

TOWN PLANNING BOARD

TPB Paper No. 11010
For Consideration by the
Town Planning Board on 27.6.2025

Proposed Amendments to the
Definitions of Terms Used in Statutory Plans and Broad Use Terms

**Proposed Amendments to
the Definitions of Terms Used in Statutory Plans and Broad Use Terms**

1. Purpose

This paper is to seek Members' agreement to the proposed amendments to the Definitions of Terms used in Statutory Plans (DoTs) and Broad Use Terms (BUTs).

2. Background

In preparing and/or updating statutory plans, reference is to be made to the Master Schedule of Notes (MSN) which sets out schedules of uses permissible with or without planning permission by the Town Planning Board (the Board) and development restrictions for individual zones. To allow flexibility, BUTs are also adopted to group uses of similar nature and planning implications together and DoTs are to provide easy reference for interpreting the various planning terms used in the statutory plans. They are updated and revised from time to time to meet the changing planning circumstances as well as economic and social needs. This paper is to seek Members' agreement to some amendments mainly to the definitions of two land use terms to reflect the latest policy initiatives and market needs.

3. Proposed Amendments to DoTs

(a) *'Hotel'*

3.1 To actualise the strategy of developing Hong Kong into an international

post-secondary education hub as set out in the 2023 and 2024 Policy Addresses (PAs), the Education Bureau (EDB) has strived to step up the promotion of the “Study in Hong Kong” brand to attract more non-local students to further their education in Hong Kong. The demand for hostel accommodations from post-secondary students is expected to increase substantially in the coming years.

3.2 The Chief Executive announced in the 2024 PA that the Development Bureau and the EDB will jointly launch a pilot scheme to streamline the processing of applications in relation to planning, lands and building plans, so as to encourage the market to convert hotels and other commercial buildings into student hostels on a self-financing and privately-funded (SFPF) basis (eligible SFPF student hostels). The implementation details and facilitation measures under the proposed scheme were announced at the meeting of the Panel on Development of the Legislative Council on 24 June 2025¹.

3.3 Under the planning regime, at present, student hostels provided off-campus² are regarded as ‘Residential Institution’ (‘RI’)³ use, which is generally always permitted in residential zonings including “Residential (Group A)”, “Residential (Group B)” and “Commercial/Residential” (“C/R”) zones; requires planning permission from the Board in “Commercial” (“C”) and “Government, Institution or Community” (“G/IC”) zones; and not permitted in the “Other Specified Use” annotated ‘Business’ (“OU(B)”) zones. In recent years, there has been conversion of existing hotels⁴ to student hostels to meet the acute demand especially from non-local students. Converting commercial buildings on these sites, e.g. within “C” and “OU(B)” zones, into student hostels requires planning permission or even rezoning.

¹ The website link to the relevant paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1068/2025(03)):
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr2025/english/panels/dev/papers/dev20250624cb1-1068-3-e.pdf>

² Student hostels within the campus of a tertiary institution are regarded as ancillary to the permitted ‘Educational Institution’ use under the respective “Government, Institution or Community” zone,

³ According to the DoTs, ‘RI’ means any institution established within a building which is wholly owned and managed or operated by a body or organization and which provides residential accommodation for persons who meet the eligibility criteria as prescribed by the body or organization. It includes hostels but excludes hotel and guesthouse regulated under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

⁴ Student hostels operated in accordance with a hotel licence are considered as ‘Hotel’ use, which is generally always permitted in “C”, “C/R” and “OU(B)” zones.

3.4 To take forward the 2024 PA's initiative and considering that the operations of hotel and student hostel are very similar in nature and 'Hotel' is a Column 1 use for most "C" zones as well as a Column 2 use for most "OU(B)" zone (for open-air development or building other than industrial/industrial-office building), it is proposed to expand the scope of the BUT and DoT for 'Hotel' use to include student hostels ~~admitted into the proposed scheme~~ **supported by Government's policy**. Upon revision of the DoT⁵, flexibility is allowed for eligible SFPP student hostels⁶ to be operated in premises that are converted from hotel and/or commercial/office buildings, e.g. those within "C" zone without need for planning permission as well as a hotel licence. For residential zonings, student hostels operating as "RI" will continue to be always permitted and subject to the control on total/domestic plot ratio (PR), where appropriate. However, if the developer would like to operate an eligible SFPP student hostel to be regarded as non-domestic building enjoying higher permissible PR under the Buildings Ordinance as mentioned in paragraph 3.5 below, a planning permission for 'Hotel' use is required.

3.5 In terms of building control, eligible SFPP student hostels will be regarded as non-domestic building for the calculation of PR and site coverage limits under the Buildings Ordinance, rendering there not to be the need to make physical modifications to remove exempted space of the existing building. The Buildings Department will favourably consider upon application allowing such gross floor area (GFA) exempted space for previous hotel use (such as covered car parks and loading/unloading areas) to be converted to supporting facilities (such as laundry room, study/leisure room, communal kitchen/pantry) that are

⁵ The definition of 'Hotel' use in the DoTs is proposed to be revised taking into account the latest definition of 'hotel' adopted in the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance (Cap. 349), while the remarks will state that 'Hotel' also includes eligible student hostels ~~that got admitted into the facilitation scheme launched by the EDB and the Development Bureau~~ **supported by Government's policy** but excludes those student hostels provided in the form of 'RI' (**Annex A**).

