

HEC Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review

Minutes of Eighteenth Meeting

Date : 27 June 2007
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Conference Room
15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point

Present

Mr Vincent Ng (Chairman) Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Dr Andrew Thomson Representing Business Environment Council
Mr Leung Kong-yui Representing Chartered Institute of Logistics and
Transport in Hong Kong
Mr Kim Chan Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Mr Louis Loong Representing Real Estate Developers Association of
Hong Kong
Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke
Mr Raymond WM Wong Assistant Director/Territorial, Planning Department
(PlanD)
Mr Peter Mok Senior Engineer/Kowloon 2, Civil Engineering and
Development Department (CEDD)
Ms Sally Fong (Secretary) Senior Town Planner/Sub-Regional 3, PlanD

In Attendance

Mr Raymond Lee Chief Town Planner/Sub-regional, PlanD

For Item 3

Mrs Maggie Brooke) Harbour Business Forum (HBF)
Ms Ciara Shannon)
Mr Sylvester Wong)

For Item 4

Ms Christine Tse	District Planning Officer/Hong Kong, PlanD
Ms Phoebe Chan	Senior Town Planner/Hong Kong (5), PlanD

Absent with Apologies

Dr Alvin Kwok	Representing Conservancy Association
Mrs Mei Ng	Representing Friends of the Earth
Mr Leslie Chen	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
Mr Bernard Chan	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Mr Jimmy Kwok	
Miss Annie Tam	Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands) 1, Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
Mr Andy Yau	Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department (TD)
Miss Linda Law	Senior Administrative Officer (2), Home Affairs Department

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The Chairman extended a welcome to all Members. As some Members had not yet arrived and the quorum had yet to be formed, the meeting decided to discuss Agenda Items 2 and 3 first.

Item 2 Matters Arising

Harbour Planning Guidelines for Victoria Harbour and Its Harbour-front Areas [*para. 2.1 of the draft minutes of the 17th meeting*]

- 2.1 **The Secretary** reported that the revised Harbour Planning Guidelines (HPGs) were endorsed by HEC on 14 June 2007 subject to minor revision of the wordings to address Mrs Mei Ng's comment relating to the public engagement aspect. The proposed revision of the wordings was tabled at the meeting for Members' consideration. The Secretary said that Mrs Mei Ng, though being unable to attend the meeting, had agreed to the proposed revision prior to the meeting. Subject to the

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Sub-committee's agreement, the updated HPGs would be uploaded onto HEC's website and a printed version of the HPGs in bilingual format would be prepared for promulgation to major stakeholders.

- 2.2 The meeting agreed to the proposed revision as tabled at the meeting and noted the promulgation arrangement as suggested.

Hung Hom District Study [*para. 6.1 of the draft minutes of the 17th meeting*]

- 2.3 **The Secretary** reported that the study consultants briefed Members on the initial proposals of the Hung Hom District Study at an ad hoc meeting held on 23 May 2007. Major issues raised by Members included the need to derive appropriate development intensity for the undeveloped sites to blend in with the waterfront setting; quality design to avoid wall effect; and the need to carry out a massing study taking account of the provision of car parks, green features and other GFA exempted or non-accountable facilities which would affect the building bulk of development. Physical models should also be prepared to allow members of the public to visualise the development proposals.

- 2.4 **The Secretary** said that the study consultants were now revising the draft District Plan in the light of comments from Members and other concerned Government bureaux/ departments. The Stage 2 public engagement was expected to commence in late August/early September 2007.

Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront [*para. 6.1 of the draft minutes of the 17th meeting*]

- 2.5 **The Secretary** said that an ad hoc meeting was held on 10 May 2007 for PlanD to further discuss with Members on the Public Engagement Strategy and Programme. The Stage 1 Public Engagement commenced in early May 2007 and would last until end June 2007. The public engagement consultant would consolidate the public comments for reporting in due course. The public comments received would be considered by the study consultant for preparing the urban design proposals for Stage 2 Public Engagement.

Harbour e-Info

- 2.6 **The Secretary** reported that development of the electronic

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database on information of the Harbour and harbour-front uses was in progress and would be uploaded onto HEC's website in due course.

Inventory of Known Projects around the Harbour

- 2.7 Members noted the updated inventory list of known projects as tabled at the meeting.
- 2.8 **The Secretary** briefed Members on the 6 new items (No. C6, C7, NP7, YT2, WK2 and TW1) added to the inventory list.

