

TOWN PLANNING BOARD

**Minutes of 310th Meeting of the
Metro Planning Committee held on 26.8.2005**

Present

Director of Planning
Miss Ophelia Y.S. Wong

Chairperson

Dr. Peter K.K. Wong

Vice-chairman

Mrs. Angelina P.L. Lee

Mr. Erwin A. Hardy

Mr. Tony W.C. Tse

Mr. Nelson W.Y. Chan

Mr. Leslie H.C. Chen

Professor N.K. Leung

Professor Bernard V.W.F. Lim

Mr. Daniel B.M. To

Ms. Sylvia S.F. Yau

Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Urban),
Transport Department
Mr. Thomas Thumb

Assistant Director(2), Home Affairs Department
Mr. Patrick Li

Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment),
Environmental Protection Department
Mr. Elvis Au

Deputy Director/General, Lands Department
Mr. J.S. Corrigan

Deputy Director of Planning/District
Mr. Raymond T.L. Chiu

Secretary

Absent with Apologies

Dr. Alex S.K. Chan

Dr. Rebecca L.H. Chiu

Mr. Keith G. McKinnell

Mr. S.L. Ng

Dr. Pamela R. Rogers

Dr. Greg C.Y. Wong

Mr. Stanley Y.F. Wong

In Attendance

Assistant Director of Planning/Board
Mr. P.Y. Tam

Chief Town Planner/Town Planning Board
Mr. C.T. Ling

Town Planner/Town Planning Board
Ms. Paulina L.S. Pun

Agenda Item 1

Confirmation of the Draft Minutes of the 309th MPC Meeting held on 12.8.2005

[Open Meeting]

1. The draft minutes of the 309th MPC meeting held on 12.8.2005 were confirmed without amendments.

Agenda Item 2

Matters Arising

[Open Meeting]

2. The Secretary informed that there was no matter arising to report.

Tsuen Wan and West Kowloon District

[Mr. Michael C.T. Ma, District Planning Officer/Tsuen Wan and West Kowloon (DPO/TWK), and Mr. Edward P.L. Li, Senior Town Planner/Tsuen Wan and West Kowloon (STP/TWK), were invited to the meeting at this point.]

[Mr. J.S. Corrigan arrived to join the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 3

Section 16 Application

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Session only)]

A/KC/311 Office Use (District Council Member's Office)
and Minor Relaxation of Plot Ratio Restriction,
Unit 704, 7/F on Podium,
Hei Lai House, Wah Lai Estate,
Kwai Chung (KCTL 445A)
(MPC Paper No. A/KC/311)

3. The application was submitted by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA) and the following Members had declared interests :

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| Miss Ophelia Y.S. Wong
as the Director of Planning | - being a member of the Strategic Planning Committee of the HKHA; |
| Mr. Patrick Li
as the Assistant Director (2) of the Home Affairs Department | - being an alternate member for the Director of Home Affairs who was a member of the Strategic Planning Committee of the HKHA; |
| Mr. J.S. Corrigall
as the Deputy Director/General of the Lands Department | - being an alternate member for the Director of Lands who was a member of the HKHA; |
| Mr. S.L. Ng | - being a member of the HKHA; |
| Dr. Greg C.Y. Wong | - having current business dealings with the Housing Department; and |
| Mr. Stanley Y.F. Wong | - being a member of the Finance Committee of the HKHA. |

The Committee noted that Dr. Greg C.Y. Wong, Messrs. S.L. Ng and Stanley Y.F. Wong had tendered their apologies for being unable to attend the meeting.

[The Chairperson, Messrs. Patrick Li and J.S. Corrigall left the meeting temporarily, and the Vice-Chairman took over the chairmanship at this point.]

Presentation and Question Session

4. Mr. Edward P.L. Li, STP/TWK, presented the application and covered the following aspects as detailed in the Paper :

- (a) background to the application;
- (b) the applied office use (District Council Member's office) and minor relaxation of plot ratio restriction;
- (c) departmental comments – no adverse comments from concerned Government departments were received;
- (d) one public comment – raising concern on the application that the plot ratio restriction of public housing development should not be relaxed to set a precedent. No local objection was received; and
- (e) the Planning Department's view – the Planning Department had no objection to the application as the applied use was of a very small scale resulting in a slight increase of 0.001 non-domestic plot ratio.

