relation to a Member’s enquiry, Mr Paulus Johannes Zimmerman, R263’s

representative, pointed out that as the current SDC had been less communicative with the public, the local residents were not aware of the amendments to the OZP until he disseminated relevant information. He also considered that the way in which the public was notified by newspapers was outdated as people nowadays seldom read newspapers.

[Professor Roger C.K. Chan and Mr Timothy K.W. Ma left this session of the meeting during the Q&A Session]

50. As Members did not have further question to raise on the representers and/or their representatives, the Chairperson said that the presentation and Q&A sessions for the morning session of the hearing on the day was completed. She thanked the representers and their representatives for attending the meeting. The Board would deliberate on the representations in closed meeting after all the hearing sessions were completed and would inform the representers of the Board's decision in due course. The representers, their representatives and the government representatives left the meeting at this point.

51. The Chairperson said that the meeting would be adjourned for lunch break.

[The meeting was adjourned for lunch break at 1:20 p.m.]

52. The meeting was resumed at 2:00 p.m.

53. The following Members and the Secretary were present in the afternoon session:

Permanent Secretary for Development  
(Planning and Lands)  
Ms Doris P.L. Ho

Chairperson

Mr Stephen L.H. Liu

Vice-chairperson

Mr Daniel K.S. Lau

Mr Stanley T.S. Choi

Mr K.W. Leung

Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong

Mr Ricky W.Y. Yu

Professor Roger C.K. Chan

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

Mr Timothy K.W. Ma

Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan

Mr Daniel K.W. Chung

Mr Ryan M.K. Ip

Mr Derrick S.M. Yip

Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong  
Transport Department  
Mr Sammy C.Y. Wong

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

Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment)  
Environmental Protection Department  
Mr Gary C.W. Tam

Deputy Director/General  
Lands Department  
Ms Jane K.C. Choi

Director of Planning  
Mr Ivan M.K. Chung



## Presentation and Question Sessions

54. The following government representatives, representers and/or their representatives were invited to the meeting at this point:

### **Government Representatives**

#### **PlanD**

Ms Janet K.K. Cheung	-	DPO/HK
Mr Ronald C.H. Chan	-	STP/HK

### **Representers and Representers' Representatives**

#### **R12 – Lam Wai Yin Michelle**

Ms Lam Wai Yin Michelle	-	Representer
Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung	]	
Ms Fan Mei Mary	]	
Mr Kong Kai Chung	]	Representer's Representatives
Mr Lim Wan Fung Bernard Vincent	]	
Mr Chan Kim On	]	

#### **R251 – Ebenezer School**

Mr Chen Kai Ho	]	Representer's Representatives
Dr Yuk Tak Fun	]	

#### **R252 – Ebenezer Child Care Centre and Early Intervention Programme for Visually Impaired Children**

Mr Yim Chun Kit	]	Representer's Representatives
Ms Chan May Han, Helena	]	

#### **R253 – Ebenezer Care and Attention Home**

Ms Mak Shiu Chun	]	Representer's Representatives
------------------	---	-------------------------------

Dr Yuk Tak Fun ]

R254 – Ebenezer Project Works

Mr Yang En Hua - Representer's Representative

R255 – Ebenezer New Hope School

Ms Yeung Wing Shan Theresa ] Representer's Representatives

Ms Kwong Ching Man Catherine ]

R256 – The Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired Limited

Ms Yuen Sik Kiu Heather ] Representer's Representatives

Mr Ian Brownlee ]

R257 – Wong Tin Ling Tammy

Ms Wong Tin Ling - Representer

Dr Yuk Tak Fun - Representer's Representative

R267 – Silvia Carius

Ms Silvia Carius - Representer

R268 – Gunther Rittner

Mr Gunther Rittner - Representer

R377 – Leung Pui Hang Philip

Mr Leung Pui Hang Philip - Representer

R3257 – Eed Shen

Dr Eed Shen - Representer

55. The Chairperson extended a welcome and invited the representers and/or their representatives to elaborate on their representations:

[Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan left this session of the meeting temporarily at this point.]

R251 – Ebenezer School

56. Mr Chen Kai Ho made the following main points:

- (a) he had been a visually impaired student of Ebenezer School since 2016;
- (b) the students in the school relied heavily on the senses of touch and sound for learning. If the Centre of HKU was to be developed at the Item A Site, the construction noise would severely disrupt the students' learning as they were highly sensitive to noise. At a time when there were renovation works at the school, he found it difficult to hear his teachers clearly in class, and some classmates with mental impairment were frightened and distressed by the loud noises;
- (c) it was challenging for the visually impaired to adapt to changes in the built environment. Orientation for the visually impaired relied on a white cane (白杖) and counting steps to navigate forward. If the bus stop needed to be relocated due to the proposed development, the visually impaired would struggle to locate the new bus stop; and
- (d) he opposed the development of the Centre at the Item A Site in Pok Fu Lam as it would block sunlight reaching the school. The loss of sunlight would create a sense of oppression for the visually impaired, and some students might become irritable.

