

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION
UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDNANCE

APPLICATION NO. A/K1/268

- Applicant** : The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) represented by Townland Consultants Limited
- Site** : Blocks U and W of PolyU Main Campus, Hung Hom, Kowloon
- Site Area** : About 5,568m²
- Lease** : Kowloon Inland Lot (KIL) No. 9853 RP and Ext. (Part)
(a) held under Conditions of Grant No. 11361 together with Conditions of Extension Nos. 11441 and 11822 as varied or modified by four Modification Letters
(b) no restriction on gross floor area (GFA), site coverage (SC) or building height (BH)
- Plan** : Approved Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/K1/28
- Zoning** : “Government, Institution or Community” (“G/IC”)
[Restricted to a maximum BH of 45 metres above Principal Datum (mPD)]
- Application** : Proposed minor relaxation of BH restriction from 45mPD to 60mPD for permitted ‘Educational Institution’ use

1. The Proposal

- 1.1 The applicant seeks planning permission for minor relaxation of BH restriction from 45mPD to 60mPD (i.e. +15m or +33%) for construction of two additional storeys atop the existing 6-storey Block U with BH of 42.72mPD and four additional storeys atop the existing 8-storey Block W with BH of 59.62mPD for permitted ‘Educational Institution’ use at the PolyU Main Campus at Hung Hom (the Campus), Kowloon.
- 1.2 Blocks U and W, namely Realink Building and Ho Lu Kwong Building respectively (collectively known as Industrial Centre), are situated at the north-eastern portion of the Campus (the Site) which falls within an area zoned “G/IC” on the approved TST OZP No. S/K1/28 (**Plans A-1 and A-2**). According to the

Notes of the OZP for “G/IC” zone, ‘Educational Institution’ use is always permitted and developments therein are subject to a maximum BH restriction of 45mPD. Minor relaxation of the BH restriction may be considered by the Town Planning Board (the Board) under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance.

- 1.3 The proposed development will provide 7,600m² new academic floor space for information and technology (IT) and research and development (R&D) activities comprising laboratories and artificial intelligence robotics workshops (**Drawings A-1 to A-15**). In order to support the research laboratory facilities, heavy-duty E&M structures of 8.5m in height are proposed at the roof level of Block W (**Drawings A-12 to A-15**). As the proposed roof-top structures exceed 10% of the BH, it will be counted towards the BH resulting in a BH (at top roof) of 59.62mPD in accordance with Joint Practice Notes No.5 (JPN5).
- 1.4 The proposed scheme has adopted two-step BH profile (i.e. 59.62mPD (Block W) and 42.72mPD (Block U)) (**Drawings A-14 and A-23**). Landscape features including a new communal green roof on Block U with access to 9/F of Block W (**Drawing A-18**) and rooftop planters on Block W (**Drawing A-19**) will be provided. The existing design features including landscape features at 2/F podium and 5/F (**Drawings A-16 and A-17**), and central void at Block W (**Drawings A-4 to A-12 and Plan A-6**) will be retained. The applicant will consider incorporating solar panels at the roof level at Block W for generating renewable energy (**Drawing A-13**).
- 1.5 Blocks U and W are connected with the existing covered walkway system¹ of the Campus on the podium on 2/F level, which is further connected to MTR Hung Hom Station, bus stops at the Cross Harbour Tunnel (CHT) portal and the TST East area (**Plan A-2**). The existing vehicular access and the two loading/unloading (L/UL) bays on G/F will not be affected by the proposal (**Drawing A-1**). According to the submitted Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), it is envisaged that most of the students and staff would go to the Campus by public transport, and thus, additional traffic generation would be minimal. As such, no additional car parking spaces and L/UL bays would be required.
- 1.6 The floor plans, section plans, landscape plans and photomontages submitted by the applicant are shown in **Drawings A-1 to A-22**. A comparison of the major development parameters of the existing development and the proposed scheme are summarised as follows:

Development Parameters	Existing (a)	Proposed Scheme (b)	Difference (b) - (a)
Site Area (about)	5,568m ²	5,568m ²	No change
GFA (about)	25,699m ²	33,299m ²	+7,600m ²
Plot Ratio (PR)	4.62	5.98	+1.36

¹ The covered walkway system on the campus podium comprises covered walkways and covered spaces underneath the building blocks.