[Mrs. Angelina P.L. Lee, Messrs. Elvis Au and Thomas Thumb arrived to join the meeting at this point.]

5. Major questions and comments raised by the Members were as follows :

- (a) what the original use of the application premises was and whether the application premises was already occupied by the applied use. If so, how long had it been converted;
- (b) whether the similar application previously approved in the Sham Shui Po District involved an increase in plot ratio;
- (c) whether the approval of the current application would set an undesirable precedent; and
- (d) a few Members considered that the HKHA and Housing Department (HD) should be reminded that uses and development in public housing estates were also bounded by the Town Planning Ordinance. The Board's

approval should be obtained prior to commencement of uses that required planning permission.

6. In reply, Mr. Michael C.T. Ma, DPO/TWK, made the following points :
- (a) the application premises was converted from an empty bay area which was often found on the lower floors of public housing blocks of standard design. According to the applicant, the premises had been converted and used as a District Council (DC) member's office for a few months;
 - (b) the previously approved application at Fu Cheong Estate in Sham Shui Po for a Legislative Councillor's office was of the same nature as the subject application, which also involved a slight increase in non-domestic plot ratio. The applicant had confirmed that there were no similar cases in the Kwai Tsing-Tsuen Wan District and other districts. The Planning Department opined that, since each application was considered on its individual merits, the approval of the current application should not set a precedent; and
 - (c) during the processing of the previous application in Sham Shui Po, the Planning Department had already advised the HKHA and HD that planning permission should be obtained before allowing development of Column 2 uses to commence. Members' concern on the matter would be relayed to HKHA and HD again.

Deliberation Session

7. Whilst supporting the application as the DC office would provide services to the local community, a Member said that possible nuisance from its related activities should however be minimized by imposing restrictions on the working hours. Mr. Michael C.T. Ma suggested and the Committee agreed to incorporate an advisory clause to reflect this Member's concern.

8. The Vice-Chairman remarked that the applied use was of a very small scale leading to a slight increase in plot ratio only. It would unlikely induce any adverse impacts.

9. After deliberation, the Committee decided to approve the application, on the terms of the application as submitted to the Town Planning Board.

10. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant to set restrictions on the working hours of the office with a view to minimizing possible nuisance on local residents.

[The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr. Michael C.T. Ma, DPO/TWK, and Mr. Edward P.L. Li, STP/TWK, for their attendance to answer Members' enquiries. Messrs. Ma and Li left the meeting at this point.]

[The Chairperson, Messrs. Patrick Li and J.S. Corrigan returned to join the meeting, and the Chairperson resumed chairmanship at this point.]

Kowloon District

[Mr. C.C. Lau, Senior Town Planner/Kowloon (STP/K), was invited to the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 4

Section 16 Application

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Session only)]

A/K9/201 Proposed Educational Institution (Post-secondary College)
in "Residential (Group A)" zone,
Whole Block (G/F to 14/F),
Chinachem (Hung Hom) Commercial Centre,
270-274 Chatham Road North, Hung Hom,
Kowloon (HHIL 269 Various Sections)
(MPC Paper No. A/K9/201)

11. The application was submitted by the Caritas Bianchi College of Careers (CBCC). The Committee noted that Dr. K.K. Wong, being a council member of the CBCC, declared an interest in this item.

[Dr. K.K. Wong left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

Presentation and Question Session

12. With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation, Mr. C.C. Lau, STP/K, covered the following aspects as detailed in the Paper :

- (a) background to the application;
- (b) the proposed educational institution (post-secondary college) use;
- (c) departmental comments – that no adverse comments from concerned Government departments were received;
- (d) no public comments and no local objection were received; and
- (e) the Planning Department's views – the Planning Department had no objection to the application for reasons given in paragraph 11.1 of the Paper.

[Professor Bernard V.W.F. Lim arrived to join the meeting at this point.]