57. Dr Yuk Tak Fun, the Chief Executive Officer of Ebenezer, made the following main points:

- (a) she opposed the proposed development of the Centre at the Item A Site in Pok Fu Lam;
- (b) many students at Ebenezer School were born with low vision and gradually lost all eyesight as they grew up. The learning experience of students with low

vision was different from blind students. Those with low vision could use optical aids such as magnifying glasses to assist their learning; however, minor vibrations from the surrounding environment could impair the functionality of these aids, specifically when learning materials involved complex texts or mathematics; and

- (c) apart from students with visual impairment, about 40% of Ebenezer School's students had mental impairment (e.g. autism) or other special learning needs. The development of the Centre at the Item A Site would affect the learning and growth of these students and create unnecessary hurdles in their daily lives.

R252 – Ebenezer Child Care Centre and Early Intervention Programme for Visually Impaired Children

58. Mr Yim Chun Kit made the following main points:

- (a) he was a visually impaired graduate of Ebenezer School. He was currently a teacher at the school, and worked in the projects related to employment and music development for visually impaired youths and the early intervention programme (EIP) for visually impaired children aged 0 to 6;
- (b) the EIP aimed to provide training for children and their parents to help visually impaired children develop senses other than vision, such as touch and sound. Apart from regular trainings, the school also provided boarding services for children to receive kindergarten education;
- (c) children with visual impairments aged 2 to 6 mainly learnt through hearing and touch, while those in primary and secondary school levels learnt using braille or audio aids;
- (d) in the past, when there were slope works nearby, students who were highly sensitive to noise (about 40% to 50%) would cover their ears with hands during lessons. This made teaching very difficult and hindered students' learning.

Students also experienced negative emotions, and boarding students sometimes struggled to sleep due to construction noise;

- (e) sunlight was essential for the students as they could sense it through temperature. Should there be construction works nearby, the school would have to arrange less outdoor training and activities for the students. Sunlight was also crucial for students with multiple disabilities who required vitamin D to maintain bone health;
- (f) the Centre would bring thousands of people to the area and generate adverse traffic impact on PFLR. Most visually impaired students relied on Rehabus (復康巴士) to travel to school via PFLR, and the bus stop near the school was already beyond its capacity as it was frequented by the staff or visitors of QMH, especially during peak hours; and
- (g) he opposed the proposed development of the Centre at the Item A Site in Pok Fu Lam as it would impose unnecessary hardships on the vulnerable visually impaired community.

59. Ms Chan May Han, Helena made the following main points:

- (a) she was a nurse at Ebenezer Care and Attention Home; and
- (b) majority of the elderly residents in the care and attention home had cardiovascular diseases, and the construction works of the Centre would affect their health.

#### R253 – Ebenezer Care and Attention Home

60. Ms Mak Shiu Chun and Dr Yuk Tak Fun made the following main points:

- (a) Ms Mak was a visually impaired elderly woman and had lived in Ebenezer Care and Attention Home for 17 years. She enjoyed the tranquillity and the fresh air of the surrounding environment;

- (b) majority of the elders in the care and attention home had hypertension or medical conditions that could be adversely affected by the construction works nearby. The construction nuisance, such as noise, dust, and other pollution from the Centre, would disturb the tranquil lives of the elderly, posing risks to their mental and physical health;
- (c) the green space in the “GB” zone was important to the elderly and all nearby residents and thus should be preserved; and
- (d) they opposed the development of the Centre at the Item A Site in Pok Fu Lam.

#### R254 – Ebenezer Projects Works

61. Mr Yang En Hua made the following main points:

- (a) he was a visually impaired graduate of Ebenezer School and joined Ebenezer Project Works in 2021. He taught Erhu (二胡) and Chinese chess (Xiangqi) (象棋) classes and provided vocational training to students;
- (b) the construction noise of the Centre would affect the vocational and other training activities for the visually impaired. For instance, piano tuning and Chinese chess training were highly sensitive to noise as they required high concentration and accuracy;
- (c) a quiet learning environment was also important to the visually impaired. Those born with low vision could be taught to learn braille. For those with innate visual impairment or special education needs, they required audio aids such as screen reading software to facilitate reading. In a noisy environment, they would need to increase the volume of audio aids, which could damage their hearing ability in the long term, especially when the visually impaired relied on hearing all day long for learning and environmental perception; and
- (d) the proposed Centre, being located to the west of Ebenezer School, would

block the sunlight penetrating the school, and affect students' outdoor activities.

62. Mr Yim Chun Kit supplemented that Ebenezer Projects Works (心光「有作為」計劃) was established about 10 years ago to provide career guidance and training to graduates of Ebenezer and other youths with visual impairment to improve their employment prospects. The training, taught by external staff, comprised interview skills and tutorials for using braille displays and audio aids at work. Mr Yim also said that the increased traffic and the changes to the surrounding environment as a result of the Centre development would make it difficult for the visually impaired to travel to Ebenezer to receive vocational training, thus affecting their future employment and depriving them of opportunities to contribute to the society.

[Mr Timothy K.W. Ma joined this session of the meeting during R254's presentation.]

