

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION
UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE

APPLICATION NO. A/H10/98

<u>Applicant</u>	: The University of Hong Kong (HKU) represented by AECOM Asia Company Limited
<u>Site</u>	: Middleton Towers, 140 Pok Fu Lam Road (PFLR) (Rural Building Lot (RBL) 825 RP) and Adjoining Government Land, Pok Fu Lam
<u>Site Area</u>	: About 10,915m ²
<u>Land Status</u>	: <u>RBL 825 RP (about 8,939m² or 81.9%)</u> - restricted to housing the staff and employees of the Lot owner and dependent members of the families of such staff and employees, non-paying guests and domestic servants employed by them or by the Lot owner - not exceeding 12 storeys in height (properly accessible car ports at ground floor level could be exempted) - not exceeding 17.5% of roofed-over area for 12 storey building - car park provision of not less than one car per flat - a non-building area at the red hatched black area (Plan A-2) : <u>Government Land (GL) (about 1,976m² or 18.1%)</u> - non-exclusive right-of-way (ROW) for access from PFLR to RBL 852 RP (Plan A-2)
<u>Plan</u>	: Approved Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H10/23
<u>Zonings</u>	: “Residential (Group C)” (“R(C)”) [about 99.3%] - restricted to a maximum plot ratio (PR) and site coverage (SC) of 1.95 and 15% respectively for a building with 13 storeys used for domestic purposes, or the PR and SC of the existing building, whichever is the greater : “Green Belt” (“GB”) [about 0.7%]⁽¹⁾
<u>Application</u>	: Proposed Residential Institution (Student Hostel)

⁽¹⁾ About 80m² along the north-eastern boundary of the Site encroaches upon “GB” zone on the Pok Fu Lam OZP. This can be regarded as a minor boundary adjustment in accordance with the covering Notes of the OZP and is therefore not included in the subsequent planning assessment.

1. The Proposal

- 1.1 The applicant seeks planning permission for the wholesale conversion of three existing HKU staff quarters, known as Middleton Towers, at 140 PFLR (the Site) into a proposed student hostel. The Site falls predominantly within an area zoned “R(C)” (about 99.3%), with a minor portion encroaching upon the “GB” zone (about 0.7%) ⁽¹⁾, on the approved Pok Fu Lam OZP No. S/H10/23 (**Plan A-1**). According to the Notes of the OZP, the proposed student hostel, which is regarded as a ‘residential institution’ use, requires planning permission from the Town Planning Board (the Board) within the “R(C)” zone.
- 1.2 The Site is currently occupied by three towers of HKU staff quarters constructed in 1965 on two platforms (at approximately 160mPD and 163mPD) and traversed by a vehicular ramp with a footpath alongside (i.e. the ROW) (**Plan A-2**). According to the approved building plans, the development comprising three 13-storey towers with 72 units and 93 car parking spaces has a total gross floor area (GFA) and a total SC of 183,749 ft² (i.e. 18,198m²) and 20.25% respectively. The total PR is 2.14 based on a site area of 91,500ft² (i.e. 8,500m²) ⁽²⁾. According to the notional scheme in the application, the proposed development involves no alteration to the existing building height, massing, and external façade.
- 1.3 The proposed student hostel is intended for (i) student tenants who are full-time local or non-local (including exchange students) of HKU; and (ii) other tenants who are affiliated with HKU such as visiting fellows and scholars, and involved in the hostel operation such as wardens and tutors. The Education Bureau (EDB) confirms that the proposed student hostel is, prima facie, eligible under the ‘Hostels in the City Scheme’ (the Scheme) launched by the Government on 21.7.2025 (**Appendix Ia**).

Proposed Conversion

- 1.4 The proposal involves internal reconfiguration works to transform the three existing 13-storey towers into student hostels providing about 900 bed spaces in single occupancy. Each of the towers provides 12 domestic floors above one ground floor level containing common areas ⁽³⁾ and ancillary facilities. The typical domestic floors will have hostel units along common corridors. Every unit will have windows for natural lighting and air ventilation. As the external perimeter remains unchanged, some units will be able to have shared use of the existing balconies. Most hostel units have shared bathrooms serving each pair of adjoining rooms, while specific units are equipped with private bathrooms. Accessible rooms with barrier-free access and accessible toilets will be provided at a ratio of one for every 100 rooms. Student common and sitting areas will be provided on each floor, and warden / tutor units may also be provided, subject to confirmation at the detailed design stage. As indicated on the submitted floor plans (**Drawings A-2 to A-10**), the existing internal light wells will be slabbed over for provision of enlarged passenger lifts, centralised lift lobbies, and common areas. The existing

⁽²⁾ The site area of 91,500ft² (i.e. 8,500m²) is based on the approved building plans. It is subject to confirmation of the Buildings Department in the building plans approval stage.