13. Major questions raised by the Members were as follows :

- (a) whether the proposed school could start operation in September 2005 as indicated by the applicant;
- (b) in addition to the Town Planning Ordinance, what other statutory controls were available for controlling the proposed school use;
- (c) whether the conversion of the building to the proposed use was acceptable in planning terms;
- (d) whether the increase in pedestrian traffic brought by the proposed use was acceptable;

- (e) whether there were other similar cases;
- (f) what the rationale was for approving a previous application for “School (Secondary School)” use at the application premises without conditions; and
- (g) whether the subject building was already occupied by another post-secondary institution as shown on Plan A-3 of the Paper.

14. In reply, Mr. C.C. Lau made the following points :

- (a) an application under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance would be considered by the Board within two months of submission. For the current proposal, the applicant had in parallel applied to the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) for school registration under the Education Ordinance. The EMB was seeking comments from relevant Government departments;
- (b) the proposed use was not considered incompatible with the surrounding commercial/residential developments. There were no adverse comments / objections from concerned Government departments, including the Fire Services Department and Transport Department;
- (c) there were no other similar applications for post-secondary school use in the district. In 1983, the Board approved an application for secondary school use from G/F to 7/F of the subject building without conditions. To be in line with the current practice, an approval condition on time limit for commencement of the proposal was recommended for the current application. The other condition required by FSD on the provision of water supplies for firefighting and fire service installations was considered reasonable; and
- (d) the school as shown on Plan A-3 was no longer in operation.

[Mr. Leslie H.C. Chen arrived to join the meeting at this point.]

Deliberation Session

15. The Chairperson remarked that the proposed development was considered compatible with the surrounding development with no adverse comments from concerned departments. She added that the EMB and other relevant Government departments would further assess the application for school registration under the Education Ordinance.

16. After deliberation, the Committee decided to approve the application, on the terms of the application as submitted to the Town Planning Board and subject to the condition that water supplies for firefighting and fire service installations were provided to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board. The permission should be valid until 26.8.2009, and after the said date, the permission should cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted was commenced or the permission was renewed.

17. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant :

- (a) that the approval of the application did not imply any compliance with the Buildings Ordinance and Regulations. Building plans should be submitted to the Building Authority for formal approval;
- (b) to consult the Secretary for Education and Manpower on the licensing requirements for a post-secondary college under the Education Ordinance; and
- (c) of the guidelines to reduce noise exposure as specified in Chapter 9 of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) concerning noise mitigation measure at the floors that were/might be subject to traffic noise exceeding the HKPSG 65dB(A) traffic noise criterion.

[The Chairperson thanked Mr. C.C. Lau, STP/K, for his attendance to answer Members' enquiries. Mr. Lau left the meeting at this point.]

[Dr. K.K. Wong returned to join the meeting at this point.]

Hong Kong District

[Ms. Christine K.C. Tse, District Planning Officer/Hong Kong (DPO/HK), Messrs. Kevin C.P. Ng and Roy C.H. Li, Senior Town Planners/Hong Kong (STPs/HK), were invited to the meeting at this point.]

Agenda Item 5

[Open Meeting (whole agenda item)]

Public Consultation Strategy for Building Height Restrictions
in Wong Chuk Hang Business Area
(MPC Paper No. 25/05)

18. The Committee noted that Mr. Tony W.C. Tse declared an interest in this item as his employer owned properties in the Study Area of Wong Chuk Hang Business Area (WCHBA). However, the Committee considered that the Paper only invited comments on a public consultation strategy and Mr. Tse's interest was indirect. The Committee agreed that Mr. Tse could stay in the meeting and participate in the discussion of the Paper.

Presentation Session

19. With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation, Mr. Kevin C.P. Ng, STP/HK, covered the following aspects as detailed in the Paper :

- (a) background to the public consultation exercise;
- (b) the proposed timing of the consultation exercise and target consultees; and
- (c) the presentation material of the public consultation including a consultation digest which outlined the principles and recommendations of the building height restrictions, and a 3-dimensional "fly-through" computer simulation illustrating the possible height profile in the WCHBA when it was redeveloped to its fullest development intensities upon the imposition of the proposed building height restrictions.

