

**S.16 Application for Proposed Student Hostel
at Middleton Towers, 140 Pokfulam Road
(RBL No. 825 RP)**

The University of Hong Kong

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Executive Summary

This planning application seeks approval from the Town Planning Board (TPB) under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance for the proposed student hostel uses at Middleton Towers, 140 Pokfulam Road, RBL No. 825 RP (The Application Site). The Application Site has an area of approximately 10,915 m² (development area of about 8,939m²) and mainly falls within “Residential (Group C)” (“R(C)”) zone (99.3% of Application Site) with a minor portion of about 80 m² falls within “Green Belt” (“GB”) zone (0.7% of Application Site) on the approved Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H10/23. The proposed student hostel uses fall under Column 2 use of “R(C)” and “GB” zone, for which permission from the TPB is required. As the project only involves conversion of the existing Middleton Towers with no alteration to the building height, massing, or external façade, the maximum plot ratio of not more than 2.10 and a maximum site coverage of 17.5% shall be maintained.

The project involves internal reconfiguration works to transform the existing staff quarters to student hostels to provide approximately 900 beds. The ground floor will provide common areas and ancillary facilities to serve the future hostel residents. The proposed scheme optimizes the use of the existing building bulk and is considered compatible with the surrounding low- to medium-density residential environment. Technical assessments have been undertaken, and no insurmountable impact on traffic, water supply, drainage and sewerage are anticipated.

The proposed student hostel will help address the timely need for additional student accommodation and directly support the broader policy directive of strengthening Hong Kong’s position as an international education hub. The development will also generate strong synergy with the existing and planned academic and residential facilities of the HKU campus, enhancing the overall functionality and vibrancy of the university environment.

As confirmed by the Secretary for Education on 4 March 2026, the project meets the eligible criteria of the “Hostels in the City Scheme” launched by the Development Bureau and the Education Bureau. The Scheme aims to encourage the market to increase the supply of student accommodation, thereby strengthening Hong Kong’s position as an international hub for post-secondary education.

Givern the project’s alignment with the Government’s policy objective, its demonstrable community benefits, and its positive contribution to the long-term development of Hong Kong’s education ecosystem, Members of the TPB are respectfully invited to give favourable consideration to the application.

行政摘要

本規劃申請乃根據《城市規劃條例》第 16 條，向城市規劃委員會（「城規會」）申請批准於薄扶林道 140 號明德村（地段編號 RBL 825 RP）（「申請地點」）作學生宿舍用途。申請地盤面積約 10,915 平方米（淨發展面積約 8,939 平方米），並主要劃為《薄扶林分區計劃大綱核准圖編號 S/H10/23》上的「住宅（丙類）」地帶（申請地盤面積的 99.3%），另有小部分為於「綠化」地帶，面積約 80 平方米（申請地盤面積的 0.7%）。擬議的學生宿舍用途屬於「住宅（丙類）」及「綠化」地帶的第二欄用途，故須取得城規會的規劃許可。鑒於項目僅涉及改裝現有明德村，並不會改動其建築高度、體量或外牆立面，故現行之最高地積比率不超過 2.10 倍及最大上蓋面積為 17.5%將可維持不變。

擬議發展涉及於現有明德村內進行內部裝修工程，將現有職員宿舍改裝為學生宿舍以提供約 900 個宿位予學生及職員居住，並擬議於地下樓層設置服務未來學生宿舍的共用空間及使用者的配套設施。擬議方案善用現有建築物，並與周邊低至中密度住宅發展環境相容。相關技術評估已完成，預計擬議發展用途不會對附近交通、供水、渠務及排污造成不良的影響。

擬議學生宿舍用途將有助適時提供學生宿舍設施，以回應需求，並直接支持香港作為國際教育樞紐的整體政策方向。是項發展亦將與香港大學現有及規劃中的學術及住宿設施產生良好協同效應，提升整體校園環境之功能與活力。

如教育局局長於 2026 年 3 月 4 日確認，本項目符合由發展局及教育局推出的「城中學舍計劃」的申請資格。該計劃旨在鼓勵市場增加學生住宿供應，從而進一步鞏固香港作為國際高等教育樞紐的地位。