#### R255 – Ebenezer New Hope School

63. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Yeung Wing Shan Theresa made the following main points:

- (a) Ebenezer New Hope School was founded in Pok Fu Lam in 1978 for the visually impaired with intellectual disabilities. The mission of the school was to provide comprehensive educational and rehabilitation services to cultivate good character in students, enhance their cognitive and self-care abilities and realise their full potential. The school also provided boarding services. Currently, there were 80 students, including 50 boarders, and 140 staff;
- (b) while the representer had no objection to the development of the Centre in Hong Kong, the representer raised objection to Item A on the draft OZP for the Centre. The Item A Site should be reverted to its original land use zonings (i.e. "GB", "R(C)6" and area shown as 'Road');
- (c) the visually impaired students usually had enhanced senses of hearing, touch and smell when comparing with other people. They were highly sensitive to noise, natural ventilation and the surrounding environment in their daily lives;

- (d) the existing BH of the school (about 141.3 mPD) was lower than the proposed BH of the Centre (158mPD). The proposed buildings of the Centre were bulky and the site was located less than 15m from the school. The creation of an elongated wall right in front of the school would result in blockage of sunlight penetration and natural ventilation, affecting the students and boarders;
- (e) the school provided rehabilitation training for students, including vocational training, physical therapy, speech therapy, low vision training, orientation and mobility training and braille training. The training should be conducted in a comfortable and sensory-rich environment with sunlight penetration and good natural ventilation. Since the proposed site for the Centre was in close proximity to the school, the students would be exposed to significant nuisance during the construction of the Centre;
- (f) the proposed site for the Centre, which was located within the residential and school neighbourhood in Pok Fu Lam, currently served as a green space for the residents. The loss of the green space with dense vegetation as a result of the development of the Centre at the proposed site would adversely affect the landscape and visual quality of Pok Fu Lam and the wildlife;
- (g) according to the NM Action Agenda promulgated in 2023, NM could be divided into four major zones. The I&T zone was one of them, which would become a hub for I&T clusters with strong synergy with Shenzhen's I&T zone. The proposed I&T zone was also adjacent to three boundary crossings to boost commerce and industries. Other than the above, the 2024 PA envisioned a University Town to be developed in NM. NM was a more appropriate location for the Centre;
- (h) PlanD currently proposed to rezone the Item A Site from "OU(Global Innovation Centre)" to "U". According to the proposed amendments to the ES of the OZP, HKU would amend the development plan of the Centre, e.g. reducing the density of the proposed development and bulk of the building(s), increasing the setback area from neighbourhood buildings, designating more green spaces, etc. to address stakeholders' concerns as much as practicable.



The proposed “U” zone was not appropriate as there was insufficient development control for the site. Should the Centre be located at the Item A Site, clear BHs and setback requirements should be stipulated on the OZP. A gradation of BH profile/five stepped BH sub-areas (i.e. 123mPD, 183mPD, 188mPD, 168mPD and 158mPD) and a setback of not less than 32m in width from the school site boundary were suggested to be incorporated into the OZP. Alternatively, all proposed uses of the Centre could be put under Column 2 of the Notes for the site such that any development proposal at the site would be scrutinised by the Board under the s.16 planning application mechanism. Apart from the above, the Board could consider stipulating the requirement of layout plan submission (i.e. the requirement to submit a detailed development layout supported by technical assessments) in the Notes of the OZP for the site for better statutory planning control, and state in the ES of the OZP the gradation concept of BH profile and the requirement of providing a setback of not less than 32m in width with the school; and

- (i) to preserve the school’s supportive learning environment, the Board was urged to consider the representer’s proposal to prioritise the needs and well-being of students with visual and intellectual disabilities, i.e. reverting the Item A Site to its original land use zonings.

#### R256 – The Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired Limited

64. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation and a visualiser, Mr Ian Brownlee made the following main points:

- (a) there were no strong justifications to establish the Centre at the Item A Site in Pok Fu Lam. The Centre should be located elsewhere at a more suitable site;
- (b) according to HKU’s Indicative Scheme, two huge buildings would be built in front of Ebenezer School, which were not compatible with the locality and the school;
- (c) for the relocation of Ebenezer School to Tung Chung, it would likely take

another 8 to 10 years until the completion of a new purpose-designed school premises for Ebenezer;