Development Parameters	Existing (a)	Proposed Scheme (b)	Difference (b) - (a)	
Max BH			Compared with Existing (b) – (a)	Compared with OZP BH Restriction (45mPD)
• Block U	• 30.12mPD	• 42.72mPD	• +12.6m (+41.8%)	• Complied with OZP
• Block W	• 38.52mPD	• 59.62mPD	• +21.1m (+54.8%)	• +14.62m (+32.5%)
Greening Area (% of Site Area)	232.19m ² (4.17%)	965.69m ² (17.34%)	+724.5m ² (+312%)	

1.7 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted the following documents:

- (a) Application Form received on 7.7.2023 (Appendix I)
- (b) Supplementary Planning Statement (SPS) (Appendix Ia)
(including traffic impact assessment (TIA) and preliminary environmental review (PER))
- (c) Further Information (FI) received on 25.10.2023[@] (Appendix Ib)
- (d) FI received on 28.11.2023* (Appendix Ic)
- (e) FI received on 14.12.2023* (Appendix Id)

Remarks: [@] accepted but not exempted from publication and recounting requirements

* accepted and exempted from publication and recounting requirements

1.8 On 25.8.2023, the Metro Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Board agreed to defer making a decision on the application for two months as requested by the applicant.

2. Justifications from the Applicant

The justifications put forth by the applicant in support of the application are detailed in **Appendices I to Ic**. They can be summarised as follows:

- (a) The proposed development is in line with Government's policy directives under 2022 Policy Address (PA) to nurture IT talents and enhance IT development in Hong Kong. A dedicated provision of \$16 billion has been set aside by the Government for the University Grants Committee (UGC) funded universities to enhance or refurbish campus facilities for IT and R&D activities. The proposal is approved and supported by UGC in 2021.
- (b) The provision of additional educational floor space and new modernised research facilities is essential to support the teaching, research, innovation, and entrepreneurial activities of the university. The proposal will expedite the provision of IT facilities without demolishing and disrupting the operation of existing well setup academic facilities within Blocks U and W;
- (c) The proposed scheme is featured with a stepped BH profile and is compatible with the varied BH profile of the Campus and surrounding areas (**Drawings A-14 and A-23**). Existing landscape features and central void will be preserved (**Drawings A-4 to A-12 and A-16**). New communal green roof, rooftop planters, balconies and communal areas will be provided for the enjoyment of staff, students and visitors

(**Drawings A-17 to A-19**). Solar panels will be considered to be incorporated at the roof level of Block W (**Drawing A-13**) and BEAM Plus Gold rating will be pursued at the design stage.

- (d) The proposed development is in line with the planning intention of “G/IC” zone and meets the criteria for consideration of BH relaxation set out in Explanatory Statement (ES) of the OZP (see paragraph 7.2 below). As demonstrated by various technical assessments, the proposal will not generate adverse impacts on traffic, environmental, visual, air ventilation, landscape, sewerage and drainage aspects. Similar applications for minor relaxation of BH restrictions within the same “G/IC” zone have been approved.

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.

4. Previous Application

There is no previous application covering the Site.

5. Similar Applications

There are two similar applications for minor relaxation of BH restriction within the same “G/IC” zone on the TST OZP (**Plan A-1**). The two applications Nos. A/K1/218 and A/K1/266 for minor relaxation of BH restriction from 45mPD to 63.3mPD (+40.6%) and 67.5mPD (+50%) respectively for permitted ‘Education Institution’ use were approved with conditions by the Committee on 19.9.2008 and 28.10.2022 mainly on the grounds that the proposals were in line with the planning intention of “G/IC” zone; they were not incompatible with existing buildings in the vicinity; there were no significant visual impacts on the surrounding areas; and the relevant Government departments had no adverse comment.