鑑於本項目與政府政策目標高度一致，並具備明顯的社會效益，以及對香港教育生態的長遠發展具正面貢獻，謹請城市規劃委員會各委員惠予積極及正面考慮本申請。

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1. Introduction

1.1. Objective of the Application

1.1.1. On behalf of The University of Hong Kong (HKU), AECOM Asia Company Limited submits this S.16 planning application in seeking permission from the Town Planning Board (TPB) for the proposed conversion of existing staff quarters to student hostel at the Middleton Tower, 140 Pokfulam Road (RBL No. 825 RP) (the Application Site/the Site) (Refer to **Figure 1.1**).

1.2. Project Background

1.2.1. With the continued increase in non-local student enrollment and the shortfall in hostel provision, the need to expand student accommodation has become increasingly pressing. The 2025 Policy Address continues to identify the enhancement of hostel supply as a key component in advancing Hong Kong's development as an International Education Hub. In support of this objective, the Government is actively encouraging the conversion or redevelopment of suitable buildings for student accommodation purposes. This includes the launching of the "Hostels in the City Scheme" ("the Scheme") in July 2025, which streamlines development control procedures to encourage market participation in increasing the supply of student accommodation.

1.2.2. Against this background, and in support of the Government's policy objective, the University of Hong Kong is exploring various means, including cost-effective and time efficient approaches, to expand its hostel provision. One such initiative is the collaboration with a private partner for the joint re-development of the Middleton Towers in Pokfulam to transform the existing staff quarters into modern student hostels. The project is restricted to a modification of the existing buildings internally, without alterations to the bulk of the existing the buildings, landscaping or external works. It aims to provide about 900 beds for students by internal re-partitioning to unleash the architectural and strategic locational potential. In parallel, HKU has submitted an application under the "Hostels in the City Scheme" to support and facilitate the implementation of the project, and the project is considered eligible under the Scheme by the Education Bureau (EDB) on 4 March 2026 (see **Appendix VII** for letter from EDB).

1.2.3. The Application Site has an area of about 10,915 m² and is located along Pokfulam Road in close proximity to HKU main campus. Currently, the Site is occupied by the Middleton Tower, a staff quarter constructed in 1965 comprising three 12-storey residential blocks providing 72 flats in total (Refer to Figure 1.2). The Site is mainly zoned "Residential (Group C)" ("R(C)") with a minor portion zoned "Green Belt" ("GB") on the approved Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H10/23 (the Pok Fu Lam OZP). According to the

Notes of the “R(C)” and “GB” zone, the proposed student hostel use fall under Column 2. As such, a section 16 planning application is required to seek approval from the Town Planning Board.

- 1.2.4. A preliminary enquiry was submitted to the Planning Department in January 2026 on the requirements for the s.16 application. Initial departmental comments were received in February 2026 on the proposed hostel use at the Middleton Towers. Subsequently, a draft section 16 submission package was prepared in which the departmental comments received on the preliminary enquiry were addressed, and the package was submitted to the Planning Department in March 2026 to seek initial departmental comments. Based on the comments received during the pre-submission stage, the Railway Development Office (RDO), Agriculture, Conservation and Fisheries Department (AFCD), Geotechnical Engineering Office and Urban Design and Landscape (UD/L) of Planning Department and other departments indicated no concerning views or adverse comments on the project. Requirements/comments raised relating to technical assessments on traffic, sewage and water supply by the relevant departments have been incorporated and addressed in this application. For detailed responses to departmental comments, please refer to **Appendix VI**.
- 1.2.5. This planning application seeks approval for internal modifications to the existing Middleton Towers to provide a student hostel. The proposal fully aligns with current policy directives and makes efficient use of the existing built structure, thereby expediting delivery of much-needed hostel spaces. By increasing off-campus accommodation capacity in a timely manner, the project will support HKU’s long-term development, strengthen its ability to attract and retain talent, and address the growing accommodation needs associated with future student intake.