⁽³⁾ The applicant clarified that the common areas on the ground floor will provide facilities such as vending machines for the convenience of future residents (**Appendix Ic**).

open space and landscaped areas will be maintained, with possible upgrade to benefit future residents.

- 1.5 The master layout plan (MLP) and typical floor plans submitted by the applicant are at **Drawings A-1 to A-10**. Major development parameters of the proposed development are summarised as follows:

	Proposed Student Hostel
Site Area Application Site Development Site ^(a)	About 10,915m ² About 8,939m ²
Total GFA	About 18,198m ^{2(b)} (i.e. Total GFA of the existing buildings)
PR	Not more than 2.14 ^(b) (i.e. PR of the existing buildings)
SC	Not more than 20.25% ^(b) (i.e. SC of the existing buildings)
BH (No. of Storeys)	12 domestic storeys above one level of common areas / ancillary uses
Number of Rooms ^(c)	About 900 single rooms
Unit Size ^(c)	About 8m ² (excluding the shared bathroom and balcony)
Private Car Parking Spaces	10
Loading / Unloading (L/UL) Bay for Heavy Goods Vehicle	1

Note:

- (a) The Development Site is delineated in accordance with the lot boundary of RBL 825 RP, and excludes the GL which is mainly ROW (**Plan A-2**).
- (b) The applicant stated that the existing GFA, PR and SC are based on the approved building plans. The proposed wholesale conversion of the existing buildings would involve alteration and addition works, including the slab-over of the light wells in the towers. The applicant commits to offsetting some areas (e.g. covered carports) in order not to exceed the existing GFA, PR and SC, subject to confirmation by the Buildings Department at the building plans approval stage.
- (c) The number of rooms and room sizes of the proposed student hostel may be subject to change at the detailed design stage and will be closely monitored by EDB and the Development Bureau (DEVB) under the Scheme.

Proposed Access and Traffic Control Management

- 1.6 Vehicular and pedestrian access from PFLR to the Site is currently via an existing vehicular ramp with a footpath alongside, part of which is shared with the adjoining High West development, a staff quarters and student hostel development of HKU under construction (**Plans A-2 and A-4**). As explained in the Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) submitted by the applicant, a new 28-seater shuttle bus service bringing students up to the Middleton Tower platform (**Drawing A-12**) would be introduced to minimise the need for pedestrians to use the existing access road and

to provide a direct link to key campus locations. Five one-way trips (for a total of ten trips in both directions) during peak hours are proposed between the proposed student hostel and key campus locations.

- 1.7 To enhance traffic safety and ensure sufficient manoeuvring space within the existing vehicular ramp, the applicant proposes to implement a traffic control management scheme (**Drawing A-12**). Signalised control will be installed on the vehicular ramp within the Site to allow only one-way traffic and to enable heavy vehicles and the 28-seater shuttle bus to turn smoothly at narrow bends. Vehicles from PFLR would access the Site via the existing ingress to the High West development and University Hall, which will be restricted to one-way ingress only, while a section of the current access road from PFLR to the Site will be converted to one-way egress towards PFLR. These two routes will be integrated via a new internal link road within the High West development (**Drawings A-11 and A-12**)⁽⁴⁾. In addition, right turns by northbound traffic from PFLR into the Site will be prohibited, and vehicles will be required to turn around at the PFLR / Sassoon Road junction to approach the Site.
- 1.8 To support the application, the applicant has also conducted other technical assessments, including a Drainage and Sewerage Impact Assessment (DSIA) and a Water Supply Impact Assessment (WSIA). The assessments demonstrate that the proposed conversion will not result in any adverse drainage, sewerage and water supply impacts, subject to upgrading works to be implemented by the applicant at certain segments of the nearby sewer network. The proposed student hostel is anticipated to be completed in Q1 2028.
- 1.9 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted the following documents:
 - (a) Application Form received on 11.5.2026 (**Appendix I**)
 - (b) Supporting Planning Statement (SPS) received on 11.5.2026 (**Appendix Ia**)
 - (c) Supplementary Information (SI) received on 18.5.2026 (**Appendix Ib**)
 - (d) Further Information (FI) received on 2.7.2026 (*accepted and exempted from publication and recounting requirements*) (**Appendix Ic**)
 - (e) FI received on 3.7.2026 (*accepted and exempted from publication and recounting requirements*) (**Appendix Id**)
 - (f) FI received on 6.7.2026 (*accepted and exempted from publication and recounting requirements*) (**Appendix Ie**)
 - (g) FI received on 8.7.2026 (*accepted and exempted from publication and recounting requirements*) (**Appendix If**)
 - (h) FI received on 10.7.2026 (*accepted and exempted from publication and recounting requirements*) (**Appendix Ig**)