6. The Site and its Surrounding Areas (Plans A-1 to A-6)

The Site is currently occupied by Block U (6-storey) and Block W (8-storey), their podium on 2/F level forms part of the Ho Lu Kwong and Kwok Pui Chun Square. Its surrounding areas have the following characteristics:

- (a) the Site is mainly surrounded by existing buildings within the Campus with BHs generally ranging from about 18.8mPD to 87.1mPD to the north, south and west. Lee Shau Kee Building (70.1mPD), and Yip Kit Chuen Building /Ng Wing Hong Building (40.3mPD) are located to the immediate north and south of the Site respectively (**Plan A-2**). The existing covered walkway system on the podium is detailed in paragraph 1.5 above;

- (b) to its immediate east are Hong Chong Road and existing railway tracks; and
- (c) well-served by various modes of public transport, including buses, public light buses and taxis. The CHT bus interchange and MTR Hung Hom Station are located in about 300m to the south-east of the Site (**Plan A-1**).

7. Planning Intention

- 7.1 The subject “G/IC” zone is intended primarily for the provision of Government, institution and community (GIC) facilities serving the needs of the local residents and/or a wider district, region or the territory.
- 7.2 A minor relaxation clause in respect of the BH restrictions is incorporated into the Notes of the OZP to provide incentive for developments/redevelopments with design merits/planning gains. Each application for minor relaxation of BH restrictions will be considered on its own merits and the relevant criteria for consideration of such relaxation as stated in paragraph 7.5 of the ES of the OZP are as follows:
 - (a) amalgamating smaller sites for achieving better urban design and local area improvements;
 - (b) accommodating the bonus PR granted under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) in relation to surrender/dedication of land/area for use as public passage/street widening;
 - (c) providing better streetscape/good quality street level space;
 - (d) providing separation between buildings to enhance air ventilation and visual permeability;
 - (e) accommodating building design to address specific site constraints in achieving the permissible PR under the OZP; and
 - (f) other factors, such as the need for tree preservation, innovative building design and planning merits that would bring about improvements to townscape and amenity of the locality, provided that no adverse landscape and visual impacts would be resulted from the innovative building design.

8. Comments from Relevant Government Bureau/Departments

- 8.1 The following Government bureau/departments have been consulted and their views on the application are summarised as follows:

Policy Perspective

8.1.1 Comments of the Secretary for Education (SED):

supports the application from the educational policy perspective.

Land Administration

8.1.2 Comments of the District Lands Officer/Kowloon West, Lands Department (DLO/KW, LandsD):

- (a) no objection to the application;
- (b) the Site falls within KIL No. 9853 RP and the Extension thereto (“the Lot”), which is held under Conditions of Grant No. 11361 dated 27.11.1979 together with Conditions of Extension No. 11441 dated 12.9.1980 and Conditions of Extension No. 11822 dated 14.5.1985 as varied or modified by four Modification Letters dated 23.10.1989, 30.3.1999, 22.3.2004 and 6.8.2010 respectively. There are no restrictions on GFA, SC and BH in the lease conditions;
- (c) the proposed extension and revitalization of Realink Building (Block U), Ho Lu Kwong Building (Block W), and Ho Lu Kwong and Kwok Pui Chun Square (portion) does not appear to be in breach of the lease conditions and therefore lease modification is not required. As such, in the event that the application is approved by the Board, any planning conditions, if imposed by the Board, would not be incorporated into the lease through the mechanism of lease modification; and
- (d) detailed comments under lease on the proposal at the building plan processing stage are reserved.

Environment

8.1.3 Comments of the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP):

- (a) having reviewed the FI submitted, insurmountable environmental and sewerage impacts are not anticipated with the implementation of mitigation measures. Hence, he has no in-principle objection to the application;
- (b) as noted from the SIA (Section 7.2.1), the applicant would conduct further site survey and update the SIA. Hence, the following approval conditions on sewerage planning matters should be incorporated:
 - (i) the submission of a revised SIA to the satisfaction of DEP or of the Board; and

- (ii) the implementation of the local sewage upgrading/sewerage connection works identified in the revised SIA in approval condition above to the satisfaction of the Director of Drainage Services or of the Board.