Inventory Item No. C6

- 2.9 Noting that the planning application was for various uses at the upper decks and rooftops of Central Piers No. 4 to 6 which were a visually sensitive and prominent harbour-front location, **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** asked whether the Sub-committee had been briefed by the project proponent (TD) on the proposal.
- 2.10 **The Secretary** said that the planning application was received on 24 April 2007 for consideration by the Town Planning Board (TPB) on 22 June 2007. There was no scheduled meeting of the Sub-committee in the intervening period. **Mr Raymond Lee** added that all planning applications received by TPB had to be considered within a 2-month statutory time limit. According to the established practice, the HEC Secretariat would inform Members of those planning applications falling within harbour-front areas by email. Members could forward their comments, if any, to the TPB Secretariat directly. Special meetings could be arranged if Members considered there was a need for the project proponents to brief the Sub-committee on their proposals.
- 2.11 **Mr Raymond Wong** said that even though the application was already partially approved by TPB, there was scope for refining the proposed design. TD could be invited to brief the Sub-committee when the detailed design and layout of the proposed development were available.
- 2.12 As the current term of HEC would soon expire, **Mr Leung Kong-yui** suggested that the briefing on the proposed development by TD be recorded as an outstanding task to be followed up with by the next term of the HEC or its appropriate Sub-committee. Members agreed to the suggestion.

Secretariat

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Inventory Item No. TW1

- 2.13 **Dr Andrew Thomson** said that the proposed cycle track between Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun was the first purpose-designed cycle track along the waterfront. He pointed out that existing cycle tracks were not well planned. Some sections of the cycle track at Tolo Harbour were too narrow with no segregation from the pedestrian traffic. Accidents had occurred during previous cycle races. The proposed cycle track should be designed with adequate width and, if possible, be able to use for cycle racing. The relevant cycling associations should be key stakeholders to be consulted on the detailed design.
- 2.14 Noting that the proposed cycle track was quite long, **Mr Leung Kong-yui** suggested that some resting places could be provided along the cycle track for the public to take rest and enjoy the harbour view.
- 2.15 **Mr Peter Mok** said that CEDD was now conducting the feasibility study for the proposed cycle track. To his understanding, the proposed cycle track would have a width of 5-6m and the cycling associations would be consulted on the design requirements. Members' comments would be reflected to the study team for consideration.

CEDD

Item 3 Guidelines for a Sustainable Hong Kong Harbour

- 3.1 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** declared an interest in this item as his wife, Mrs Maggie Brooke, would represent HBF in presenting the subject guidelines to the Sub-committee. **Dr Andrew Thomson**, being a member of the Executive Committee of HBF, also declared an interest in this item.
- 3.2 **The Chairman** then invited HBF's representatives to present the guidelines.
- 3.3 **Mrs Maggie Brooke** said that the guidelines were prepared by HBF with inputs from the HOK Planning Group. Different from the HPGs which were all embracing, HBF's guidelines were prepared from a business perspective and were more straightforward with tangible recommendations. **Mr Sylvester Wong** then introduced the guidelines with the aid of powerpoint slides.
- 3.4 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** said that many ideas in HBF's

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guidelines, though formulated by the business sector, were to meet community aspirations rather than achieving business visions. The guidelines also suggested practical ways to achieve community aspirations. However, the public might be confused by having both the HPGs and HBF's guidelines in place. Consideration might be given to combining the 2 sets of guidelines as a joint initiative of HEC and HBF.

- 3.5 **Dr Andrew Thomson** said that both HPGs and HBF's guidelines were dynamic and living documents. Whether the 2 sets of guidelines could be integrated into one would depend on how the HPGs would be taken forward by the Government, such as to incorporate it into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines.
- 3.6 **Mr Raymond Wong** asked HBF's representatives to further explain points B2.8, E3.2 and E3.6 in the guidelines. He observed that some points under the category of "Business and Economic Opportunities" such as protecting ridgelines appeared to relate more to the category of "Enhance Hong Kong's Key Environmental Asset". Besides, the guidelines could be regrouped from planning and urban design perspectives to facilitate application.
- 3.7 **Mr Sylvester Wong, Ms Ciara Shannon and Mrs Maggie Brooke** responded as follows:
- (a) point B2.8 encouraged developers to be accountable for our environment by pursuing responsible developments that could protect our resources including the Harbour. In doing so, HKBEAM and similar standards with environmental objectives might be adopted to achieve sustainable design;
 - (b) both points E3.2 and E3.6 related to visual quality. As too many view corridors might create an impression of lack of connection, point E3.2 suggested the formation of large view windows by clustering buildings of similar heights together and separating the building clusters wider apart, thus making it easier for people to identify the activity nodes and the breathing spaces. Point E3.6 was to further enhance the quality of waterfront open space;
 - (c) the groupings of the guidelines, viz. "Diverse and Accessible Waterfront", "Business and Economic