⁽⁴⁾ Long-term redevelopment will be further considered by the applicant, subject to operational needs. The necessity of providing a new connection road between the High West development and Middleton Tower will be further reviewed by HKU if redevelopment is to proceed. The applicant will undertake the necessary upgrading works. Moreover, redevelopment of the Site for student hostel will require a fresh s.16 application.

- 1.10 On 10.7.2026, the Metro Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Board agreed to defer making a decision on the application for two months in order to allow time for the applicant for preparation of FI to respond to departmental comments.

2. **Justifications from the Applicant**

The justifications put forth by the applicant in support of the application are detailed in the SPS, SI and FI at **Appendices Ia to Ig** which are summarised as follows:

In line with the Government Policies

- (a) the proposal echoes the Government's policy initiatives to develop Hong Kong as an international education hub, and to attract and retain high-calibre international and academic talent. Non-local students account for about 66% of all HKU's undergraduate and postgraduate population, representing over 22,300 non-local students in 2024/25 academic year. As maintaining full accommodation coverage becomes increasingly challenging, the internal modification of the existing towers to expand the provision of student accommodation can ensure that high-quality hostel facilities are in place in a timely manner to meet growing accommodation need associated with future student in-take;
- (b) the adaptive-reuse approach will only involve internal re-partitioning, with no changes to the building bulk or façades. By leveraging existing building stock and infrastructure, the proposal significantly shortens project delivery time whilst minimising construction costs and material waste, thus presenting a resource-efficient and sustainable solution which aligns with the government policy objective of encouraging market-led conversions to increase the supply of student accommodation under the Scheme;

Synergy with Existing and Planned Academic and Residential Facilities of HKU

- (c) located opposite the proposed Global Innovation Centre (the Centre) and well-connected to the Main Campus of HKU by public transport and shuttle service, the proposed development forms an integral component of the live-and-learn university environment. Together with the adjacent High West Student Hostel and the Centre, the proposed development reinforces the area's emerging identity as a university-oriented academic community and enhances the capacity to attract and retain high-calibre students, thus supports HKU's long-term development;

Operation and Management of the Hostel

- (d) the proposed student hostel is intended to be operated in line with other HKU's hostels, affiliated with HKU with wardens / tutors recruited and appointed by HKU. Designed and operated with student wellbeing, safety, and inclusivity as priority, the proposal incorporates modern design and a university-led governance model. Each bathroom is shared by only two rooms as fully enclosed, lockable units with gender-sensitive assignment, in line with lately completed HKU hostels. Safeguards include a university-operated model, on-site management by staff, and design for safety with good visibility and controlled access. HKU will monitor future operation and management, with the primary objective to support student

life, affordability, and campus integration, serving as critical educational infrastructure for HKU's long-term sustainability;

Conform with Planning Intention

- (e) the proposed student hostel use is residential in nature and comparable to nearby residential developments. As the proposal involves internal re-partitioning only, the external built form and height of the existing buildings will remain unchanged. In view of the compatible nature of the use and the absence of physical modifications to the massing of the existing buildings, the proposed development is considered in line with the planning intention of the "R(C)" zone; and

No Insurmountable Technical Impacts

- (f) the proposed development is intended to serve as an interim stage under the HKU's overall planning to achieve the earliest provision of student hostel supply. In this connection, relevant technical assessments submitted by the applicant, including TIA, DSIA and WSIA, confirm that the development is acceptable. These assessments demonstrate that with the implementation of the traffic control management measures, the proposal will not significantly degrade the efficiency of the local road network, and that no adverse impacts on the existing fresh water, flushing water supply, and drainage system are anticipated. While no upgrading works to the existing pumping stations, service reservoirs or water mains are required, the applicant undertakes to upgrade certain segments of the nearby sewer network as recommended in the DSIA to cope with the increased sewage generation.