Urban Design, Air Ventilation and Landscape

- 8.1.4 Comments of the Chief Town Planner/Urban Design and Landscape, Planning Department (CTP/UD&L, PlanD):

Urban Design and Visual

- (a) given the context and as illustrated in the photomontages of the visual impact assessment, the proposed development with a maximum BH of 59.62mPD would unlikely induce significant adverse effects on the visual character of the surrounding townscape;

Air Ventilation

- (b) as the Site does not fall within any major wind corridor and the proposal does not fall within the criteria for air ventilation assessment (AVA) under the Joint Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau and Environment, Transport and Works Bureau Technical Circular on AVA No. 1/06. Significant adverse impact on the surrounding pedestrian wind environment is not anticipated;

Landscape

- (c) the Site is situated in an area of institutional landscape character predominated by medium-rise institutional developments. It is currently occupied by two existing institutional buildings. The proposed development is considered not incompatible with the landscape setting in proximity; and
- (d) with reference to the SPS, existing planters at 2/F on both blocks are maintained. Landscape provisions such as a communal green roof at Block U with connection to 9/F of Block W, additional greenery and vertical greenery are proposed to enhance the landscape quality of the development. Hence, she has no objection to the application from landscape planning perspective; and
- (e) other detailed comments are set out at **Appendix II**.

Building Matters

- 8.1.5 Comments of the Chief Building Surveyor/Kowloon, Buildings Department (CBS/K, BD):

- (a) no in-principle objection to the application;
- (b) all building works are subject to compliance with the BO and its allied regulations; and
- (c) other detailed comments are set out at **Appendix II**.

8.2 The following departments have no comment on/objection to the application:

- (a) Commissioner for Transport (C for T);
- (b) Comments of the Chief Engineer/Mainland South, Drainage Services Department (CE/MS, DSD);
- (c) Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department;
- (d) Chief Architect/Central Management Division 2, Architectural Services Department (CA/CMD2, ArchSD);
- (e) Director of Fire Services (D of FS); and
- (f) District Officer (Yau Tsim Mong), Home Affairs Department.

9. Public Comments Received During Statutory Publication Period

During the statutory public inspection period, a total of 93 public comments were received from individuals, including 90 supportive comments (samples at **Appendix IIIa**), two comments objecting to the application (**Appendix IIIb**); and one comment providing suggestion/view on the proposal (**Appendix IIIc**). Their views are summarised as follows:

Supportive comments (90)

- (a) the proposal will optimise the site utilisation by providing additional upgraded teaching and research floor spaces to address the soaring demand, and to facilitate the academic and research development of PolyU;
- (b) it is in line with Government's policy on promoting IT development in Hong Kong as well as the country's "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan";
- (c) it has adopted a flexible, smart and sustainable building design with the provision of communal spaces which could foster collaboration and knowledge exchange;
- (d) the proposed relaxation in BH restriction is minor in nature with no adverse environmental impacts;

Objecting Views and Suggestions (3)

- (e) the proposal is not justifiable and may have adverse technical impacts, and approval of the application would set an undesirable precedent; and
- (f) more green space with new trees should be provided and opened for public use.

10. Planning Considerations and Assessments

- 10.1 The applicant seeks planning permission for proposed minor relaxation of BH restriction from 45mPD to 60mPD (i.e. +15m or +33%) for construction of two additional storeys atop the existing 6-storey Block U with BH of 42.72mPD and four additional storeys atop the existing 8-storey Block W with BH of 59.62mPD at the Site, resulting in an additional academic floor space of about 7,600m² for permitted 'Educational Institution' use.

Planning Intention

- 10.2 The proposed 'Educational Institution' use is in line with the planning intention of the "G/IC" zone, which is primarily for the provision of GIC facilities serving the needs of the local residents and/or a wider district, region or the territory. The proposed minor relaxation of BH restriction will enable the provision of additional floor space for proposed educational use which would serve the community at large.

Policy Aspect

- 10.3 The proposed extension to the subject buildings will support the expanding curriculum of IT education and research in emerging technologies, and help attracting and nurturing IT talents, which is in line with the Government's policy for promoting IT education and R&D promulgated in the 2022 PA. In this regard, SED supports the application from educational policy perspective. Funding has been granted to PolyU to enhance and refurbish their IT and R&D research facilities.