2. Site Context

2.1. The Application Site

2.1.1. The Application Site, with an area approximately 10,915 m² (development area of about 8,939m²), is located at 140 Pokfulam Road in close proximity to the HKU main campus. The Site is known as the Middleton Tower, comprises three 12-storey residential blocks constructed in 1965, providing a total of 72 staff quarters units. The Application Site has two platforms at different levels (~159mPD and ~163mPD respectively) and are connected via a vehicular ramp (Refer to **Figure 2.1**).

2.2. Existing Context

2.2.1. Immediately northeast of the Application Site are vegetated slopes zoned “Green Belt” (“GB”) under the Pok Fu Lam OZP, which form a natural buffer leading toward the Pok Fu Lam Reservoir and the Pok Fu Lam Country Park, both zoned “Country Park.” Directly north of the Application Site lies a river/stream and the Alberose (a senior staff quarters managed by HKU). To the west, the Site abuts Pok Fu Lam Road 138, a private residential building, while to the south it adjoins the High West development, an upcoming student hostel scheduled for completion in the second half of 2026.

2.2.2. The nearby context is predominantly characterised by low to medium-density private residential developments, including Woodbury Court, University Hall, Baguio Villa, Jessville, etc. These developments typically range between 15 and 23 storeys in height, establishing a consistent residential scale in the locality. Further southeast of the Site are various “Government, Institution or Community” (“G/IC”) uses, including the Hong Kong PHAB Association Jockey Club PHAB Camp, Pok Fu Lam Public Riding School. Across Pok Fu Lam Road are several educational and institutional facilities, including the planned Global Innovation Centre (GIC) of the University of Hong Kong, Ebenezer New Hope School, the planned new academic building expansion of No.3 Sasson Road and the proposed Clinical Training Amenities Centre at No.6 Sasson Road by HKU.

2.2.3. In the broader context, the neighbourhood is closely integrated with HKU, accommodating a mix of residential and educational facilities. These include the Queen Mary Hospital School of Nursing, numerous HKU research buildings, and several existing residential halls administered by HKU. Collectively, this mix contributes to a diverse yet compatible community environment that reflects the long-established academic character of the area (Refer to **Figure 2.1**).

2.3. Site Accessibility

- 2.3.1. There is a direct vehicular access from Pok Fu Lam Road leading to the Application Site via a private road under the management of HKU. The area is well served by public transport, with a range of bus and minibus routes operating along Pok Fu Lam Road, providing convenient connections within the Southern District as well as to other parts of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the Airport.
- 2.3.2. The Application Site is currently served by HKU's internal shuttle bus services, with Route No. 3 providing direct connection to the HKU Main Campus and a designated shuttle bus stop located at Middleton Towers.
- 2.3.3. For pedestrian access, the Site is connected to Pok Fu Lam Road by an existing footpath, which provides a continuous connection between the public footpath network, the private access road, and the Application Site.

2.4. Statutory Context

- 2.4.1. The Application Site mainly falls within an area zoned "R(C)" on the Pok Fu Lam OZP (Refer to **Figure 1.1**). The planning intention of the "R(C)" zone is primarily for low to medium-rise and low to medium-density residential developments. A small area of approximately 80 m² with vegetated slope, accounting for approximately 0.7% of the Application Site, falls within the "GB" zone. The existing development does not encroach upon the "GB" zone. The proposed use involves only internal repartitioning works would likewise not result in any encroachment into this area. The proposed student hostel use falls under the broad term use of 'Residential Institution', which is a Column 2 use under the Schedule of Uses of the Notes of the Pok Fu Lam OZP. To support the conversion of the existing buildings for the proposed student hostel use, submission of a planning application under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO) to seek approval from the TPB shall be required.
- 2.4.2. As stipulated in the Notes of the OZP for "R(C)" zone, the maximum plot ratio and site coverage shall be limited based on the number of storeys used for domestic purposes. For the existing Middleton Towers of 12-storey, it is subject to a plot ratio (PR) of not more than 2.10 and a maximum site coverage (SC) of 17.5%. In determining the maximum PR and SC, *"any floor space that is constructed or intended for use solely as car park, loading/unloading bay, plant room and caretaker's office, or caretaker's quarters and recreational facilities for the use and benefit of all the owners or occupiers of the domestic building or domestic part of the building, provided such uses and facilities are ancillary and directly related to the development or redevelopment, may be disregarded."*

2.5. Land Status

2.5.1. The Application Site is governed by the lease conditions under RBL No. 825. According to the lease, the permitted use for the lot is restricted to housing the staff and employees and their dependent family members, non-paying guests and domestic servants employed by them or by the lease. A “Right of Way” is delineated on the lease plan to provide access to and egress from Pok Fu Lam Road. Lease modification will be separately arranged.

