

HEC Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review

Minutes of Thirty-first Meeting

Date : 20 January 2010
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Conference Room, 15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point

Present

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| Mr Vincent Ng (Chairman) | Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects |
| Dr Sujata Govada | Representing Citizen Envisioning @ Harbour |
| Mr Lam Kin-lai | Representing Conservancy Association |
| Mr Kim Chan | Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners |
| Dr Chan Fuk-cheung | Representing Hong Kong Institution of Engineers |
| Mr Paul Zimmerman | Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour Ltd. |
| Mr Nicholas Brooke | |
| Mr Patrick Lau | |
| Ms Alice Cheung | Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour), Development Bureau (DEVB) |
| Mr Peter Mok | Senior Engineer/Kowloon 2, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) |
| Mrs Ann Ho | Chief Executive Officer (2) 1, Home Affairs Department |
| Mr Jeff Lam | Assistant Director (Headquarters), Lands Department (LandsD) |
| Mr Raymond WM Wong | Assistant Director /Territorial, Planning Department (PlanD) |
| Ms Ying Fun-fong | Chief Engineer/Transport Planning, Transport Department (TD) |
| Ms Lily Yam (Secretary) | Senior Town Planner/Studies & Research 3, PlanD |

Absent with Apologies

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| Dr Andrew Thomson | Representing Business Environment Council |
| Mrs Mei Ng | Representing Friends of the Earth |
| Mr Yu Kam-hung | Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors |
| Mr Mason Hung | Representing Hong Kong Tourism Board |

In Attendance

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| Ms Jacinta Woo | Chief Town Planner/Studies & Research, PlanD |
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Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 30th Meeting

- 1.1 The draft minutes of the 30th meeting held on 4 November 2009 were circulated to Members on 8 December 2009. The meeting confirmed the draft minutes without amendment.

Item 2 Matters Arising

Sheung Wan Stormwater Pumping Station and adjoining waterfront park (para. 2.7 of the minutes of the 30th meeting)

- 2.1 **The Chairman** informed Members that Dr Andrew Thomson, Messrs Nicholas Brooke, Paul Zimmerman and Lam Kin-lai, the Secretary and himself had joined the site visit arranged by the Drainage Services Department (DSD) on 6 January 2010. He expressed his appreciation that the pumping station had integrated well with the park development by putting most station facilities underground with the area above for public park use.
- 2.2 **The Secretary** then reported the suggestions as raised by Members during the site visit, which were now being followed up by DSD and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). They included:
- (a) opening up part of the landscaped area at the northern side of the Tai Chi Exercise Area to create direct access to the waterfront promenade;
 - (b) replacing the steel railing of the Pet Garden with more natural forms of barrier such as trees/shrubs;

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- (c) improving the outlook of the storeroom cum switch room to the east of the Pet Garden by incorporating landscape plantings to soften its visual impact;
- (d) removing the railing at the eastern end of the waterfront promenade to facilitate access of visitors from the taxi stand at Shun Tak Centre;
- (e) reviewing whether *Arecastrum romanzoffianum* was a suitable planting species along the waterfront and the need of metal tree guards; and
- (f) improving the glass shelter above the Tai Chi Exercise Area by making it UV filtrating.

[Post-meeting note: The responses of LCSD and DSD to the above suggestions were circulated for Members' reference on 12 February 2010.]

- 2.3 **Mr Patrick Lau** remarked that while the steel railing of the Pet Garden was a standard feature to help prevent the dogs from running out of the garden, the increasing popularity of pet gardens might call for formulation of design guidelines with the incorporation of greening measures to help reduce the visual impact of the railing.
- 2.4 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** considered that the design and facilities of the Wan Chai Waterfront Promenade and Kwun Tong Promenade Stage I, which had not followed entirely the standard design and guidelines, were better than those of the subject waterfront park.
- 2.5 **The Chairman** said that design guidelines and design flexibility were two sides of the same coin. In designing facilities along the harbour-front, aesthetic and visual qualities were no less an important consideration than their functions.

Views of the Sub-committee on various proposals presented at the 30th meeting (Items 3 to 5 of the minutes of the 30th meeting)

- 2.6 **The Chairman** said that the confirmed minutes of meeting would be forwarded to the relevant parties for reference/follow-up after the meeting.

Secretariat

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[Post-meeting note: The confirmed minutes of meeting were forwarded to the relevant parties for reference/follow-up on 21 January 2010, except the Town Planning Board (TPB) which was already advised of the Sub-committee's views on Item 3 and Item 5 on 15 December 2009.]