- (d) HKU had no long-term vision for its future development. They were just trying to use the land available, including “GB” and amenity areas in the western part of Hong Kong Island for their developments and expansion. The proposed site for the Centre was the last piece of land available in Pok Fu Lam. HKU should consider the future expansion of the university elsewhere;
- (e) during the hearing of the representations in respect of the draft STT OZP No. S/STT/1, the draft Mai Po and Fairview Park OZP No. S/YL-MP/7 and the draft Ngau Tam Mei OZP No. S/YL-NTM/13 in June and July this year, Mr Ching Yuk Yu Eugene, a representer (R101 of STT OZP) and an architect, considered that Planning Areas 19B and 19C of STT OZP were inappropriate for rezoning to “OU” annotated “Innovation and Technology”, and Planning Area 30 at Tit Hang was considered more appropriate as an alternative site. It was, however, not accepted by the Government as there was no study to ascertain the feasibility of the area concerned for I&T development;
- (f) Planning Area 30 of STT OZP was a suitable alternative site worth consideration by HKU. It was located on a highland near the Lok Ma Chau Loop and the STT, and was in close proximity to the Shenzhen’s I&T zone, which was a prime location for HKU. A 5-hectare site could be identified in Planning Area 30 for the development of the Centre. While road connection and infrastructure would be required, Planning Area 30 in STT was solely government land, implying that no land resumption would be required, which was readily available for the construction of the Centre. The Centre at that location also complied with the Government’s policy objectives on I&T;
- (g) paragraph 5.2 of the ES of the draft OZP stated that “On the seaward side along the section of PFLR to the north of its junction with Chi Fu Road, it is intended to keep developments below the level of PFLR as far as possible in order to preserve public view and amenity and also the general character of the area.”

The above principle was applied to Ebenezer School site and limited developments to the height of the existing buildings at 151mPD. Accordingly, the same principle should be applied to the Item A Site;

- (h) the Item A Site should be reverted to its original zonings (i.e. “GB”, “R(C)6” and area shown as ‘Road’). In the non-ideal case that the Centre was not located elsewhere, BHR bands (130mPD for sub-area A fronting Ebenezer School and 137mPD for the remaining area of the site) should be stipulated on the OZP and/or in the Remarks of the Notes of the OZP for the “OU(Global Innovation Centre)” zone. A minimum 32m non-building area (NBA) between Ebenezer School and the Centre, which was the same as that designated at the “Government, Institution or Community (1)” (“G/IC(1)”) site adjoining the Ebenezer School site, should also be stipulated in the ES of the OZP for the “OU(Global Innovation Centre)” zone;
- (i) the currently proposed “U” zone was not the right zoning for the Item A Site. Any person, including HKU, could make a s.16 planning application for any use at the site; and
- (j) upon reviewing and amending the development plan, HKU should submit a s.12A planning application for OZP amendment to the Board and engage the public in the process.

[Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan rejoined this session of the meeting during R256’s presentation.]

R257 – Wong Tin Ling Tammy

65. With the aid of a visualiser, Ms Wong Tin Ling Tammy made the following main points:

- (a) she was the headmistress of Ebenezer New Hope School;
- (b) the school was founded in 1978 and it was the only school in Hong Kong for

students with visual impairment cum multiple disabilities. As such, the students came from different districts in the territory. There was a boarding section providing residential services for the students. About 90% of the boarders were 7-day boarders who were either orphans or whose families were unable to take care of them. About four-fifths of the students were complicated medical cases, so the boarding section of the school was akin to a hospital with seven nurses and a head nurse responsible for taking care of them round-the-clock; and

- (c) students with low vision (about 80% of the students) were highly sensitive to the surrounding environment and sunlight. They had enhanced abilities in other senses and were sensitive to feeling. As compared with other schools, the Centre at the Item A Site would have more significant impacts on Ebenezer New Hope School and the students in the short, medium and long terms.

66. With the aid of a visualiser, Dr Yuk Tak Fun supplemented the following main points:

- (a) Ebenezer New Hope School was located right next to Ebenezer School. Apart from these two schools, Ebenezer also provided other services including child care centre, Project Works, care and attention home and music academy. The Centre at the Item A Site would have significant impacts on Ebenezer's facilities and students;
- (b) she studied at HKU in 1972 and graduated in 1975, and continued her education afterwards. She was delighted with the significant I&T development of HKU which improved the well-being of people, better protected the environment rather than creating conflicts, and allowed people to understand that something impossible at the current moment might become possible in future; and
- (c) the Centre could be developed in other more suitable sites in Hong Kong as suggested by their consultants. Local residents would be able to continue to enjoy the green environment and fresh air if the Centre was located elsewhere.

[Mr Stanley T.S. Choi left this session of the meeting during R257's presentation.]

R267 – Silvia Carius

67. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Silvia Carius made the following main points:

- (a) she had been living in Hong Kong for 36 years and was a resident of Pok Fu Lam;
- (b) according to the 2023 PA, Hong Kong would strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 and reduce carbon emissions by 50% before 2035. Hong Kong's ecosystems and biodiversity should also be protected;
- (c) it was understood that the Centre aimed to uplift and connect the community in Pok Fu Lam. The site was large, of which about 90% was previously zoned "GB" on the OZP. Seven 6-storey and one 9-storey towers on top of a structural podium would be constructed, which were considered a high and huge development. There would be a substantial increase in traffic in the area upon completion of the Centre. The project would be implemented in three phases, with the first phase tentatively scheduled for completion by 2028;