2.6. Previous or Similar Planning Application

2.6.1. There is no previous planning application in respect of the Application Site. A comparable case is the proposed residential institution (student hostel) development at High West, locating to the immediate southeast of the Application Site, which is zoned predominantly “R(C)” with a portion zoned “Green Belt” (“GB”) (Application No. A/H10/94). This application was approved by the TPB on 16 August 2019. Approval was granted on the basis that the proposed use was generally in line with the planning intention of the “R(C)” zone, compatible with the surrounding residential and institutional developments, and would not give rise to adverse traffic, landscape, or visual impacts. In light of the demonstrated shortfall in student accommodation for HKU, the TPB considered the proposal acceptable and decided to approve the application.

3. Development Proposal

3.1. Proposed Student Hostel

- 3.1.1. The Application Site has an area of 10,915 m² (development area of about 8,939m²) and is currently used for staff quarter purposes. The existing three towers will be transformed into modern hostels by internal re-partitioning to provide approximately 900 beds, intended for (i) student tenants who are full-time local or non-local (including exchange students) of the University of Hong Kong¹; (ii) Other tenants who are affiliated with the University of Hong Kong and in relation to the hostel operation, such as wardens / tutors and visiting fellows and scholars. To support the operation of the proposed student hostel, common areas and ancillary facilities will be provided solely for use by the future residents. Since the project is limited to internal modification of existing buildings, existing internal roads, footpaths, landscaping and building bulk shall be maintained.
- 3.1.2. Each of the three towers will have 12 domestic floors above ground level. The typical domestic floors will have student hostel units aligned along the common corridor. Each hostel unit will have window providing natural lighting and natural ventilation. Due to no change to the external perimeter, some units will be able to have shared use of the existing balconies. Most of the units will have shared bathroom between each pair of adjoining student units. Warden units and Tutor units may be provided on domestic floors, subject to future detail design stage.
- 3.1.3. The typical floor corridor has appropriate width as such to be able to provide student common areas/ sitting areas on each floor. The two existing passenger lifts have been proposed to be upgraded to two larger lift car sizes and grouped together at a central lift lobby. This will enhance the daily lift traffic and well-being of the students.
- 3.1.4. The proposed development parameters for the application site with the proposed student hostel are as follows:

¹ Operating publicly-funded or self-financing locally-accredited post-secondary programmes at the sub-degree (i.e. Associate Degree and Higher Diploma) or degree (including undergraduate, master, and doctorate) levels, and summer institutes. (Source: [Hostels in the City Scheme Application Guideline](#), September 2025)

Table 3-1 Proposed Parameter of the Application Site

| | Existing Staff Quarters | Proposed Student Hostel |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Application Site Area (m ²) | 10,915 | |
| Development Site Area (m ²) | 8,939 | |
| Plot Ratio | Not more than 2.1 | |
| Site Coverage (%) | Not more than 17.5 | |
| Gross Floor Area (GFA) (m ²) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total GFA: approx.18,199 m² Domestic GFA: approx. 17,070 m² (include ancillary uses) Non-domestic GFA: approx. 1,128 m² | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total GFA: approx. 18,199 m² Domestic GFA: approx. 18,199 m² (include ancillary uses) |
| Building Height (No. of Storey) | 12 domestic storeys above ground level for car parking spaces / ancillary uses. | 12 domestic storeys above ground level for common areas / ancillary uses for all three buildings <i>(unchanged from the existing use)</i> |
| No. of Carparks & Loading/ Unloading Bays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car parking space: 93 nos. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car parking space: 10 nos. Loading/Unloading Bays: 1 no. |

3.1.5. For Master Layout Plan please refer to **Appendix I**. For typical floor plans of the three towers, please refer to **Appendix II**.