Paper submitted by Mr Paul Zimmerman on revitalising Lei Yue Mun (para. 6.1 of the minutes of the 30th meeting)

- 2.7 The meeting noted that the Paper submitted by Mr Zimmerman had been forwarded to TPB for reference on 15 December 2009.

Short Term Tenancies, Temporary Government Land Allocations and Vacant Government Sites along Harbour-front

- 2.8 The meeting noted that LandsD had submitted an updated list of "Short Term Tenancies, Temporary Government Land Allocations and Vacant Government Sites along Harbour-front" to the Sub-committee, which was circulated for Members' reference on 18 January 2010.

Item 3 Implementation of the Proposal to Allow Commercial Helicopter Operators to Use the Wan Chai Temporary Helipad (Paper No. 1/2010)

- 3.1 The following representatives of the Proponents were invited to the meeting:

Mr Francis Cheng) Transport and Housing Bureau (THB)

Captain West Wu) Government Flying Service (GFS)

Mr David Tong) Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group (HKRHWG)

- 3.2 After a presentation by Mr Francis Cheng, Members raised the following comments/questions:

- (a) as the Sub-committee had previously requested that all operators should refrain from using the Wan Chai Temporary Helipad on Sundays except for emergencies, information on the number of GFS flights using the helipad in the past 6 months and breakdown on the number of flights during weekends and night time

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should also be provided for reference;

- (b) the permanent helipad should be designed with sufficient capacity to meet the future demand. When would the permanent helipad come into operation, and how the comments raised by the Sub-committee in July 2009 when it was briefed by CEDD on the proposed exterior design of the helipad would be addressed; and
- (c) the term “neighbour-friendly operations” as referred to in para. 4 of the Paper should be elaborated.

3.3 In response, **the Proponents** made the following points:

- (a) as the majority of the commercial flights were for sight-seeing purpose, a total ban on commercial flying on Sundays would affect the attractiveness and development of the commercial service. To reduce the noise nuisance on Sundays and public holidays, the licensee was only allowed to use the helipad during 9:00am-6:00pm;
- (b) most of the GFS flights using the Wan Chai Temporary Helipad during weekends were emergency flights. Detailed breakdown would be provided for the Sub-committee’s reference in due course;
- (c) the scale of the permanent helipad, which included 2 helipads for landing/taking off of flights and one helipad for back-up purpose, was carefully assessed under the Wan Chai Development Phase II Review. It was approved by TPB for incorporation into the OZP after a due process and funding approval had been obtained from the LegCo. CEDD had submitted a planning application (No. A/H25/11) for the exterior design of the helipad and the new Wan Chai ferry pier. Members’ comments regarding the provision of public facilities would be considered by TPB in that context;
- (d) according to the current programme, the permanent helipad was expected to come into operation in about 2 years’ time in early 2012; and
- (e) regarding “neighbour-friendly operations”, Heliservices (Hong Kong) Limited (Heliservices) had implemented

GFS

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measures to reduce the time required for the ground operation (e.g. boarding/departure of passengers) of their commercial flights. Once the boarding/departure procedures had been completed, the flights would take off to the designated flight paths as quickly as possible. Over the past 6 months, only one complaint had been received and the complaint was not substantiated.

3.4 Members had the following further questions/comments:

- (a) whether there were controls over the duration of ground operation of commercial helicopters and flight paths under the licence; and
- (b) besides noise mitigation measures, consideration should be given to implementing carbon reduction measures and arranging non-commercial programmes/activities for the community.

3.5 **The Proponents** responded as follows:

- (a) the operational rules as outlined in para. 3 of the Paper were requirements that the licensee had to follow pursuant to the licence agreement;
- (b) the licensee had been looking into some carbon reduction measures and carbon offset programmes, which were still under study and yet to be implemented; and
- (c) in terms of community programmes, apart from continuing their initiative of donating free flights to charitable organisations, Heliservices had launched a summer programme in 2009 which included lecture, site visit, helicopter tour, etc. for some students and members of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, which was well received with positive feedback.

3.6 **The Chairman** thanked the Proponents for attending the meeting.

Item 4 Draft Planning Brief for Yau Tong Bay “Comprehensive Development Area” Zone on the Draft Cha Kwo Ling, Yau Tong, Lei Yue Mun Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K15/18 (Paper No. 2/2010)

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4.1 **Mr Kim Chan** declared an interest in this item as he had business dealings with some of the owners of the subject site. The meeting agreed that Mr Chan could stay in the meeting but should refrain from participating in the discussion of this item.