*Tree Preservation, Landscape and Ecology*

- (d) there were about 2,250 trees (mostly shrubs and plants) on the Item A Site. Some 2,000 trees including 22 large mature trees would be felled. Only about 223 trees, i.e. 10% of the existing trees, would be retained, and 854 new/compensatory trees would be planted;
- (e) summer and autumn in Hong Kong were increasingly hotter. Trees were a vital source in combating climate change and for balancing the environment. Felling trees would cause more landslides, catastrophes and heat and wildlife loss;
- (f) nobody should harm birds. Any person who injured wild birds was liable to

a fine under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170). Hong Kong Island was home to about one-tenth of the global population of yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) (小葵花鳳頭鸚鵡). They were a critically endangered species in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, due to poaching and the pet trade. Hong Kong could help preserve those birds. The research conducted by Dr Luke Gibson's team at HKU in 2017 found a relationship between the number of large trees and trees with cavities suitable for nesting and the population size of cockatoos. Many such trees were found in the city parks, including the concerned "GB" area in Pok Fu Lam;

- (g) the concerned "GB" area had its recreational value, serving the residents of Pok Fu Lam for jogging, walking, walking dogs and strolling with family around the "GB" area and enjoying the relatively clean air, green surroundings and watercourses, all of which contributed to the well-being of the residents. During the construction of the Centre, children could not play outdoors because of the noisy and dusty environment;
- (h) it was likely that those in favour of the Centre project were mostly employees of HKU rather than the residents of Pok Fu Lam as there was no need for them to endure dust, vibration, noise nuisance and pollution during the construction period of the Centre;
- (i) according to a newspaper article, "pok-fu" (薄鳧) was the Cantonese name for a bird common in the area and the meaning of "lam" (林) was forest. If the Centre project proceeded at the Item A Site, only the name of this bird and animal paradise would remain. It would resemble the current construction site (for public housing development) along PFLR for a long time, i.e. a noisy, barren landscape, as the Centre project would comprise three phases with the second and third phases having no timetable yet. Upon completion of the Centre, it was expected that traffic would be highly congested with 1,000 professors and their families living in or commuting to Pok Fu Lam but no MTR station was planned for the foreseeable future. There would be no uplift and connectivity improvement for the community;

### *Research Projects*

- (j) HKU was planning to conduct a variety of research projects but it failed to state the type of research that would be conducted in the Centre. Whether it would involve contagious disease or potentially hazardous material research, where laboratories would be required to be sealed off from the community, remained questionable;

### *Site Selection*

- (k) as local residents became aware of the Centre project in the HKU's briefing sessions on 13 and 14.5.2024, no other sites had been considered by HKU;

### *Conclusion*

- (l) the Centre project would be good for the Hong Kong economy but was in a wrong location at the Item A Site because of (i) inappropriate location on the steep slope in the "GB" area which was close to residential area in Pok Fu Lam; (ii) high construction cost due to the sloping site; (iii) large-scale development and wildlife removal; (iv) significant nuisance to the residents and damage to the environment during the construction period; (v) huge increase in traffic flow; (vi) weakening slope stability; and (vii) potentially hazardous installations, such as nitrogen tanks, close to the residential area; and
- (m) the most feasible option was to develop the Centre in NM to facilitate future collaboration within the Greater Bay Area. The construction cost would also be lower and the Centre could be completed in a shorter period of time. The project would be more future-growth oriented and much more ecologically friendly.

### R268 – Gunther Rittner

- 68. Mr Gunther Rittner made the following main points:

- (a) he had been living in Hong Kong for more than 55 years and was a resident of Pok Fu Lam;
- (b) while the Centre project was highly commendable and supported by the Government, he objected to the Centre development in Pok Fu Lam;
- (c) HKU tried to keep the proposal under cover from the public as long as possible, knowing that there would be local protests against the proposal. The protests started in May this year after the proposal was made known to the local residents;
- (d) Pok Fu Lam was not suitable for the development of the Centre. The Item A Site was however selected without considering the adverse impacts of the development on the local residents. The construction cost was high due to the sloping terrain. The assessment report prepared by the consultants of HKU attempted to convince the Board that the site was suitable for the Centre only because it had to be close to HKU's existing facilities;
- (e) there were alternative sites for the Centre. NM and STT were suitable for the Centre for upstream global research activities. Except for HKU's convenience, there was no compelling reason for the Centre to be close to HKU in Pok Fu Lam;
- (f) the precious "GB" area along Victoria Road, which was currently protected under PFLM, would be destroyed as a result of the development of the Centre. The fauna, flora, woodland and animal wildlife there would be lost. The quality of life for residents would be diminished as the natural environment along Victoria Road, which was currently enjoyed by residents for walking, jogging and walking dogs, would be affected;
- (g) the extensive construction works for the Centre along Victoria Road would not only cause noise pollution for many years but also induce heavy traffic upon its completion. During the construction period, traffic, especially public



transport, would suffer from prolonged road closures and diversions. Ambulances' access to QMH would also be affected. The on-going building construction (for public housing development) at the southeastern end of Victoria Road and PFLR was a good example of what to expect if the Centre development was taken forward at the Item A Site;

- (h) the preliminary TIA for the Centre project was conducted during the summer vacation when schools were closed and people were travelling, leading to an under-estimation of the traffic impacts of the Centre. No major construction should take place in Pok Fu Lam until public transport in the area could be improved by the new MTR line; and
- (i) HKU currently proposed to revise the development plan to reduce the scale of the Centre in view of the public comments received and/or because there was already an oversupply of HKU's residential accommodations in Pok Fu Lam. The Centre development was a great project but not suitable for the Pok Fu Lam area.