3.2. Accessibility

3.2.1. The future Student Hostel will continue to be accessed via the existing access road connecting to Pok Fu Lam Road. Technical constraints, including the presence of slopes, existing retaining walls and the proximity of the High West Development, have been identified as significant barriers to widening the existing access road. To enhance future traffic safety, convex mirrors will be proposed at tight bends in accordance with the standards outlined in Vol. 3, Chapter 2.3.4 of the Transport Planning and Design Manual (TPDM) in later design stages.

3.2.2. A short section of this access road at the southern end will be shared with the High West Development and will be converted from a 2-way to a 1-way southbound to align with the planned road network of the High West Development, serving as the egress for both the Application Site and the High West Development. The ingress for these developments will be located approximately 50 m east of the egress and will be

internally connected to both the egress and the access road. Consequently, ingress traffic to the Application Site will be slightly rerouted via the new ingress, the internal road of the High West Development, and the access road to reach the site. Swept path analysis of 11m lorry and two-way private cars are done to ensure adequate maneuvering space, which is attached to **Appendix III (Appendix E)**.

3.3. Traffic Impact

- 3.3.1. A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) was undertaken to evaluate traffic impact due to the changes of use of Middleton Tower, including the operational and construction stage of key junctions assessments and public transport demand assessments. The TIA report is enclosed as **Appendix III**.
- 3.3.2. The assessments on key junctions include 8 junctions along Pok Fu Lam Road on 3 scenarios, namely year 2026 observed case, year 2031 reference and design case. Although currently the units at the existing staff quarter is not fully occupied, full intake for both the existing and proposed uses was adopted for reference and design case respectively to ensure a like-for-like comparison and fair assessment of traffic impact.
- 3.3.3. Trip generation surveys were conducted at Tam Towers & Gardens, an existing HKU staff quarters in the vicinity with 79% occupancy rate, and University Hall to understand the traffic conditions of the existing staff quarters and the proposed student hostel respectively.
- 3.3.4. As shuttle services will be provided for the increased resident population, it is assumed that the students from the proposed student hostel travelling by non-private modes (i.e transport modes other than private car and taxi) would primarily use HKU shuttle bus rather than public transport.
- 3.3.5. As detailed in the TIA, the junction assessments for all 8 junctions along Pok Fu Lam Road are within capacity, taken into account eight planned developments in the vicinity up to 2031. In view of this, the proposed change to student hostel is considered acceptable from traffic point of view.
- 3.3.5. During construction stage, it is expected to generate minimal construction traffic (15 pcu/hr 1-way) as the construction works will mainly involve internal re-partitioning and only a limited amount of construction materials and waste is anticipated. Moreover, internal re-partitioning works for Middleton Tower are anticipated to be completed in 2028, well in advance of the commencement of construction for the adjacent Global

Innovation Centre. Therefore, insignificant impact on the surrounding road network is anticipated.

3.4. Sewage and Drainage Impact

Sewage System

3.4.1. Upon review, the capacity of existing sewers are sufficient to cater for the sewage generated from the proposed student hostel. No upgrading works on the existing public sewers are required and therefore there would not have any adverse impact on the public sewerage system.

Drainage System

3.4.2. Surface runoff is mainly from rainfall and it will be directed to existing public storm drains. As the existing site is currently on hard-paved ground and only internal re-partitioning works on the existing Middleton Towers will be involved, it is anticipated that the proposed hostel development will not affect the drainage path or lead to any changes in the runoff behaviour.

3.4.3. Since there will be no change or abandonment of existing drains, no additional stormwater discharge will be resulted. As such, adverse impact on the existing drainage system is not anticipated and a detailed drainage impact assessment is therefore considered not necessary.

3.4.4. The detailed drainage and sewerage impact assessment can be found in **Appendix IV**.

3.5. Water Supply Impact

3.5.1. Based on the assessment (see **Appendix V** for the report on Water Supply Impact Assessment), the existing water main are adequate to serve the future hostel development. No upgrading works of the existing pumping stations, service reservoirs and water mains are required.