Discussion Session

20. The Chairperson said that the Committee had already had a thorough discussion on the height restrictions in June 2005. The current discussion dealt with the public consultation strategy only.

21. Major questions and comments were summarized as follows :

Variation in Building Height Profile and Wall Effect

- (a) the use of a “fly-through” technique was welcome. However, the simulation showed an “ultimate development” form in which all buildings were assumed to be redeveloped to their fullest potential. While the chance of reaching such a scenario was actually very slim due to such redevelopment constraints as multiple-ownership, the public would be alarmed by the change in the townscape as presented in the “fly-through” simulation when compared with the existing situation. There was a need to make clear to the public that the transformation of the townscape would be gradual;
- (b) while the consultation materials had reflected the agreed maximum height bands at 120mPD and 140mPD, they showed a very monotonous townscape comprising two flat-topped blank walls. This was not the intention of the Board which had in fact rejected applications based on a lack of design merits. Variations to the two height bands could be introduced based on minor relaxation to allow flexibility in the design of individual buildings. Feasibility of more variations along the edge of the WCHBA could also be explored;
- (c) it would be useful to present images of the existing conditions of the WCHBA as a comparison;
- (d) the digest should include more pictures taken from different angles as not all the public had access to a computer for viewing the “fly-through” simulation;

- (e) while photomontages on page 12 in the digest showed the views with different height bands, there was no indication of the distance involved;
- (f) referring to page 13 of the digest, it was noted that a bulkier building was located at the western end of the WCHBA while the other buildings were slenderer with gaps between each other;

Assumptions

- (g) clarification was sought on the development parameters adopted in generating the “fly-through” simulation of the WCHBA;

The Green, Visual and Ventilation Corridor

- (h) little emphasis was placed in the consultation materials on the green, visual and ventilation corridor from the Aberdeen Country Park through the Aberdeen Reservoir Valley to the Aberdeen Channel which received much attention by the Committee in the June meeting;

The “Fly-Through” Simulation

- (i) the height of the “fly-through” route should be adjusted to show views at eyelevel, and the assessment should include some simulated views as would be seen by a person walking at street level;
- (j) the “fly-through” simulation only showed views from outside the WCHBA. Consideration should be given to include a “fly-through” within the WCHBA, for example along Wong Chuk Hang Road;
- (k) the “fly-through” simulation should be uploaded onto the Planning Department’s website for easy access by the public;

Physical Model

- (l) during the discussion in June 2005, the Planning Department was urged to consider the inclusion of a physical model of the Study Area and the surrounding districts in the consultation exercise. For instance, a model could be put in a community centre for public viewing and it would not have the limitations of the “fly-through” simulation such as inaccessibility to a computer and limitation of viewing angles. The model would be complementary to the digest and “fly-through” assessment; and

View Collection Methodology

- (m) Aberdeen was a popular local attraction with many tourists. It was suggested that a telephone hotline be set up to widen the catchment of public views on the proposed building height restrictions in addition to the proposed consultation channels via fax and email.

22. In response to Members’ comments and questions, the Chairperson and Ms. Christine K.C. Tse, DPO/HK, gave the following responses :

Variation in Building Height Profile and Wall Effect

- (a) it was agreed that the assumption for the “ultimate development” in which the whole WCHBA would be redeveloped to the fullest development intensities, and the timing and constraints of such process should be highlighted in the digest and presentation to the public. Consideration could be given to showing various stages of development before the whole area reached the “ultimate development” form;
- (b) it was agreed to highlight in the consultation digest that the proposed heights were maximum height restrictions in the area and there could be some height variations arising from applications for minor relaxation to allow design flexibility of individual buildings. However, to randomly introduce such variations in the assessment without other supporting information at this stage might not be practicable;