3. Compliance with the "Owner's Consent / Notification" Requirements

The applicant is the sole "current land owner". Detailed information would be deposited at the meeting for Members' inspection. For the GL portion within the Site, TPB PG-No. 31B is not applicable.

4. Background on the "Hostels in the City" Scheme (the Scheme)⁽⁵⁾

- 4.1 To consolidate Hong Kong's position as an international hub for post-secondary education, the Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address (PA) 2024 that DEVB and EDB would launch a pilot scheme to streamline development control procedures, so as to encourage the market to convert commercial buildings into student hostels, increasing the supply of student accommodation. As such, the Scheme was launched on 21.7.2025. The Chief Executive announced in the PA 2025 that the Scheme will further expand to cover newly built student hostels.
- 4.2 The policy objective of the Scheme is to create a clear and easy-to-follow framework with low compliance cost, while putting in sufficient safeguards to ensure quality hostel accommodation and that the implementation of the Scheme

⁽⁵⁾ Dedicated website of the Hostels in the City Scheme
<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/postsecondary/policy-doc/studenthostel/index.html>

is in line with the policy intention. As part of the facilitation measures under the Scheme, the Board has expanded the definition of ‘hotel’ use under the planning regime ⁽⁶⁾ to include eligible student hostels under the Scheme. Various facilitation measures have also been formulated under the building regime.

- 4.3 Applications under the Scheme must fulfil the eligibility criteria laid down by EDB, *inter alia*: (a) eligible tenants under the Scheme should be full-time local or non-local students enrolled in locally accredited sub-degree or degree programmes operated by specified institutions, while at most 10% of hostel places may be occupied by persons affiliated with eligible institutions (e.g. wardens, visiting scholars, etc.); (b) new hostel construction and conversion works must be completed within 54 and 18 months respectively, from the date of approval by EDB; (c) hostel rooms must not be sold off individually; and (d) developers / operators must take all necessary and reasonable measures to ensure that the operation of the hostel complies with relevant statutory and administrative requirements, while also striving to maintain a safe and suitable living environment for the students. EDB reserves the right to revoke the confirmation of the eligibility of the application, having regard to any changes to the application under the Scheme. For effective monitoring, the applicant is required to submit an annual certified audit report to EDB to confirm ongoing compliance with the Scheme’s criteria. In case of non-compliance, the Government will take appropriate enforcement actions based on the statutory declaration, land lease and relevant ordinances.

5. **Previous Application**

The Site is not the subject of any previous application.

6. **Similar Application**

There is one similar application (No. A/H10/94) for ‘residential institution’ use within the same “R(C)” zone on the OZP (i.e. two blocks of UGC-funded student hostels at the High West development), which was approved with conditions by the Committee on 16.8.2019 mainly on the considerations that the proposed student hostel, being residential in nature, was generally in line with the planning intention of the “R(C)” zone and was not incompatible with surrounding environment; and relevant technical assessments demonstrated that the proposal would not result in adverse impacts on traffic, drainage, sewerage, landscape, environmental, and heritage aspects. A s.16A application No. A/H10/94-1 for amendments to the approved scheme (No. A/H10/94) was approved with conditions by the Director of Planning under the delegated authority of the TPB on 14.4.2021. The proposed amendments include minor changes in disposition of building blocks; change in layout of emergency vehicular access (EVA), change in location of ingress / egress points and changes in soft / hard landscape design. Details of the application are summarised at **Appendix II** and the location of the site is shown on **Plan A-1**.

⁽⁶⁾ TPB paper no. 11010 available at the Board’s website
https://www.tpb.gov.hk/uploads/page/meetings/20250627/Dot_paper.pdf

7. **The Site and Its Surrounding Areas** (Plans A-1 to A-3 and Photos on Plans A-4 to A-9)

7.1 The Site is:

- (a) currently occupied by three 13-storey towers of HKU staff quarters (Block 1 is vacant and Blocks 2 & 3 are partly occupied) built in 1965 on two platforms, a children's playground, a vehicular ramp, a small electricity substation, and some vegetated slopes; and
- (b) accessible to / from PLFR via a vehicular ramp with a pedestrian footpath alongside, part of which is shared with the High West development (RBL1192) (Plans A-1 to A-4).

