

本署檔號 OUR REF.: UGC/GEN/62/73 (17)

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25 May 2002

Miss Flora Tai
Clerk to the LegCo Panel on Education
Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
3rd floor, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Tai,

LegCo Panel on Education

When considering LC Paper No. CB(2)1855/01-02(01) on the Phase 7 Development of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) at the Education Panel meeting on 13 May 2002, Members raised for discussion issues relating to the plot ratio of the proposed development, background surrounding the demolition of the operational quarters and the implications of the Higher Education Review on PolyU's space requirement. This letter seeks to provide Members with further information on these issues before the proposed development being further considered by the Public Works Sub-Committee.

In designing the proposed development, PolyU is conscious of the need to make effective use of the site concerned and equally important, the need to provide an environment conducive to teaching, learning and research from an education point of view. The UGC considers that the proposed development has struck a good balance between the two having regard to the overall campus development of PolyU, the utilization potential of the site, the space requirement of PolyU etc. In designing the new building, PolyU has also given due consideration to its compatibility, efficiency, student throughput and vertical circulation within the building as more than 60% of the space will be taken up for teaching.

The vacant 9-storey staff quarter (Pak Nin Yuen) was built in the early eighties as a government project at a cost of \$6.5 million, providing 40 residential units for the minor staff attending essential duties at non-office hours. It was built at a time when public transportation

and telecommunication devices were much less developed than it is now. With rapid developments in those areas in the past two decades, in-house provision of such services is no longer a necessity. The essential duties are gradually being taken over by staff not residing in these quarters, including those engaged through out-sourcing arrangements. Pak Nin Yuen has thus been vacated since mid 2001. Re-development of the site to be vacated also represents a much more effective use of the site concerned. As for the other UGC-funded institutions, six have operational/minor staff quarters, totaling about 400 flats/units. A majority of these quarters are found in institutions which are less centrally-located.

Regarding the implications of the Higher Education Review on the space requirement of PolyU, Members may wish to note that the proposed Phase 7 development aims to address the existing space shortfall of the University, which has been persisting for quite some time. The proposed development will fulfill about half of PolyU's existing space requirement, with an understanding that the remaining shortfall will have to be met by another development, which will be subject to careful scrutiny by UGC and the Administration in the light of future development of higher education. The UGC considers it a prudent and pragmatic approach in addressing the urgent and persisting space shortfall of PolyU.

Yours sincerely,

(LEUNG Wing-yan, Jeff)
for Secretary-General
University Grants Committee

c.c. SEM (Attn.: Mr Clement Leung)
D Arch S (Attn.: Mr C M Chan)
Mr Ernest Chiu, Director of Estates (PolyU)