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Opportunities” and “Enhance Hong Kong’s Key Environmental Asset” corresponded to respectively the social, economic and environmental considerations in achieving sustainable development;

- (d) the ridgelines of Victoria Peak were the iconic feature building up the brand identity of our Harbour. If views to the ridgelines could not be preserved, so would be our brand and the associated business opportunities. Guidelines like “Protect Views to Ridgelines” were therefore put under the category of “Business and Economic Opportunities”; and
- (e) in preparing this set of guidelines, HBF had consulted over 120 members organisations and many other interested parties. Though some ideas were formulated from a business perspective for maintaining the brand identity and competitiveness of Hong Kong, it was a document prepared for the community at large.

3.8 **The Chairman** appreciated the effort of HBF in drawing up the guidelines. He said that in formulating the HPGs, the Task Group on Harbour Planning Principles (HPPs) had also taken into consideration comments from HBF. As the HPGs were a living document subject to further refining for continuous improvement, other relevant information including HBF’s guidelines would be taken into account upon refinement of the HPGs in future.

3.9 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** suggested and the meeting agreed that the Task Group on HPPs in the next term of HEC be requested to continue taking up the role of refining the HPGs.

Secretariat

3.10 **The Chairman** thanked HBF’s representatives for attending the meeting.

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

1.1 As sufficient Members had arrived to form the quorum, the meeting confirmed the draft minutes of the 17th meeting, which were circulated to Members on 25 June 2007, without amendments.

Item 4 Building Height Restrictions in North Point (Paper No. 3/2007)

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4.1 **The Chairman** invited PlanD's representatives to brief Members on the Paper. **Ms Christine Tse and Ms Phoebe Chan** then introduced the building height restrictions as incorporated into the draft North Point Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H8/20 gazetted on 8 June 2007 and the underlying rationales with the aid of powerpoint slides.

4.2 **Mr Kim Chan** had the following questions/comments:

- (a) whether physical models had been prepared to assess the impacts of the building height proposals;
- (b) building design and ultimate built form were affected by many factors. Wall effect could not be totally avoided by restricting the building heights alone. Rather than imposing stringent restrictions on building height, minor relaxation of the building height restrictions to exceed the ridgelines could be considered for large sites (with an area of over 2 ha) if more open space could be provided at ground level for public enjoyment; and
- (c) whether wind corridors would be affected and set back requirements would be stipulated for redevelopment sites to enhance air ventilation of the area.

4.3 **Dr Andrew Thomson** had the following views:

- (a) building height and site coverage were of inverse relationship. Wall effect and air ventilation would be affected by the separation distance between buildings. The implications on creating a more compact built form should be carefully considered when building height restrictions were imposed to preserve the views to ridgelines;
- (b) for waterfront sites where smaller buildings should be encouraged, permitting building heights up to 100mPD might not be ideal; and
- (c) while air ventilation assessment (AVA) could provide general indications on wind performance, the availability of air quality data like the amount of pollutant emission at roadside was equally important in determining the appropriate development intensity, especially for areas with a compact built form.

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4.4 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** had the following comments:

- (a) high development intensity was the underlying cause for many problematic developments. Imposing “blanket” height restrictions might not be able to tackle site-specific problems;
- (b) unlike the Central waterfront where preserving the views to ridgelines was of greater concern, some tall buildings might be acceptable in North Point where a considerable portion of the ridgelines was already protruded by existing developments. Higher buildings might be preferred to larger site coverage for certain sites;
- (c) a building height of 100m could accommodate about 33-35 storeys. A high-rise character would be created for the area; and
- (d) Government buildings, “Government, Institution or Community” (“G/IC”) sites and “Comprehensive Development Area” (“CDA”) zones should not be excluded from building height control.

4.5 **The Chairman** said that controlling development density was as equally important as controlling building height. Lower development density should be allowed for harbour-front sites, but information on the future development density of the Ex-Government Supplies Depot at Oil Street and the Ex-North Point Estate had not been included in the Paper.

4.6 **Mr Leung Kong-yui** also considered it important to control the development intensity of other harbour-front sites with redevelopment potential, such as the Water Supplies Department HK Regional Building and the adjacent sewage treatment plant.