7.2 The surrounding areas have the following characteristics:

- (a) the neighbourhood is characterised by low- to medium-rise and low- to medium-density residential developments and residential institutions within the "R(C)" zone, including the under-construction staff quarters and student hostel at the High West development and the student hostel at University Hall to the immediate southeast, the Alberose (HKU senior staff quarters) and Pok Fu Lam Road 138 (private residential houses) to the northwest, and Woodbury Court (private residential towers) to the south across PFLR;
- (b) to the northwest are several government, institution, and community (GIC) developments, including the Ebenezer New Hope School and the Ebenezer School. Further northwest are the existing Medical Campus of HKU (HKUMed) and a planned campus expansion site along Sassoon Road. A site zoned "Undetermined"⁷ is located across PFLR to the west; and
- (c) to the immediate northeast are vegetated slopes zoned "GB", and further north lie the Pok Fu Lam Reservoir and the Pok Fu Lam Country Park.

8. **Planning Intention**

The "R(C)" zone is intended primarily for low- to medium-rise and low- to medium-density residential developments where commercial uses serving the residential neighbourhood may be permitted on application to the Board.

9. **Comments from Relevant Government Bureaux / Departments**

9.1 The following government bureaux / departments have been consulted and their views on the application are summarised as follows:

⁷ The long-term use of the "Undetermined" ("U") zone would be determined subject to HKU's review of utilising an undeveloped site adjacent to the "U" zone, which was zoned "Residential (Group C) 6" ("R(C)6") on the Pok Fu Lam OZP for the development of the Centre as presented to the Board on 11.7.2025.

Policy Perspective

9.1.1 Coordinated comments of the Secretary for Education (SED) and Head of Development Projects Facilitation Office (DPFO) of DEVB:

- (a) they have no adverse comment on the application;
- (b) the three buildings under the planning application are the subject of the Scheme received by EDB. On 4.3.2026, EDB confirmed the eligibility of the application under the Scheme;
- (c) the proposed layout shown in the planning application is generally in line with that of the Scheme;
- (d) they reserve comments on the details of the proposed student hostel development at the building plan submission stage and EDB also reserves the right to revoke the confirmation of the eligibility of the Scheme having regard to any changes to the Scheme; and
- (e) advisory comments are at **Appendix IV**.

Land Administration

9.1.2 Comments of the District Lands Officer/Hong Kong West & South, Lands Department (DLO/HKW&S, LandsD):

- (a) he has no objection to the application from a land administrative perspective;
- (b) the subject existing development, namely Middleton Towers, falls within RBL 825 RP (the Lot). The Lot is held under the Government Lease dated 22.5.1970 for a term of 150 years from 17.3.1884 (i.e. expiry on 16.3.2034). The Lot is restricted to be used for housing the staff and employees of the Lot owner and dependent members of the families of such staff and employees, non-paying guests and domestic servants employed by them or by the Lot owner⁽⁸⁾;
- (c) the Lot is also subject to a temporary waiver dated 23.3.2005 for a term of two years commencing from 1.4.2005 to 31.3.2007 and thereafter quarterly to permit underletting of quarters erected on the Lot to any person or persons;
- (d) the proposed conversion of the existing development to a student

⁽⁸⁾ Other salient lease conditions of the Lot include but are not limited to (i) Height: not exceeding 12 storeys in height (properly accessible car ports at ground floor level could be exempted from this height restriction); (ii) Non-building area (red hatched black area); (iii) Non-exclusive right of way (brown area); (iv) Roof-over area: different % requirement depending on the number of storeys (in particular not exceeding 17.5% of the lot area (including the area of the red hatched black area) applicable to an 8-12 storey building); (v) Parking requirement: at the rate of not less than one car per flat; (vi) Requirement of design, disposition and height; (vii) Restriction on alienation; and (viii) Non-offensive trades clause.

hostel with ancillary facilities does not comply with some of the existing lease conditions. A lease modification is required for implementation of the subject proposal. However, there is no guarantee that the lease modification application will be approved. The lease modification application will be considered by LandsD acting in the capacity as the landlord at its sole discretion. In the event that the lease modification application is approved, it will be subject to such terms and conditions as the Government shall see fit, including among others, payment of premium and administrative fee as may be imposed by LandsD;

- (e) the boundary of the Site shown on the site plan and MLP (**Drawing A-1** and **Plan A-2**) does not merely include the Lot and the brown area (i.e. the existing non-exclusive ROW granted to the Lot owner under lease) but it also involves some additional GL. According to the Response-to-Comments (R-to-C) in the submission (**Appendix VI** of **Appendix Ia**), the applicant explains that (i) the GL currently functions as a service road and is related to the existing and proposed site access arrangements; and (ii) it is therefore included in the Site to allow a holistic assessment of traffic and access arrangements. Should the said additional GL (or any part thereof) be required for access purposes, the extent / alignment of the brown area of the Lot would need to be modified. Similarly, there is no guarantee that the modification of the brown area (if submitted) will be approved and it will be subject to such terms and conditions as the Government shall see fit; and
- (f) it is noted that the applicant has proposed in the application form (**Appendix Ia**) a tentative completion year of the development proposal in 2028. His office is not in a position to comment.