⁶ For the avoidance of doubt, eligible SFPP student hostels admitted into the **proposed** scheme could either be wholesale-converted or partially-converted on conditions. They also include commercial buildings that have undergone wholesale conversion from industrial buildings in non-industrial zones, provided that relevant land administration procedures have been completed. Considering that student hostels are intended for medium-to long-term habitation, and to avoid land use incompatibility, wholesale conversion of industrial buildings falling within "Industrial" and "OU(B)" (for industrial or industrial-office building) zones are not eligible for facilitation under the proposed scheme.

conducive to a better living environment for student tenants.

3.6 On land administration, as the user clauses of most commercial land leases are broad enough to encompass student hostel use, only a small number of conversion cases will require lease modification or waiver application and full market premium or waiver fee will be charged for such cases.

(b) *'Shop and Services'*

3.7 Pet keeping has become increasingly common in Hong Kong, accompanied by a steady rise in the demand for pet hotels. These establishments provide temporary overnight accommodation for animals in fully air-conditioned premises to minimise noise nuisance. Their mode of operation and facilities are generally comparable to those of pet shops.

3.8 Under the current DoTs, 'Animal Boarding Establishment' (ABE) means any place or premises providing food and accommodation, training or recreation facilities for or undertaking breeding of animals other than livestock. Pet hotels, which provide food and accommodation for animals, can be regarded as 'ABE'. On the other hand, indoor pet hotels have demonstrated that their operational characteristics (i.e. smaller scale, urban centric locations and manageable customer flows) are akin to retail pet shops with minimal traffic, environmental and infrastructural impacts comparable to those of retail shops. To better reflect industry diversity and accommodate growing demand, it is proposed to expand the definition of 'Shop and Services' to include "indoor pet hotel".

3.9 As a related matter, under the current DoTs, 'Shop and Services' means any premises where goods are sold or where services are provided to visiting members of the public. While pet shop has been regarded as 'Shop and Services' use, opportunity is also taken to include "pet shop" in the definition of 'Shop and Services' for the sake of clarity. The BUT for 'Shop and Services' is also proposed to be updated accordingly.

3.10 The proposed amendments to DoTs as recommended in paragraphs 3.1

to 3.8 above are highlighted in ***bold and italics*** and deletion in ‘~~cross-out~~’ in **Annex A**, and the proposed amendments to BUTs as recommended in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.9 above is highlighted in ***bold and italics*** in **Annex B**.

4. Technical Amendments to DoTs

(a) *‘Research, Design and Development Centre’*

- 4.1 As a follow-up to the last round of review conducted in March 2024, it is proposed to revise the Chinese translation in the DoT of ‘Research, Design and Development Centre’ from 「研究所、設計及發展中心」 to 「研究、設計及發展中心」 to reflect more precisely and tally with the English version. In addition, under the current DoTs, there is a similar term of ‘Laboratory, Research and Development Centre’ which is subsumed under ‘Research, Design and Development Centre’. However, the term is not in use in any prevailing plan. To avoid redundancy and potential confusion, it is proposed to delete this term from DoTs as it is already subsumed under a broader term with a similar meaning. The revised Chinese version of the term will be adopted in the preparation of new/amended statutory plans when opportunities arise. The relevant BUT is also proposed to be updated accordingly.

(b) *‘Public Utility Installation’, ‘Public Utility Pipeline’ and ‘Utility Installation for Private Project’*

- 4.2 Opportunity is taken to standardise the Chinese translation of ‘gas’ in the DoTs of ‘Public Utility Installation’, ‘Public Utility Pipeline’ and ‘Utility Installation for Private Project’ from 「煤氣」／「燃氣」 to 「氣體」 for consistency.

(c) *‘Government Refuse Collection Point’*

- 4.3 On 22.3.2024, during consideration of the proposed amendments to the MSN and DoTs by the Board, a suggestion was made to consider renaming the term ‘Government Refuse Collection Point’ to ‘Public Refuse Collection Point’, with a view to better reflecting that the facility

was for the use of the general public. The current term ‘Government Refuse Collection Point’ means any place at which the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) or any authorized person provides services for the storage or removal of waste for disposal. This definition is adapted from the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). In other words, this term is intended to exclusively refer to a designated facility under the jurisdiction of DFEH for the provision of refuse collection services, rather than to services operated by private service providers, even if they are accessible to the general public. Given the clear legislative intent and the intention of accurately reflecting these government-provided facilities in statutory plans, it is considered appropriate to retain the term ‘Government Refuse Collection Point’ to avoid ambiguity.

- 4.4 The proposed amendments to DoTs and BUTs as recommended in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.2 above are highlighted in ***bold and italics*** and deletion in ‘~~cross-out~~’ in **Annex C**.

5. Consultation

Concerned government bureaux/departments have been consulted on the proposed amendments to DoTs and BUTs and their comments have been duly incorporated in the proposed amendments, where appropriate.

6. Promulgation

Upon Members’ agreement to the proposed amendments as mentioned in paragraphs 3 to 4 above, the revised DoTs and BUTs shall take effect upon promulgation and uploading to the Board’s website.

7. Decision Sought

Members are invited to consider and agree to:

- (a) the proposed amendments to DoTs and BUTs in **Annexes A, B and C**; and
- (b) the proposed arrangement for promulgation as set out in paragraph 6 above.

Annexes

Annex A Proposed Amendments to Definitions of Terms used in Statutory Plans

Annex B Proposed Amendments to Broad Use Terms

Annex C Proposed Technical Amendments to Definitions of Terms used in Statutory Plans and the Broad Use Terms

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

JUNE 2025