- (c) it was agreed that pictures of the existing conditions and more pictures at different angles be added to the consultation materials;
- (d) marked with dotted lines, the photomontages on page 12 of the digest showed that buildings at 120mPD and 140mPD would be hidden behind the hills and vegetation and could not be seen from this viewpoint. Improvements would be made to the presentation method, and the distance between the Aberdeen Country Park Pavilion and WCHBA would be indicated on the key plan for reference;
- (e) the simulation of the bulkier building on the western edge of WCHBA as shown on the photomontages on page 13 of the digest was based on an approved scheme for hotel development at about 135mPD, whereas the other buildings were simulated based on the existing lot boundaries and no site amalgamation had been assumed. The buildings on smaller lots would therefore generally appear slenderer above podium;

Assumption

- (f) as discussed in the MPC meeting in June, the building height restrictions were proposed based on the assumption that the development right as permitted under Building (Planning) Regulation would not be affected;

The Green, Visual and Ventilation Corridor

- (g) it was agreed that more emphasis would be placed on the green, visual and ventilation corridor in the consultation materials;

Fly-through Assessment

- (h) the “fly-through” assessment was actually set at eyelevel at the three sensitive points. For example, at the Lower Aberdeen Reservoir Dam, the viewing level was set at about 80mPD to 90mPD. However, views at some points along the flying route might be blocked by the other

developments, particularly at the southern part of the WCHBA, so a higher level was set. Consideration would be given to introducing a slower flying speed and the addition of some stops along the route;

- (i) technically, there should not be a problem to upload the simulation onto the Planning Department's website. Confirmation would be sought from the department's technical support team;
- (j) the fly-through assessment required tremendous hardware and software support. In view of the tight schedule for consultation, it might not be feasible to introduce substantial changes at this stage;

Physical Model

- (k) the Planning Department had carefully considered the use of a physical model in support of the public consultation. However, due to the extensiveness of the area involved, the size of the model could be very big. Moreover, in consideration of the time required for securing the necessary funding for a physical model and the tight schedule for launching of the public consultation exercise, a computer model was adopted; and

View Collection Strategy

- (l) the proposal of setting up a hotline would be considered.

23. The Chairperson thanked Members for their comments and suggestions. The Planning Department would consider and take their views on board to improve on the consultation strategy and presentation materials where appropriate.

25. Major questions and comments raised by Members were summarized as follows :

- (a) the duration that the application premises had been occupied by the applied use without planning permission;
- (b) the reason why the application was now made; and
- (c) how the public could be encouraged to apply for planning permission before commencement of development.

26. In response, Ms. Christine K.C. Tse, DPO/HK, and Mr. Kevin C.P. Ng made the following main points :

- (a) there was no information available at hand about the duration that the applied use had operated in the application premises;
- (b) it was likely that this application was submitted upon the advice of other Government departments including Lands Department and Environmental Protection Department; and
- (c) wider publicity, such as the notification system under the Town Planning (Amendment) Ordinance, would enhance the public awareness on requirement of planning permission.

[Professor N.K. Leung left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

Deliberation Session

27. The Chairperson remarked that there was no objection from the relevant Government departments including the Fire Services Department.

28. After deliberation, the Committee decided to approve the application, on the terms of the application as submitted to the Town Planning Board and subject to the following conditions :

- (a) the provision of fire services installations to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board; and
- (b) no seating accommodation would be allowed within the application premises for the use of the customers.

29. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant to note the comments from the District Lands Officer/Hong Kong East, Lands Department and the Chief Building Surveyor/Hong Kong East, Buildings Department in paragraphs 9.1.1 and 9.1.3 of the Paper.

[Mrs. Angelina P.L. Lee left the meeting temporarily, while Professor N. K. Leung returned to join the meeting at this point.]

[A short break of 5 minutes was taken.]

[Open Meeting (Presentation and Question Session only)]

- (ii) A/H25/5 Exhibition Hall in 'Road' and "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Exhibition Centre" zones, Area between Phase I and Phase II of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai
(MPC Paper No. A/H25/5)
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30. The Committee noted that Professor Bernard V.W.F. Lim declared an interest in this item as he resided in proximity of the application site. The Committee agreed that the interest of Professor Lim was indirect and not pecuniary, and he could stay and participate in the discussion and deliberation of the item.