Traffic

9.1.3 Comments of the Commissioner for Transport (C for T):

- (a) referring to the TIA report and the R-to-C submitted by the applicant (**Appendix Ig**), he has no objection in principle to the subject application from traffic engineering viewpoint at this stage; and
- (b) approval conditions for the submission of an updated traffic impact assessment and implementation of traffic improvement and management measures as identified therein should be imposed.

9.1.4 Comments of the Chief Highway Engineer/Hong Kong, Highways Department (CHE/HK, HyD):

he has no comment from a highway maintenance perspective.

Building Matters

9.1.5 Comments of the Chief Building Surveyor/Hong Kong East and Heritage, BD (CBS/HKE&H, BD):

he has no objection in principle under the Buildings Ordinance to the application. The proposal involves slabbing-over of light wells. Detailed comments will be made at building plan submission stage.

Fire Safety

9.1.6 Comments of the Director of Fire Services (D of FS):

- (a) he has no specific comment on the application subject to water supplies for firefighting and fire service installations being provided to his satisfaction; and
- (b) advisory comments are at **Appendix IV**.

Heritage Conservation

9.1.7 Comments of the Chief Heritage Executive (Antiquities & Monuments), Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO):

- (a) she has no comment from a heritage conservation perspective;
- (b) the buildings are not declared monuments, graded historic buildings, new items for grading assessment by the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) nor government historic sites identified by AMO;
- (c) nevertheless, Pok Fu Lam Conduit (Conduit Bridges and Inverted Syphon Piers), a Grade 2 historic structure, is located in the close vicinity of the buildings (**Plan A-2**). The applicant / project proponent should ensure that the proposed works will not cause any physical damages to the graded item; and
- (d) advisory comments are at **Appendix IV**.

Infrastructural

9.1.8 Director of Environmental Protection (DEP):

- (a) ***he has no in-principle objection to the proposed conversion works from sewerage aspect; and***
- (b) in view of the anticipated increase in sewage flow, approval conditions for submission of a revised SIA and implementation of upgrading works before the population in-take from the proposed development should be imposed.

9.1.9 Comments of the Chief Engineer/Hong Kong & Islands, Drainage Services Department (CE/HK&I, DSD):

- (a) he has no adverse comment on the proposed development from drainage aspects. The proposed development is not expected to

impose adverse drainage impact to the surrounding areas; and

- (b) in view of the anticipated increase in sewage flow, sections of sewers at PFLR (FMH7022565 to FMH 7022539) are anticipated to have insufficient freeboard due to the proposed development. Therefore, upgrading works of the sewers and its associated manholes should be carried out by the project proponent before the population in-take from the proposed development. Approval conditions for submission of revised SIA and implementation of upgrading works before the population in-take of the proposed development should be imposed, which will allow for close monitoring of the associated sewerage impact.

9.1.10 Comments of the Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department (CE/C, WSD):

he has no objection to the proposed development from water supplies aspect.

Local Views

9.1.11 Comments of the District Officer (Southern), Home Affairs Department (DO(S), HAD):

she has no comment on the proposed development.

9.2 The following departments have no adverse comments on or no objection to the application:

- (a) Head of the Geotechnical Engineering Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department (H(GEO), CEDD);
- (b) Project Manager (South and Sustainable Lantau), CEDD (PM(SSL), CEDD);
- (c) Chief Engineer/Railway Development, Railway Development Office, HyD (CE/RD, RDO, HyD);
- (d) Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (DEMS); and
- (e) Commissioner for Police (C of P).

10. Public Comments Received During the Statutory Publication Period

10.1 During the statutory publication period, a total of 75 public comments were received, including 74 supporting comments (**Appendix IIIa**) and one expressing views (**Appendix IIIb**).