[Mr Derrick S.M. Yip left this session of the meeting during R268's presentation.]

R377 – Leung Pui Hang Philip

69. Mr Leung Pui Hang Philip made the following main points:

- (a) he was a resident of Pok Fu Lam and had been living there for more than 30 years;
- (b) the Centre proposal was not acceptable from the local residents' perspective;

*Traffic Problems*

- (c) PFLM had been in place due to traffic concerns. There was a lack of traffic infrastructure in Pok Fu Lam;

- (d) there were only two major roads in Pok Fu Lam, namely PFLR and Victoria Road. Other than these, local residents could make their way to Causeway Bay via Aberdeen Tunnel/Wong Nai Chung Gap Road. However, if a traffic accident occurred on any of the above roads/tunnel or in the area concerned, the traffic would come to a halt in Pok Fu Lam. For instance, the western part of Hong Kong Island was subject to significant traffic congestion on 20.9.2023 due to the 5-car collision incident on Aberdeen Praya Road. The additional traffic arising from the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and HKU campus expansion projects would worsen the traffic conditions in Pok Fu Lam. In order to alleviate the traffic problems, the Government should carry out road improvement works to widen Victoria Road. No further development should be allowed in the Pok Fu Lam area unless the traffic issues could be resolved;

*Existing Staff Quarters in HKU*

- (e) according to HKU's Indicative Scheme, a domestic building for the scholars and staff would be built. Nevertheless, it was not justifiable in view of the under-utilisation of HKU's staff quarters and residential land. Referring to HKU's website, there were a large number of HKU's staff quarters in Pok Fu Lam, mainly in two clusters in Sandy Bay and PFLR, including, among others, Pine Court, Pine Grove, Tam Towers, Tam Gardens and Rodrigues Court in Sandy Bay, New Alberose, Old Alberose and Middleton Towers in PFLR, and Felix Villas at Mount Davis. People could pay a monthly rent of \$80,000 for an apartment of more than 2,000 square feet (ft<sup>2</sup>) in Tam Gardens, which was even bigger than the apartments in the traditional luxury private housing estates such as Baguio Villa (on average 900 ft<sup>2</sup> to 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) and some of the apartments in Residence Bel-Air. HKU did not maximise the utilisation of their land resources. It was doubtful if there was a need to provide additional land to HKU for the development of the Centre. Even though the land owned by HKU was in scattered locations as compared with The Chinese University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, it was not a convincing reason for the Government to continue granting more land to HKU and amend the land use zoning, given that there was a scarcity of "GB" sites in the territory;

*Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Dimensions*

- (f) HKU was considered to have failed in ESG ratings. On the environment dimension, HKU proposed the Centre at the “GB” site at the expense of a good living environment for the local residents. On the social dimension, HKU disregarded the needs of the local residents and relevant stakeholders. On the governance dimension, HKU did not manage their land resources properly, noting that there were vacant staff quarters available for rent by outsiders; and
- (g) the rezoning for the Centre project, if approved by the Board, would cause more adverse than positive impacts, including construction impacts (noise and air pollution) in the short term, worsening traffic conditions in Pok Fu Lam in the medium term, and giving a wrong signal to the society that HKU, being one of the higher education institutes, could disregard the community, those in need and the underprivileged in the long term.

R3257 – Eed Shen

70. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Dr Eed Shen made the following main points:

- (a) she was one of the members of the GIC PRG. She graduated from HKU and was a medical professional;
- (b) the size of the Centre should be reduced by 60% (or GFA by 135,320 m<sup>2</sup>) to only allow the research building to be developed at the site with a GFA of 87,400 m<sup>2</sup> for the reasons below;

*Staff Quarters and Accommodation in HKU*

- (c) in the briefing sessions held on 13 and 14.5.2024 and referring to the responses to major grounds/views A1 to A6 on “Strategic Planning and Site Selection” aspect in paragraph 6.2.6 (page 17) of the Paper, HKU emphasised that the

Centre should be located in an area to facilitate efficient access with reasonable travel distance;