3.5.2. The responsibility for operation and maintenance of the proposed waterworks will be discussed and agreed with Water Supplies Department (WSD) and relevant departments during detailed design stage.

3.5.3. It is concluded that the proposed student hostel can be implemented without insurmountable water supply impact.

3.6. Visual and Landscape Impact

- 3.6.1. The project is restricted to internal modification of the existing buildings, without alterations to the bulk of the existing buildings, landscaping or external works. Given the internal nature of works, no visual or landscape impact is anticipated.

4. Planning Justifications

4.1. Align with the Policy Directive to Increase Student Hostel Supply

- 4.1.1. In the 2024 Policy Address, the Government reiterated that “education nurtures our future, technology denotes our strength, and talents lead our development,” highlighting Hong Kong’s strategic position as an international education hub. With five local universities ranked among the global top 100, Hong Kong possesses clear competitive advantages to attract and retain high-calibre students and academic talent. To sustain this momentum, it is essential not only to provide high-quality post-secondary education, but also to ensure that adequate supporting facilities, including sufficient and well-located student accommodation, are available to meet growing demand.
- 4.1.2. In support of this policy direction, the Development Bureau and the Education Bureau jointly launched the “Hostels in the City Scheme” (the Scheme) in July 2025 to streamline development control procedures, so as to encourage the market-led conversion of commercial buildings into student hostels, thereby increasing the supply of student accommodation. Also announced in the 2025 Policy Address, the Scheme has expanded to cover new hostel developments. Under the enhanced arrangement, planning approval is in general not required for the construction of new student hostels or for conversion on most commercial sites². The Government has recently earmarked three commercial sites in Kai Tak, Siu Lek Yuen and Tung Chung East for the development of new hostels and has invited the market to submit expression of interest. These policy initiatives underscore the Government’s commitment to increasing hostel capacity through diverse development models.
- 4.1.3. Further to HKU’s application, the Education Bureau (EDB) confirmed in its letter on 4 March 2026 (see **Appendix VII**) that the proposed student hostel at the Middleton Towers is eligible under the Scheme. The EDB’s confirmation indicates clear alignment of the proposed use with the prevailing policy directives and affirms that the project is supported within the Government’s education framework. This institutional endorsement also underscores the recognized public benefits of expanding student accommodation provision and strengthening accommodation support for tertiary education.

² The Town Planning Board has expanded the definition of ‘hotel’ use under the planning regime to include eligible student hostels under the Scheme. As a result, commercial sites zoned “Commercial” (“C”) with ‘hotel’ under Column 1 will be always permitted. For sites zoned “Other Specified Use (Business)” (“OU(B)”), planning permission is required.

4.1.4. HKU anticipates that non-local students will account for approximately 66% of all its undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate population, representing more than 22,300 non-local students in the 2024/25 academic year³. HKU recognizes that maintaining full accommodation coverage will be increasingly challenging if enrolment continues to grow at this scale. With the anticipated substantial rise in student enrolment in the coming years, coupled with a shortfall in on-campus and off-campus student housing, HKU is actively exploring opportunities to leverage existing infrastructure to enhance and expand its student accommodation provision. The proposed internal refabrication of Middleton Towers as student hostel therefore directly supports the broader policy directive to strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international education hub, by ensuring that adequate, high-quality hostel facilities are in place timely to meet future demand.

4.2. Utilise Existing Built Resources for Hostel Provision

4.2.1. To address HKU's projected increase in student enrolment and the associated shortfall in hostel places, the Application adopts an adaptive-reuse approach by converting the existing staff quarters into modern student accommodation. The conversion will be achieved through internal re-partitioning only, with no changes to the building bulk, façades, or internal landscaping.

4.2.2. This approach enables the effective utilisation of the existing buildings, transforming the three towers into student hostels providing approximately 900 bed spaces. By leveraging existing building stock and infrastructure, the proposal significantly shortens project delivery time while minimising construction costs and material waste. It therefore represents a resource-efficient and sustainable solution that aligns with HKU's long-term development goals.