Presentation and Question Session

31. Mr. Roy C.H. Li, STP/HK, showed a short video clip submitted by the applicant. He then presented the application and covered the following aspects as detailed in the Paper with the aid of a Powerpoint presentation :

- (a) background to the application;
- (b) the proposed exhibition hall use and its broad development parameters and design concept;
- (c) the proposed traffic improvement measures, including the use of a central forwarding system, identification of off-site marshalling areas at Tseung Kwan O, extension of move-out time and provision of additional taxi/private car pick-up points and ferry shuttles;
- (d) departmental comments – relevant Government departments had no objection to the application. However, the Transport Department (TD) raised concern on the adequacy of the existing pedestrian connections to and from the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC). Also, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) advised that the proposal constituted a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance. Detailed environmental issues would be dealt with in the EIA process. The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) also advised that discussion between the applicant and CEDD was on-going to resolve the construction interface issues between the proposed works and the works on Wan Chai Development Phase II (WDII) and the Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB);
- (e) local views – the Wan Chai District Council and attendants of a public forum organized by the applicant generally supported the application;
- (f) seven public comments received – the Harbour Business Forum (HBF) and the Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited (SPH) had strongly urged the Committee to request the Harbour Enhancement Committee (HEC) to duly consider the application and undertaking a harbourfront enhancement assessment. However, the HEC Sub-committee on WDII had not formed any collective views on the suggestion. An additional comment from the HBF was tabled at the meeting. As it was received out of the statutory

period for public comments, it should be treated as not having been made;
and

- (g) the Planning Department's views – the Planning Department had no objection to the application as the proposed extension would meet the pressing demand for exhibition facilities in Hong Kong and was considered compatible with the adjacent uses. The proposal would not affect the prominence and landmark role of the HKCEC Phase II and the existing visual corridor towards the harbour. With the implementation of the traffic management measures, there would unlikely be adverse impact on the existing traffic condition. Regarding the environmental impact, it was considered that the compliance of air and water quality impacts of the proposal could be dealt with separately under the EIA Ordinance. If the Committee decided to approve the application, it was recommended to incorporate the approval conditions on implementation of the proposed traffic management measures, passenger pick-up/set-down facilities and pedestrian links, and the proposed water supplies for firefighting and fire services installations.

[Mrs. Angelina P.L. Lee returned to join the meeting at this point.]

32. Major questions and comments raised by Members were summarized as follows :

Traffic Matters

- (a) with the proposed extension, there would be an increase in pedestrian flow particularly from Wan Chai area to Wan Chai North. The TD had raised concern on the adequacy of the pedestrian links in the area. However, there was a lack of concrete proposals in the application to cater for such increase;
- (b) most of the general public would travel to the HKCEC via MTR from Wan Chai station. As the MTR was already operating near capacity, how the operation of the MTR would cope with the demand arising from the proposed extension;

- (c) the proposed traffic measures, including off-site marshalling and central forwarding, were essential to alleviate possible traffic increase in the Wan Chai area resulted from the proposed extension. It was queried whether these measures could be maintained in the long run and whether all exhibitors would adopt these measures;
- (d) whether the shuttle ferry service to Tsim Shai Tsui was a proposed measure in the application;

Reclamation

- (e) whether the proposal would involve reclamation;

Impact on Surrounding Areas

- (f) whether the alignment options of CWB would be constrained by the proposed extension;
- (g) with the proposed extension, the covered road area of Convention Avenue would increase and become darker and more unpleasant for drivers. Whether the applicant had any proposal to beautify this area and address the concerns on lighting and air ventilation;
- (h) whether the covered water area beneath and any amenity areas would be affected;

Visual Impact

- (i) the HKCEC was an important landmark which had been frequently photographed from the aerial view. Whether the proposed extension would adopt a special roof design or would include landscaping to make it more attractive;

Other Applications

- (j) whether any other applications involving the HKCEC had been received.