10.2 The supporting comments (**Appendix IIIa**) were received from individuals and members of the HKU community, seven of which are in standard format. The main supporting reasons are summarised below:

- (a) the proposed conversion aligns with government policy initiatives under the Scheme and contributes to the strategic goal of reinforcing Hong Kong's

position as an international post-secondary education hub;

- (b) the additional hostel beds provision would address a critical shortage of affordable accommodation currently faced by HKU students;
- (c) the Site's proximity to existing student accommodation clusters and academic facilities, including High West, the Main Campus and the Sassoon Road Campus, generates synergy with other student-oriented facilities of HKU and reduces student commuting time;
- (d) HKU has a proven track record of managing multiple hostels. The established guidelines for communal spaces and event organization will ensure that the hostel integrates smoothly into the quiet neighbourhood. The overall student experience and well-being are enriched through hall life, boosting HKU's long-term global competitiveness and talent attraction;
- (e) minimal traffic impact on the neighbourhood is anticipated due to a substantial reduction in private car parking spaces, and a primary reliance on walking, public transportation, and HKU shuttle buses;
- (f) construction and environmental disturbances are minimised by utilising internal reconfiguration and preserving the existing building footprint, surrounding slopes, and landscape. The 'wholesale conversion' approach is environmentally responsible and minimises the visual impact on the surrounding residential area; and
- (g) technical assessments demonstrate that the proposed conversion is technically feasible and would not cause any insurmountable impacts.

10.3 One individual raises concern on the actual necessity of the conversion, the privacy implications of the shared bathroom design layout, the operation of the proposed student hostel and the inclusion and utilisation of adjoining GL within the Site (**Appendix IIIb**).

11. Planning Considerations and Assessments

11.1 The applicant seeks planning permission for proposed wholesale conversion of three existing blocks of staff quarters (i.e. Middleton Towers) which falls within the "R(C)" zone into a student hostel (i.e. 'residential institution') intended for full-time local or non-local (including exchange) students of HKU and other tenants who are affiliated with HKU and involved in the hostel operation (**Drawing A-1**), which requires planning permission within the "R(C)" zone. The proposed modification works involve internal re-partitioning of existing buildings only and without alteration to the external built form. Therefore, the visual appearance, building bulk and height of the existing buildings will remain unchanged. According to the applicant, there would not be any increase in the GFA and SC resulting from the proposed conversion as compared to those of the existing development at the Site.

Policy Perspective

- 11.2 The proposed student hostel is made pursuant to a key initiative of the PA 2024 to develop Hong Kong into an international education hub by timely increasing the supply of high-quality student accommodation through internal reconfiguration of the existing three blocks of HKU staff quarters (72 units) into a student hostel with 900 beds. EDB has confirmed that the proposed student hostel project is eligible under the Scheme (**Appendix Ia**), and SED and SDEV advised that the proposed layout in the current planning application is generally in line with that under the Scheme. The proposed student hostel, if approved by the Committee, will be closely monitored by EDB and DEVB under the Scheme as mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 9.1.1 above.

Planning Intention and Land Use Compatibility

- 11.3 The Site is located within an existing low- to medium-rise and low- to medium-density residential and academic neighbourhood in Pok Fu Lam. The proposed student hostel is residential in nature and therefore is considered to be generally in line with the planning intention of the “R(C)” zone and compatible with the surrounding uses.

Technical Aspects

- 11.4 The proposed wholesale conversion involves internal reconfiguration works to transform the three existing 13-storey towers with 72 staff quarter units and 93 car parking spaces into student hostels providing about 900 bed spaces and 10 car parking spaces. The applicant has undertaken TIA, DSIA and WSIA to demonstrate that the proposed development will not result in any adverse impacts on traffic, drainage, sewerage and water supply aspects, subject to traffic control management measures and sewerage upgrading works to be implemented by the applicant. On traffic arrangement, the applicant will provide a new 28-seater shuttle bus service with stops at the Middleton Tower platform, operating five one-way trips (for a total of ten trips in both directions) during peak hours between the proposed student hostel and key campus locations. To enhance traffic safety and ensure sufficient manoeuvring space within the existing vehicular ramp, the applicant proposes a traffic control management scheme (**Drawing A-12**) for the ingress / egress arrangement for the Site and the adjoining HKU’s development, namely the High West development and University Hall. The existing ingress to the High West development and University Hall will be converted to one-way ingress only to serve the three developments, while the access road from PFLR to the Site will become one-way egress only. These two routes will be linked via a new internal link road within the High West development (**Drawings A-11 and A-12**). Northbound traffic from PFLR will be prohibited from turning right into the Site, and must instead turn around at PFLR / Sassoon Road junction. Moreover, signalised control will be installed on the existing vehicular ramp within the Site to allow only one-way traffic and to enable heavy vehicles and the 28-seater shuttle bus to navigate narrow bends. Based on the TIA report and R-to-C submitted by the applicant (**Appendix Ig**), C for T has no objection in principle to the proposed development from traffic engineering view point, and suggests to impose approval conditions for submission of an updated TIA and

implementation of traffic improvement and management measures identified therein.