- (d) there was an abundance of HKU's existing and upcoming staff quarters and accommodation sites with efficient access and reasonable travel distance in Pok Fu Lam. According to HKU's website, there were five clusters of staff quarters and accommodation, including Sandy Bay cluster (23-25 Sha Wan Drive and 350 Victoria Road), PFLR cluster (132-142 PFLR), Felix Villas (61 Mount Davis Road), St. John's College (82 PFLR) and Graduate House (3 University Drive). Taking the Sassoon Road Campus (Sassoon Campus) (where a footbridge to connect the existing academic building at 3 Sassoon Road with HKU's Faculty of Medicine expansion site intended to be built by HKU) as a reference point for estimating the maximum distance from the above clusters to the Centre, it was found that these staff quarters clusters were within efficient access and reasonable travelling time to the Sassoon Campus with the maximum walking time of 15-27 minutes, except Graduate House where there was free shuttle bus service for the residents. Based on the information from the Transport Department, if travelled by taxi from these clusters to the Sassoon Campus, the fare was about \$29 (except from Graduate House to the Sassoon Campus with the taxi fare of not more than \$45). There was also a well-established network of green minibus routes including No. 10, 22, 22S, 28 and 31 in the area concerned;
- (e) the five clusters had established furnished apartments for short-term stay. St. John's College and Graduate House were advertised by HKU to be specifically for "scholars, researchers and visitors engaged in academic and research activities." A new site (High West) would be completed by the end of 2024, providing more than 1,200 flats;
- (f) the responses to major grounds/views D1 on "Traffic and Transport" aspect in paragraph 6.2.9 (page 33) of the Paper stated that PFLM could be partially uplifted if development was deemed necessary to fulfil public needs. Given the abundance of staff quarters and accommodation of HKU, there was no need

to build a 9-storey domestic tower with a proposed GFA of 10,620m<sup>2</sup> as it was not “deemed necessary to fulfil public needs”;

*Safety Hazards from Dangerous Goods and Laboratories Involved in Disease Research*

- (g) referring to the responses related to “Development Control” aspect in paragraph 6.2.7 (page 25) and “Health and Safety Concerns” aspect in paragraph 6.2.13 (page 41) of the Paper, HKU emphasised that “... communal open space and vertical connection via lifts and escalators to improve pedestrian connectivity between PFLR and Victoria Road ... to benefit the local community” and “... majority of the proposed facility would be dry laboratories”. At the current stage, there were no details regarding the expected dangerous goods storage;
- (h) in the briefing sessions held on 13 and 14.5.2024, HKU emphasised that the Centre was pledged to be dedicated to “top-tier” disease research and that there was genuine importance in not relying on overseas disease and vaccination development after the world’s experience of the 2019 Pandemic. When investigating diseases, this required at minimum a Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratory. According to the Department of Health, there were four categories of laboratories and Categories 3 and 4 laboratories were involved in infectious diseases including coronavirus. While majority of the laboratories were dry laboratories as mentioned in the Paper, this did not mean that there were no wet laboratories and HKU had not directly addressed the presence of such laboratories. It could be confirmed that there would be wet laboratories at the Centre although no figures were available in the Paper regarding the percentage for and the amount of such laboratories in the Centre;
- (i) according to the guidelines set by the Centre of Health Protection (under the Department of Health) for Public Health Laboratory Service, BSL-3 laboratories needed to be inaccessible to the general public. When such laboratories were designed, their location as well as facility layout, including details regarding the storage location, class and quantity of dangerous goods,

should be carefully considered, but HKU did not provide any information concerning the dangerous goods; and

- (j) based on the risk that could be potentially involved and how close it was to the local population such as the students and the residents nearby, the Centre should be a private area with restricted footprint. Facilities beyond the research building should not be included. Building and advertising a pedestrian connection between PFLR and Victoria Road as something beneficial to the community was not appropriate and misleading. Allowing communal spaces, conference/exhibition areas was also not appropriate and not safe. As mentioned by other representers in the GIC PRG, there were conference rooms, exhibition and office sites in QMH and Cyberport which were at reasonable travel distance with efficient access. HKU's Indicative Scheme was too primitive, disregarded critical community safety aspects and did not adhere to the above-mentioned guidelines of the Department of Health.

[The meeting was adjourned for a 10-minute break.]

71. As the presentations of the representers and/or their representatives in this session had been completed, the meeting proceeded to the Q&A session. The Chairperson explained that Members would raise questions and the Chairperson would invite the representers, their representatives and/or the government representatives to answer. The Q&A session should not be taken as an occasion for the attendees to direct questions to the Board or for cross-examination between parties. The Chairperson then invited questions from Members.

#### *Relocation Plan of Ebenezer to Tung Chung*

72. A Member raised the following questions:

- (a) the details and progress of relocation plan of Ebenezer to Tung Chung, and whether its relocation would avoid the conflict with the Centre; and
- (b) whether all or part of the facilities/services currently provided by Ebenezer would be relocated to Tung Chung.

73. In response, Dr Yuk Tak Fun, R251, R253 and R257's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) the relocation plan was still under discussion and had not yet been confirmed. A number of issues including the premium issue was yet to be resolved. Even if the relocation plan could be materialised in 5 years, the existing facilities/services of Ebenezer would only be relocated after the completion of new facilities at the Tung Chung site; and
- (b) the Ebenezer New Hope School site in Pok Fu Lam was restricted under the lease to uses for young people who were visually impaired, and was zoned "G/IC" on the OZP. Whilst all existing services of Ebenezer would be relocated to Tung Chung for better resources utilisation and manpower deployment, Ebenezer New Hope School site would be retained for providing employment and rehabilitation services to the visually impaired. There was a severe lack of such services in Hong Kong. The chance of open employment of the visually impaired was rather slim. When she started working in Ebenezer in 2015, about 90% of the graduates were unemployed. While the remaining 10% could find their jobs, the jobs were unrelated to their subjects studied at the school. With enormous effort made by the staff, the employment rate of the graduates had slightly improved in recent years. There was an age restriction imposed by the Education Bureau for the students in the school. For those with multiple disabilities (including visual impairment, intellectual and mental disabilities) graduated from Ebenezer School or Ebenezer New Hope School, the waiting time for admission to a residential care home might take more than 10 years. The waiting time for day care service might also take 3 to 5 years. In view of such long waiting time, more training would be provided for those students who were due to graduate in the near future. Training services would also be provided for their family members and carers. It was noticed that suicide cases sometimes occurred in the society when the disabled could not adapt to the new living environment.