4.2 The following representatives of PlanD were invited to the meeting and gave a powerpoint presentation:

Mr Eric Yue) District Planning Office/Kowloon
Mr Silas Liu)

4.3 Members raised the following comments/questions:

- (a) while the intention to impose various restrictions/requirements (including maximum plot ratio/gross floor area (GFA)/building height, building separation distance, no podium structure, avoiding slab block design, provision of waterfront promenade, etc.) was in line with the objective of harbour-front enhancement, too many constraints might leave little room for innovative/creative design. There was a need to ensure that a reasonable development scheme could be achieved under such restrictions/requirements;
- (b) the proposed building separation distance would reduce the efficiency of land utilisation;
- (c) as there was a tendency for developers to maximise the floor area under the current practice of GFA concession, a cap on the amount of non-accountable/exempted GFA should be stipulated;
- (d) construction and maintenance of the proposed basement car park would lead to higher energy consumption, which was not in line with the principle of low carbon economy. As the site was located close to the MTR station, consideration should be given to reduce the number of car parking spaces within the future development;
- (e) the proposed greening ratio was a commendable measure to enhance the environment of the subject old industrial area. Tree plantings would also contribute to carbon reduction;

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- (f) the planning brief should include a vision for this part of the harbour-front. The suggestion of siting commercial/retail facilities near the MTR Yau Tong Station and reserving the harbour-front for passive enjoyment was supported;
- (g) dining facilities should be provided with an orientation facing the harbour. Outdoor seating areas for alfresco dining on the public waterfront promenade should be clearly designated in the planning brief;
- (h) abutting a semi-enclosed water body which was protected from strong waves, the subject site was a unique and ideal location to promote marine activities;
- (i) in addition to the proposed landing steps, consideration should be given to including public boat club use with supporting facilities including slipway at the site. Half of the water body in Yau Tong Bay (YTB) should be designated for public mooring and berthing purpose;
- (j) the existing jetties should be retained because reinstatement would hardly be possible once they were demolished;
- (k) the old sawmill on the site was an interesting building worthy of preservation for adaptive reuse; and
- (l) more thoughts should be given to public engagement as community consensus was essential for successful implementation of large-scale projects.

4.4 In response, **Mr Eric Yue** made the following points:

- (a) the planning brief was prepared taking into account the community aspirations for lower building height, technical requirements from concerned Government departments and relevant studies and guidelines including HPPs/HPGs;
- (b) the purpose of the planning brief was to set out a conceptual framework and the key requirements of the future development. Implementation of the site would be private-led. In drawing up the Master Layout Plan

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- (MLP) for consideration by TPB, the developer had discretion over such details as the number, size, layout and dispositions of the proposed building blocks and distribution of domestic/non-domestic GFAs. The developer would need to provide justifications to TPB for proposing any deviations from the planning brief or minor relaxation of development restrictions;
- (c) the building separation distance of 25m was proposed having regard to an air ventilation assessment undertaken by PlanD for the Yau Tong area as a whole;
 - (d) the proposed plot ratio of 4.5 for the site, which was lower than that of the adjacent "Residential (Group E)" zone (with a plot ratio of 5), was to provide a reasonable incentive to facilitate redevelopment of the site;
 - (e) while the issues relating to GFA concession in the wider context were still being reviewed by the Administration, the developer of the subject site should submit a visual impact assessment to demonstrate the acceptability of the proposed building mass/bulk;
 - (f) by putting the car park at basement, there would be more developable space and the building height could be reduced. The traffic impact assessment to be submitted by the developer should provide justifications for the number of car parking spaces proposed at the site;
 - (g) the planning intention for this harbour-front site was to phase out the existing industrial uses with a view to enhancing the harbour-front for public enjoyment and providing a waterfront promenade to link up the proposed promenades in Kai Tak and Lei Yue Mun;
 - (h) zoning was a planning tool to control land uses rather than the water bodies;
 - (i) owing to seabed contamination, YTB was currently not suitable for active marine use. Notwithstanding this, the MLP submission should address and resolve the contamination problem and provide suitable uses within the site;
 - (j) to enhance vibrancy, the waterfront promenade should

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be designed to allow a diversity of activities. The developer was required to provide recreational facilities along the waterfront, reconstruct and beautify the seawall with interesting design and provide landing steps to facilitate the promotion of water-based recreational activities. Therefore, the planning brief would not preclude the suggested public boat club use for public berthing and mooring of pleasure boats purpose;

- (k) if any existing developments on the site had been identified as having historical value for adaptive reuse, the developer should include relevant assessments in the MLP submission; and
- (l) regarding public engagement, the Kwun Tong District Council was consulted on the draft planning brief in November 2009. The public would have opportunity to comment on the proposed development at the s16 application stage.