Urban Design and Landscape Aspects

- 10.4 The Site is located at the north-eastern portion of the Campus and surrounded by existing buildings including Lee Shau Kee Building (70.1mPD) and Yip Kit Chuen Building/Ng Wing Hong Building (40.3mPD) to the immediate north and south respectively, and Hong Chong Road and railway tracks to the east and northeast (**Plan A-2**). A two-step BH profile (i.e. 59.62mPD (Block W) and 42.72mPD (Block U)) has been adopted for the proposed development (**Drawings A-14** and **A-23**). The proposed BHs are considered compatible with the surrounding buildings within the Campus. Landscape treatments such as communal green roof on Block U and rooftop planters on Block W are proposed to enhance the landscape quality of the development (**Drawings A-18** and **19**). Some existing design features including the landscape features at 2/F podium and 5/F (**Drawings A-16** and **A-17**) and central void at Block W (**Drawings A-4** to **A-13** and **Plan A-6**) have been retained to maintain the landscape setting and permeability.
- 10.5 In this regard, CTP/UD&L, PlanD considers that the proposed development is unlikely to induce any significant adverse effects on the visual character of the surrounding townscape and is not incompatible with the landscape setting in proximity. CA/CMD2, ArchSD has no comment from architectural and visual

impact point of view. In view of the above, the proposed development is considered to be generally in line with the planning criteria provided in paragraph 7.2(f) above for which the greenery and local amenity would be enhanced.

Technical Aspects

- 10.6 The TIA submitted has demonstrated that the proposed development will not cause adverse traffic impact on the surrounding road network. C for T has no adverse comment on the application from the traffic engineering perspective.
- 10.7 The SIA and PER submitted have demonstrated that insurmountable sewerage and environmental impacts associated with the proposed development are not anticipated with the implementation of mitigation measures. In this regard, DEP has no objection to the application from the environmental aspect subject to the imposition of the approval conditions as set out in paragraphs 12.2(a) to (b) below. Other relevant government departments consulted including DSD, FSD and WSD have no adverse comments on or no objection to the application.

Similar Applications

- 10.8 Approval of the current application is consistent with the previous decisions of the Committee on similar applications, all of which are located within the Campus, as stated in paragraph 5 above.

Public Comments

- 10.9 Regarding the concerns raised in the public comments, the planning assessment above and the departmental comments in paragraph 8 are relevant.

11. Planning Department's Views

- 11.1 Based on the assessments made in paragraph 10 above, and having taken into account the public comments mentioned in paragraph 9, the Planning Department has no objection to the application.
- 11.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, it is suggested that the permission shall be valid until 22.12.2027, 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 conditions of approval and advisory clauses are suggested for Members' reference:

Approval Conditions

- (a) the submission of a revised Sewerage Impact Assessment to the satisfaction of the Director of Environmental Protection or of the Town Planning Board; and

- (b) the implementation of the local sewage upgrading/sewerage connection works identified in the revised Sewerage Impact Assessment in approval condition (b) above 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**.

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

12. Decision Sought

- 12.1 The Committee is invited to consider the application and decide whether to grant or refuse to grant permission.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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.

13. Attachments

Appendix I	Application Form received on 7.7.2023
Appendix Ia	Supplementary Planning Statement
Appendix Ib	FI received on 25.10.2023
Appendix Ic	FI received on 28.11.2023
Appendix Id	FI received on 14.12.2023
Appendix II	Detailed Departmental Comments
Appendices IIIa to IIIc	Public Comments
Appendix IV	Recommended Advisory Clauses
Drawings A-1 to A-13	Floor Plans
Drawings A-14 to A-15	Section Plans
Drawings A-16 to A-19	Landscape Plans
Drawings A-20 to A-22	Photomontages
Drawing A-23	Design Merits
Plan A-1	Location Plan
Plan A-2	Site Plan
Plan A-3	Aerial Photo
Plans A-4 to A-6	Site Photos

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DECEMBER 2023**