### *Design of the Centre*

74. HKU announced in the press release in October this year that they would strategically review and amend the development plan of the Centre. Noting that Ebenezer's facilities occupied only a relatively small area to the immediate north-east of the Item A Site, a Member asked if Ebenezer, apart from the option of identifying an alternative site for the Centre, could offer some suggestions to HKU, such as reducing the height of the proposed towers fronting Ebenezer School and Ebenezer New Hope School to a level below the existing Ebenezer buildings, for incorporating into the revised design so as to address their concerns and minimise the impacts of the Centre on the visually impaired. In response, Dr Yuk Tak Fun, R251, R253 and R257's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) her comments and views on the Centre proposal were made from a holistic rather than from the Ebenezer's own perspective. Local residents treasured the existing green area in Pok Fu Lam. The proposal to establish the Centre in Pok Fu Lam was not acceptable to her even though HKU would enhance the design of the Centre;
- (b) the construction cost on a sloping site was high. The potential geological impact arising from the project might be a concern and relevant experts could give advice in that regard; and
- (c) as mentioned by Mr Leung Pui Hang Philip (R377) in his oral submission, HKU had a number of under-utilised residential sites for the development of the Centre. There were also more suitable alternative sites in Hong Kong, as suggested by the two consultants of Ebenezer, for the Centre.

75. Mr Ian Brownlee, R256's representative, supplemented that his proposal to incorporate BH sub-areas on the Item A Site (i.e. 130 mPD for the area directly in front of Ebenezer School and 137mPD for the remaining area) was based on the need to protect the view from PFLR. A 32m wide NBA between Ebenezer School/Ebenezer New Hope School and the Centre, which was the same as that between the Ebenezer School site and the adjoining "G/IC(1)" site for the new facilities of Faculty of Medicine of HKU, was also suggested to



minimise the impacts of noise and vibrations. No construction should be allowed within the proposed NBA.

76. Ms Yeung Wing Shan Theresa, R255's representative, supplemented that the two consultants of Ebenezer were putting forward two different proposals because they were representing two different schools. That said, the two proposals were quite similar. There was the same proposal for 32m wide NBA from the two respective school. R255 also proposed five stepped height sub-areas from 123mD (fronting the Ebenezer New Hope School site) to 188mPD to be stipulated in the Notes of the OZP for development control purpose.

#### *Safety Concern*

77. Noting that one of the representers, Dr Eed Shen (R3257), raised concern on the safety hazards from the storage of dangerous goods and laboratories of the Centre in her oral submission, a Member asked whether there would be additional safety measures (e.g. evacuation plan) in place to minimise the associated risks. In response, Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung, R12's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) the Safety Office of HKU was responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy environment for the University Community. There were clear safety guidelines, including dangerous goods storage and handling of incidents. It also provided various training courses for the staff and students. As a result of good safety and risk management, no incidents had occurred in the past years; and
- (b) HKU would follow the relevant regulations and requirements stipulated by the Fire Services Department for the storage of dangerous goods. Reference would be made to the top-class international and national research facilities in respect of stringent safety management. The reputation of the researchers, laboratories, the Centre and the University would be severely affected, irrespective of how minor the incident was, thus HKU would continue to undertake good safety and risk management to minimise the associated risks.

*Engagement with Local Residents and Stakeholders in Pok Fu Lam*

78. A Member raised a question to HKU (R12) on how to step up the engagement with the local residents and stakeholders in Pok Fu Lam during the review process of the development plan for the Centre, given that there was a lack of communication, consultation, respect and trust as perceived by the representers opposing the Centre proposal. In response, Mr Tsui Cheuk Fung, R12's representative, said that given the previous experience, during the review process of the development plan of the Centre, consideration would be given to disseminate information related to the proposal via a single channel/platform. A proactive approach would also be adopted to engage local residents and stakeholders in the community with a view to addressing their needs and concerns.

79. As Members had no further question to raise, the Chairperson said that the Q&A session for the afternoon session of the hearing on the day was completed. She thanked the representers, their representatives and the government representatives for attending the meeting. The Board would deliberate on the representations in closed meeting after all the hearing sessions were completed and would inform the representers of the Board's decision in due course. The representers, their representatives and the government representatives left the meeting at this point.

[Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan left and Professor Roger C.K. Chan joined this session of the meeting during the Q&A session.]

80. This session of the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.