

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Construction of Kowloon Tong Fire Station-cum-Ambulance Depot with Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters at Baptist University Road, Kowloon Tong

Purpose

This paper informs Members of our plan to construct a 6-storey fire station-cum-ambulance depot and office building at Baptist University Road, Kowloon Tong for the Fire Services Department (FSD).

Proposal and Justifications

Fire Station-cum-Ambulance Depot

2. In recent years, a number of large-scale residential developments, educational institutes and student hostels have been built in Beacon Hill and Kowloon Tong. It is projected that the demand for fire and emergency ambulance services in Lok Fu, Beacon Hill and Kowloon Tong areas will increase with the growth in population from 54 600 in 2002 to 60 100 in 2008 and following the redevelopment of some existing low and medium-rise buildings in these areas.

3. There is currently no fire station within the areas of Lok Fu, Beacon Hill and Kowloon Tong. These areas are classified as “less congested built-up areas” in terms of fire risk category, under which building fire calls should be met with a response time of six minutes according to current fire-fighting policy. At present, fire services for these areas are provided by Ma Tau Chung Fire Station, Shek Kip Mei Fire Station and Wong Tai Sin Fire Station, which are each about three kilometers away. Due to the distant locations of these three fire stations, fire appliances take about eight minutes to reach the centre of Kowloon Tong area. This exceeds the approved six-minute graded response time for “less congested built-up areas”. From

2001 to 2003, the number of building fire calls in these areas ranged from 452 to 575 and FSD's response time performance in the same period was 84.35% to 87.32%, which fell short of the pledged standard of 92.5%. In 2003, FSD was only able to meet 85.84% of the 452 building fire calls from these areas within the graded response time of six minutes. To ensure adequate fire services coverage for these areas, we need to provide the proposed fire station at Baptist University Road.

4. There is also no ambulance depot within the areas of Lok Fu, Beacon Hill and Kowloon Tong. At present, these areas are serviced by ambulances deployed at Ma Tau Chung Ambulance Depot, Pat Tin Ambulance Depot and Wong Tai Sin Ambulance Depot. Of the 49 395 and 51 776 emergency ambulance calls from the Kowloon Tong and surrounding areas in 2001 and 2002 respectively, FSD was only able to meet 89.14% and 89.87% of them within the 12-minute target response time¹, as against its performance pledge of 92.5%. In 2003, 92.24% of the 48 891 emergency ambulance calls were met within the target response time but the improvement in performance was mainly due to the drop in demand by 5.6%² over 2002. From 1999 to 2002, there was an average annual growth of 5.7% in demand for emergency ambulance calls from the areas concerned. Taking into account the population and demographic distribution, it is projected that future demands will grow at a similar rate. To ensure adequate provision of emergency ambulance service in the areas concerned and to cope with the anticipated increase in demand for service, we need to provide the proposed ambulance depot in time.

5. With the provision of the proposed fire station-cum-ambulance depot at this strategic location which is located at the central part of the Kowloon Peninsula, FSD will be able to deploy more resources to service the areas and improve its emergency coverage.

Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters

6. Because of a lack of office accommodation at the Fire Services Headquarters Building at Tsim Sha Tsui East, the Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters was relocated from the Fire Services Headquarters Building to

¹ The emergency ambulance service has adopted a 12-minute response time as its performance target.

² The drop in demand for emergency ambulance service was largely attributable to the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

temporary offices in Wong Tai Sin Fire Station with below-standard space provision¹ in 2001. To optimize site utilization, we plan to take this opportunity to relocate the Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters to this new building to relieve the overcrowding situation and improve overall operational efficiency. Moreover, the strategic location of the new site will improve this Headquarters' operational and administrative coverage of the Kowloon area. Upon the commissioning of the new building, the space to be vacated by the Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters will be reverted to its original use as a standard fire station.

Project Scope

7. We plan to construct a 6-storey fire station-cum-ambulance depot and office building at Baptist University Road, Kowloon Tong. A site plan is at Enclosure.

8. For the fire station-cum-ambulance depot, it will have a 4-bay appliance room, offices, an exercise room, barracks, a canteen, stores, a locker-cum-changing room, a drying room, toilets and ablutions, an open drill yard and fuel filling facilities.

9. For the Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters, it will comprise staff offices, a conference room, a library, an interview room, a common room, stores, officers' standby rooms, an auditorium, a pantry and carparks at the open yard.

Public Consultation

10. We consulted the former Kowloon City District Board about our proposal to develop a fire station-cum-ambulance depot and office building on 3 December 1998 and 28 January 1999. The Board raised no objection to the proposal.

¹ The Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters with an establishment of 14 is currently occupying about 190 square metres of floor area of Wong Tai Sin Fire Station whereas its entitlements should be 612.2 square metres according to the Government's space standard.

11. To maximize site utilization, we subsequently reached agreement with the former Education Department to expand the scope of the project by making use of the adjacent vacant site to jointly develop the proposed fire services facilities with a 30-classroom affiliated school of the Hong Kong Baptist University. The joint development proposal was discussed and supported by the Kowloon City District Council on 21 March 2002.

12. The former Education Department subsequently decided to withdraw from the joint development project because the school sponsor considered it more appropriate to relocate the proposed school development elsewhere under its revised development and expansion plan. To ensure the provision of adequate fire and emergency ambulance services in the areas concerned, we decided to revert to our original plan of developing a fire station-cum-ambulance depot with Kowloon Fire Command Headquarters at the site at Baptist University Road. We informed the Kowloon City District Council of the latest developments and the reversion to our original plan by circulation of an information paper on 23 May 2003. No objection was received from the District Council.

13. To address the local residents' concerns about the possible nuisances arising from the fire station-cum-ambulance depot, FSD arranged a briefing session on 7 October 2002 to introduce the daily operation of the fire services facilities and mitigation measures to be implemented to the residents. The attendees were satisfied with the Government's efforts to minimize the possible nuisances.

Environmental Implications

14. We completed a Preliminary Environment Review (PER) for the fire station-cum-ambulance depot with office building in October 1997. The PER concluded that the project would have no long-term environmental impact. The Director of Environmental Protection vetted the PER and agreed that an Environmental Impact Assessment would not be necessary.

15. During construction, we will control noise, dust and site run-off nuisances to within established standards and guidelines through the implementation of mitigation measures incorporated in the relevant contracts. During the operation of the fire station-cum-ambulance depot, the Director of

Fire Services will implement appropriate mitigation measures to minimize noise nuisance.

Land Acquisition

16. This project does not require any land acquisition.

Financial Implications

17. We estimate the total capital cost of the project to be \$105.5 million in September 2003 prices.

Implementation Plan

18. We plan to seek funding approval from the Public Works Subcommittee in April 2004. The construction works are expected to start in late 2004 for completion in mid-2006.

Security Bureau
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ARCHITECTURAL
SERVICES
DEPARTMENT