4.7 In response, **Ms Christine Tse and Ms Pheobe Chan** explained the followings:

- (a) physical model had not been prepared for the building height review. However, the assessment of the visual impact of the building height restrictions was illustrated with the aid of photomontages as shown in the powerpoint presentation;

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- (b) the North Point area was largely developed. Majority of the harbour-front sites were occupied by private developments, except the Ex-North Point Estate site. The other potential redevelopment sites were rather small in size and under private ownership in the inland area;
- (c) in order to allow for design flexibility, minor relaxation of the building height restrictions might be considered by TPB on application and each application would be considered on its individual merits;
- (d) according to the Technical Circular on AVA, AVA would need to be carried out for Government projects on sites of over 2 ha in size. For private developments, project proponents were also encouraged to carry out AVA;
- (e) based on the findings of the AVA conducted for the North Point area, Victoria Park would serve as a major wind entrance to the area. Sea breeze could also penetrate into the inland area through the open space between Tin Chiu Street and Man Hong Street which acted as a wind corridor to the hinterland. To maintain the wind effect along the major wind corridors, the building height in these areas should be kept as low as practicable. In view of the fact that the Ex-North Point Estate was located at the waterfront with a wide sea frontage, AVA would be carried out for the future development in the site and appropriate design requirements would be considered to enhance wind penetration;
- (f) in determining the building height restrictions for the area, factors such as local characteristics, existing building height profile, urban design considerations, air ventilation, land ownership, development/redevelopment potential etc. had been considered;
- (g) in addition to the proposed height bands for the “Commercial” (“C”), “Residential (Group A)” (“R(A)”), “Commercial/Residential” and “Residential (Group E)” sites, building height restrictions were also imposed on all the “G/IC” and “Other Specified Uses” (“OU”) sites. For the government buildings/facilities along the harbour-front, specific building height restrictions were imposed on the North Point Divisional

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Police Station (65mPD), North Point Government Offices (100mPD); North Point Fire Services Headquarters Building (45mPD), the ICAC Headquarters (100mPD), the berthing area of North Point vehicular pier (2 storeys), school developments (8 storeys) and the government depot site at King Ming Road (not exceeding the soffit level of Island Eastern Corridor for northern part and 6 storeys for southern part). The intention was mainly to contain the development scale and reflect the existing building heights of these facilities, which would serve as breathing space and visual relief in the crowded built-up area;

- (h) as regards the 2 “CDA” sites along the waterfront, building height restrictions had already been incorporated in the previous version of the OZP for the “CDA(1)” site. The Planning Brief for the “CDA” covering the Ex-Government Supplies Depot was under review. According to the latest development concept which was presented to the Sub-committee earlier, a stepped height design with a lower building height of 100mPD for the commercial development at seaward side and a higher building height of 120mPD for the residential development at landward side was adopted for the Depot site. When comparing with the surrounding residential and commercial developments, a lower development intensity (domestic PR of 6 and non-domestic PR of 2.6) was proposed to allow the provision of more open space for public enjoyment and compatibility with the waterfront setting;
- (i) the Ex-North Point Estate site was currently zoned “R(A)” on the OZP. Similar to other residential sites along the waterfront, a maximum building height restriction of 100mPD was imposed. However, the future development of the site would be subject to a comprehensive review to ensure its compatibility with the waterfront setting and compliance with HPPs and HPGs; and
- (j) the Water Supplies Department HK Regional Building was zoned “C” on the OZP subject to a maximum building height restriction of 130mPD. The adjacent sewage treatment plant site was zoned “OU” with a building height restriction of one storey.

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- 4.8 **Mr Leung Kong-yui** said that the Government should consult HEC on the future development of the Ex-North Point Estate site before its implementation. The meeting agreed that the next term of HEC be requested to follow up on this. **Secretariat**
- 4.9 **Mr Charles Nicholas Brooke** suggested and the meeting agreed that Members' views should be reflected to TPB via the Secretariat. **Secretariat**
- 4.10 **The Chairman** thanked Ms Christine Tse and Ms Phoebe Chan for attending the meeting.

Item 5 Any Other Business

- 5.1 This was the last Sub-committee meeting of the current term of the HEC. **The Chairman** thanked Members and the Secretariat for their valuable support to the Sub-committee in the past 3 years. Members also thanked the Chairman for leading the Sub-committee to deliver various tasks assigned to it.
- 5.2 **Mr Raymond Wong** said that HEC had played an important role in enhancing our Harbour for public enjoyment during the term and setting out the direction on future partnership. The efforts of the Chairman, two Task Group Convenors and other Members were deeply appreciated.
- 5.3 There being no other business, the meeting closed at 4:40 pm.

**HEC Sub-committee on
Harbour Plan Review
August 2007**