- 11.5 All other relevant Government departments consulted, including D of FS, CHE/HK of HyD, CE/HK&I of DSD, DEP and CE/C of WSD, have no objection to or no adverse comment on the application. No mitigation measure is required for the proposed wholesale conversion in drainage and water supply aspects. In view of the anticipated increase in sewage flow, DEP and CE/MS, DSD recommend imposing approval conditions for submission of revised SIA and implementation of upgrading works identified therein before the population intake from the proposed development, which will allow for close monitoring of the associated sewerage impact. Should the application be approved by the Committee, relevant approval conditions and advisory clauses are recommended in paragraph 12.2 below as appropriate.

Similar Application

- 11.6 As mentioned in paragraph 6 above, there is one similar application (No. A/H10/94) for 'residential institution' use within the same "R(C)" zone on the OZP (i.e. the student hostel at the High West development near completion (**Plan A-2**)), which was approved with conditions by the Committee in 2019. The approval of the current application for student hostel is considered generally consistent with the Committee's previous decision.

Public Comments

- 11.7 Regarding the concerns raised by an individual on the internal layout and operation of the proposed student hostel, the necessity of the proposal, and the inclusion and utilization of the adjoining GL within the Site, the applicant's justifications in paragraph 2, concerned government bureaux / departments' comments in paragraph 9, and the planning assessments above are relevant.

12. Planning Department's Views

- 12.1 Based on the assessment made in paragraph 11 above and having taken into account the public comments mentioned in paragraph 10 above, PlanD has no objection to the application.
- 12.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, it is suggested that the permission shall be valid until 24.7.2030, and after the said date, the permission shall cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted is commenced or the permission is renewed. The following approval conditions and advisory clauses are suggested for Members' reference:

Approval conditions

- (a) the submission of an updated Traffic Impact Assessment to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Transport or of the Town Planning Board;

- (b) in relation to (a) above, the implementation of traffic improvement and management measures identified in the updated Traffic Impact assessment to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Transport or of the Town Planning Board;
- (c) the submission of a revised Sewerage Impact Assessment to the satisfaction of the Director of Environmental Protection or of the Town Planning Board; and
- (d) in relation to (c) above, the implementation of the local sewerage upgrading / sewerage connection works identified in the revised Sewerage Impact Assessment before population in-take to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the Town Planning Board.

Advisory clauses

the recommended advisory clauses are attached at **Appendix IV**.

12.3 There is no strong reason to recommend rejection of the application.

13. Decision Sought

- 13.1 The Committee is invited to consider the application and decide whether to grant or refuse to grant permission.
- 13.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, Members are invited to consider the approval condition(s) and advisory clause(s), if any, to be attached to the permission, and the date when the validity of the permission should expire.
- 13.3 Alternatively, should the Committee decide to reject the application, Members are invited to advise what reason(s) for rejection should be given to the applicant.

14. Attachments

Appendix I	Application Form received on 11.5.2026
Appendix Ia	SPS received on 11.5.2026
Appendix Ib	SI received on 18.5.2026
Appendix Ic	FI received on 2.7.2026
Appendix Id	FI received on 3.7.2026
Appendix Ie	FI received on 6.7.2026
Appendix If	FI received on 8.7.2026
Appendix Ig	FI received on 10.7.2026
Appendix II	Similar Application
Appendices IIIa and IIIb	Public Comments
Appendix IV	Recommended Advisory Clauses
Drawing A-1	Master Layout Plan
Drawing A-2 to A-10	Typical Floor Plans

Drawing A-11

Vehicular Access Arrangement of the Site and the adjoining RBL 1192

Drawing A-12

Traffic Control Management Plan

Plan A-1

Location Plan

Plan A-2

Site Plan

Plan A-3

Aerial Photo

Plans A-4 to A-9

Site Photos

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
JULY 2026**