4.3. Synergise with University Facilities in Proximity to Enhance Campus Growth

4.3.1. Located directly opposite the planned Global Innovation Centre (GIC) and well connected to HKU's main campus by public transport and shuttle services, the future hostels at the revitalized Middleton Towers will form an integral component of a well-integrated and cohesive university environment. Their proximity to major teaching and research facilities ensures convenient and integrated accommodation that supports HKU's academic expansion and talent-development goals.

4.3.2. The Application Site, together with the planned High West Student Hostel and the GIC, will reinforce the area's emerging identity as a university-oriented community. The

³ Annual Report – The University of Hong Kong <https://annualreport.hku.hk/2025/the-university-profile.html>

proposed student hostel complements the established residential setting and supports HKU's ongoing academic expansion, while enhancing HKU's capacity to attract and retain high-calibre students and fostering a more connected and vibrant campus environment.

- 4.3.3. To support the day-to-day needs of users at both Middleton Towers and High West student hostels, neighbourhood-serving facilities, such as a convenience store or small-size supermarket are proposed within the Site. These will provide convenient and proximate amenities for hostel users and help foster a well-supported and liveable student environment.

4.4. Conform with Planning Intention of "Residential (Group C)"

- 4.4.1. The "R(C)" zone is intended for low- to medium-rise, low- to medium-density residential developments. The proposed use as a student hostel is residential in nature and is broadly comparable to conventional residential developments in terms of occupancy and living patterns. The proposal involves internal re-partitioning of existing buildings only, with no alteration to the external built form of the three towers. As a result, the visual appearance, building bulk, height and overall development density of the Site will remain unchanged. In view of the compatible hostel use and the absence of any changes to the existing development bulk and built form, the proposed student hostel development is considered fully in line with the planning intention of the "R(C)" zone.

4.5. No Insurmountable Impact on Technical Aspects

- 4.5.1. As the proposal does not involve any alteration to the existing building bulk or overall development intensity, the relevant technical assessments have confirmed that the project is acceptable. From a traffic perspective, the proposed student hostel use is not anticipated to result in adverse traffic impact or reduce junction performance below capacity.
- 4.5.2. With respect to drainage and sewerage, the proposal does not necessitate any upgrading works to the existing public sewers, and no adverse impact on the public sewerage system is expected. Similarly, as there will be no modification, diversion, or abandonment of the existing drains, the proposed development will not result in any additional stormwater discharge. Therefore, adverse impact on the existing drainage system is not anticipated. In terms of water supply, the proposed student hostel can be accommodated without imposing any insurmountable impact on the existing water supply network.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The proposed conversion of Middleton Towers into a residential institution (student hostel) is considered appropriate and compatible with the surrounding context of Pok Fu Lam. By repurposing and optimising the existing buildings through internal re-partitioning works only, the proposal enables more efficient utilisation of the Site while supporting HKU's projected growth in student numbers. This approach aligns with Government policy directions to strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international education hub, where the timely provision of sufficient, high-quality student accommodation is essential to attracting and retaining a diverse and international student body.
- 5.2. Consistent with these policy objectives, HKU anticipates a more internationalised student profile and remains committed to exploring opportunities in expanding hostel capacity. This project contributes meaningfully to this broader objective, delivering additional student beds with minimal external impact and without altering the existing building bulk or character. The reliance on internal modifications only ensures that traffic, water supply, drainage and sewerage implications are limited.
- 5.3. This project will help strengthen the living-and-learning environment within the Pok Fu Lam area, creating synergies with nearby educational and "G/IC" facilities, including the planned GIC development across Pok Fu Lam Road. This will further reinforce a cohesive academic community in the district.
- 5.4. Moreover, the EDB's endorsement of this project under the "Hostel in the City Scheme" affirms that the proposed conversion of Middleton Towers aligns with the government policy objective of encouraging market-led conversions to increase the supply of student accommodation. The project also broadens the potential sources of student housing by introducing the option of refabricating existing university accommodation facilities, thereby enriching the range of approaches in support of the Scheme.
- 5.5. Overall, the proposed development conforms with the planning intention of the "R(C)" zone, is compatible with surrounding residential and institutional uses, and represents a sustainable and well-justified approach to meeting HKU's accommodation needs. Members of the Town Planning Board are therefore respectfully invited to consider the application favourably.