33. In response, Ms. Christine K.C. Tse, DPO/HK and Mr. Roy C.H. Li made the following main points :

Traffic Matters

- (a) currently, most of the public travelled to Phase I and then Phase II of the HKCEC from Wan Chai area through existing footbridges which were already congested especially when there were mega-events at the HKCEC. Both the applicant and TD were aware of the likely increase in pedestrian traffic resulting from the proposed extension of exhibition area. They were already conducting discussions on some preliminary options to address the issue, including extensions of existing footbridge links on O'Brien Road, Fenwick Street and Fleming Road;
- (b) to address the issue of pedestrian traffic, an approval condition requiring the submission of proposals for pedestrian plan for mega-events at the HKCEC had been proposed;
- (c) according to the applicant, it was compulsory for operators of large-scale exhibitions (i.e. with 25,000m² and/or involving 600 cars per day) to use the central forwarding system. For the other operators, special arrangements for pick-up/set-down activities after 8:30pm were in place. Transportation would be arranged to wait at various sites at the Tseung Kwan O industrial estate until they received centralized instruction from HKCEC to move to the HKCEC for loading/unloading. Such arrangements had been in operation since October 2004 and the availability of land for such purpose should be able to sustain in the medium-term;

[Mr. Patrick Li left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

Reclamation

- (d) according to the applicant, the proposed structure would be supported by five trusses over the existing water channel and supporting columns would land only on existing land. The D of J had advised that such construction method should not constitute reclamation works for the purpose of the PHO but temporary works during construction of the proposed extension would require gazettal under the Foreshore and Sea-Beds (Reclamation) Ordinance;

Impact on CWB

- (e) the proposal was merely an extension of an existing structure between HKCEC Phases I and II. While the structure of the existing atrium link was already a constraint on the alignment options of the CWB, its extension would not impose additional impact on the alignment options of the CWB;
- (f) the CEDD was concerned on the construction programme of the proposed extension which would be in conflict with that of WDII and CWB. The applicant and CEDD had already worked together in addressing the interface problems;

[Mr. Patrick Li returned to join the meeting at this point.]

Covered Road and Water Areas

- (g) the applicant was aware of the possible negative environmental impacts on Convention Avenue underneath the proposed extension. The applicant had agreed to conduct more assessments on air ventilation impact and lighting impact of the proposal on the covered road;
- (h) the covered water area would not be affected as the water would still flow freely underneath. During construction, only temporary structures would be put into the water;

Visual Impact

- (i) referring to paragraph 2(e) on the Paper, the design of the proposed extension was to present minimum impact on the exterior appearance of the HKCEC. The new roof would be well paved to present a pleasant appearance for nearby developments overlooking it. There was, however, no intention to introduce a very special design. Rather, the main trusses to be used in the proposed extension was of a curved form in order to complement with the existing roof profile of the HKCEC Phase II; and

Other Applications

- (j) it was confirmed that there had been proposals to convert existing carpark areas at HKCEC Phase II to exhibition space. As “exhibition” use was always permitted in these areas, no planning permission was required. Nevertheless, lease modifications were required.

34. In response to the Chairperson’s question, Mr. Thomas Thumb further clarified that some of the proposed traffic measures had already been adopted by the HKCEC for more than a year. Within this period, the traffic situation in the Wan Chai area had been effectively improved. Provided that these measures could be continued, the traffic impact would be acceptable in the long run. He said that the proposed ferry service between Tsim Sha Tsui and the HKCEC was welcomed as it would provide a convenient alternative to access the exhibition facilities, diverting some pedestrian traffic from the footbridge network.

Deliberation Session

35. The Chairperson said that before the Committee continued to deliberate on the application, Members should consider the request from the HBF and SPH for the Board, namely to request the HEC to carry out a Harbourfront Enhancement Assessment on the application and to defer making a decision on the application until HEC had considered the application and included it into the HER and the WDII Review.

36. Members noted that the area outside HKCEC was Government land and Government had already had a plan to enhance the area. Members considered that the proposed extension was a good use of space between Phases I and II of HKCEC to provide additional exhibition floor area without imposing major impacts on the surrounding areas nor affecting the existing harbourfront. The Chairperson remarked that there was a pressing demand for more exhibition space in the territory. The Committee agreed to decline the request from HBF and SPH.

37. In respect of the implications of the PHO on the application, the Committee agreed that, in the light of the D of J's advice, the application did not involve reclamation for the purpose of the PHO.