4.5 A Member considered that with 85% of the waterfront promenade proposed for landscaping under the planning brief, there would not be adequate space for storage and launching of pleasure boats. He considered that the feasibility of providing a public boat club in the sheltered water of YTB should be assessed before the Sub-committee could support the planning brief.

4.6 Some Members had the following views:

- (a) as boat club was not an activity enjoyed by the general public, justifications would be needed if the developer was required to provide such a facility at the site; and
- (b) a separate assessment could be conducted to review the marine use which should not affect the other components of the planning brief.

4.7 **Mr Raymond Wong** pointed out that while the potential for marine use in YTB should be fully acknowledged, it might be more appropriate for the developer to consider the suitability of providing a public boat club at the subject site and to submit any such proposal to TPB for consideration at the MLP submission stage. Such factors as land use interface, social

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consideration involving future owners/occupants, etc. would need to be taken into account in the technical assessments.

4.8 **The Chairman** said that consideration such as the implementation/operating agents, financial viability and public access through the future private development should be taken into account if a public boat club was to be provided. He considered it more meaningful for the Sub-committee to provide pragmatic advice for the relevant parties to consider the way forward.

4.9 Members generally agreed that:

(a) the Sub-committee should make it clear to TPB that it would be a waste of resources if the planning brief had not capitalised on the unique configuration of YTB. Any irreversible measures pre-empting public use of YTB in the long term should be discarded;

(b) provision of a waterfront promenade was not enough. The subject site should be treated specially to enable public use of YTB for water-based recreational activities in future. Land/marine interface should be designed correspondingly;

(c) to ensure accessibility for future public use of YTB, some land along the seawall could be carved out from the private development site; and

(d) the appropriate marine use and the land-based supporting facilities needed further examination.

4.10 **Mr Eric Yue** undertook to convey the Sub-committee's views to TPB.

PlanD

Item 5 Any Other Business

Installations of Water Supplies Department (WSD) along the Harbour-front

5.1 Referring to the information on WSD facilities as circulated to Members on 20 October and 16 December 2009, **Mr Paul Zimmerman** said that a general enhancement strategy should be considered to improve the interface of WSD facilities with

WSD

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their surroundings, such as removing boundary fence. The meeting agreed that WSD should be requested to brief the future Harbourfront Commission in this regard.

Inventory on Known (Planned and Proposed) Projects at Harbourfront

5.2 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** had the following comments/questions on the Inventory sites:

- (a) Site No. WHK6 – the time table for fixing the piers off the ex-abattoir site, which were currently not structurally safe for public use;
- (b) Site No. WHK2 – the time table for completing the review of Route 4;
- (c) Sites No. C2 and C3 – the height of part of the fence along the seawall should be reduced to facilitate fishing activities;
- (d) Site No. C5 – a large concrete structure had been erected to the east of Central Pier No. 10 and there was visual concern;
- (e) Sites No. WC1 and WC6 – with the closure of the Wan Chai Waterfront Promenade, whether a re-provisioning site could be identified in the vicinity for the Pet Garden;
- (f) temporary uses at Kai Tak – there was a concrete batching plant on the waterfront near the residential areas. It should be relocated elsewhere on the former runway to minimise the nuisances to the nearby residents; and
- (g) Sites No. NP 12 and NP13 – the North Point Ferry Piers should be included in the “CDA” zone covering the former North Point Estate site for integrated enhancement in conjunction with the property development.

5.3 Regarding Route 4, **Ms Ying Fun-fong** said that the review had been completed and the findings would be made known in February/March 2010.

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Members

5.4 Given the number of sites under the Inventory list, **the Chairman** suggested Members to forward any concerns they might have on the Inventory sites to the Secretariat for compilation. A working group might be arranged, if necessary, to follow up on the concerns. Any outstanding issues could then be passed on to the future Harbourfront Commission for further action. **Ms Alice Cheung** concurred with the Chairman's suggestion.

[Post-meeting note: No inputs had been received from Members so far.]

5.5 As the current term was about to end, **the Chairman** thanked Members for their contribution to the work of the Sub-committee in the past.

5.6 There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 5:10 p.m.

**HEC Sub-committee on
Harbour Plan Review
February 2010**