38. The Chairperson then invited members to consider whether there were planning merits for the case, particularly on whether the site was suitable for the purpose and whether approval of the application would generate adverse impacts on the surrounding areas.

39. A Member expressed support for the application, and considered that the applicant had put up innovative architectural and engineering solutions to resolve all the technical issues arising from the proposed extension. However, there was still concern on the impact of the extension structure on the road and the existing semi-circular pedestrian deck underneath. In addition to the minimum requirements under the EIA Ordinance, the applicant should be requested to beautify and to improve the lighting and ventilation of the covered road and deck areas. Architecturally, light channels could be introduced into the design to bring in natural sunlight.

40. The same Member said that the applicant should also explore the opportunity to allow public access to part of the roof area for public enjoyment or introduce landscaping on the roof to improve the visual appearance as planning gains. Another Member remarked that in engineering terms, the proposed trusses were necessary for the long span of the structure. The opening up of the roof area might not be feasible as it would increase the loading. Generous landscaping was however supported.

41. A Member remarked that Hong Kong was facing keen competition from other Asian cities on holding large-scale convention and exhibition events. A comprehensive

convention area, instead of the presence of a number of smaller exhibition spaces scattering in different locations of the territory, was required to provide facilities to keep the competitive edge of Hong Kong. The current proposal, being an extension of the existing atrium, was thus supported.

42. A Member said that the application was supported as no additional land would be required. The impacts on the harbourfront were also considered minimal and acceptable.

43. A Member reiterated the concern on pedestrian traffic and requested that an additional condition to address this issue should be imposed. Mr. Thomas Thumb clarified that a re-submission of the Traffic Impact Assessment was not required. However, he pointed out that the applicant would be required to provide feasible proposals on pedestrian linkages at the detailed design stage.

44. Based on the above discussion, the Chairperson summarized and the Committee agreed the followings :

- (a) to revise the approval condition in paragraph 10.4(b) of the Paper to better reflect the Committee's concern on the requirement of an effective pedestrian network to serve the HKCEC;
- (b) to impose an additional condition requiring the submission and implementation of landscape proposals, particularly for the roof area and the covered road area and the existing semi-circular pedestrian deck underneath; and
- (c) to convey to the applicant the Committee's views on the preference for opening up of the roof area and Committee's concerns on the lighting, ventilation and the need to beautify the covered road area and the existing semi-circular pedestrian deck.

45. After deliberation, the Committee decided to approve the application, on the terms of the application as submitted to the Town Planning Board and subject to the following conditions and the permission should be valid until 26.8.2009, and after the said

date, the permission should cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted was commenced or the permission was renewed :

- (a) the submission and implementation of proposals for passenger pick-up/set-down facilities and traffic management measures for the development, as proposed by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Transport or of the Town Planning Board;
- (b) the submission and implementation of a pedestrian proposal, including the feasibility of widening the existing connections and providing new footbridge links to the proposed development to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Transport or of the Town Planning Board;
- (c) the submission and implementation of landscape proposals to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning or of the Town Planning Board; and
- (d) the design and provision of water supplies for fire-fighting and fire services installations to the satisfaction of Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board.

46. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant to note Members' views on the feasibility of allowing public access to the roof area and the need to beautify and improve the lighting and ventilation of the covered road and existing semi-circular pedestrian deck beneath the proposed extension on paragraphs 39, 40, 44(b) and 44(c) above. The Committee also agreed to advise the applicant to note the comments of the District Lands Officer/Hong Kong East, Lands Department, the Chief Building Surveyor/Hong Kong East, Buildings Department, the Chief Architect/Advisory and Statutory Compliance, Architectural Services Department, the Project Manager/Hong Kong Island and Islands, Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Urban, Transport Department, the Director of Environmental Protection, the Director of Fire Services, the Chief Engineering/Development, Water Supplies Department on paragraphs 8.1.1 to 8.1.5, 8.1.8, 8.1.10 and 8.1.11 respectively; and the public comments at paragraphs 9.1 to 9.2 of the Paper.