

Submission from Mr Rob PENDLETON

TAMAR

The criticisms for the current Tamar planning has been well documented by many parties including my fellow surveyor, Nick Brooke. I will, therefore, concentrate my objection by advising that the possible alternatives for housing Government offices seem to have been rejected without due consideration. It seems that Government offices could be relocated to two alternative areas without too much difficulty. These are:

1) Kai Tak - the latest planning includes a significant office node but programme and achievability in a speedy timeframe is in some doubt and although this is not necessarily critical I do understand that Government have concerns in this respect. I , therefore consider the second possibly alternative location would merit at least a preliminary study to measure against TAMAR. This alternative area is:

2) Kam Tin/Pat Heung for the proposed and additional Government offices as the area is accessible and convenient for most of population and workers, development site is Government owned with no clearance problems. Further it is yet economic to develop for private sector offices (unlike both Tamar and Kowloon locations) because of low values. Additionally there is ample space for development in phases so more than just limited Bureaux can be located on one campus. Government offices do not need to be in Central Business Districts, it will result in more jobs (particularly convenient for NWNT residents), will be cash beneficial to HK Govt and release higher value sites in order to allow further space/moderated rents etc. This relief will avoid pressure to build to more office space on reclamation and relieve HK Island traffic etc.

The justification for commissioning the study could be the following:

1. The Government have not seriously looked at this possibility and it seems only Kai Tak and renovation on the existing site has been given any serious consideration to date as an alternative to Tamar so far.
2. Development land above KCRC's underutilised West Rail Depot and to the side of Kam Sheung Road Station is available and either vacant or underutilised. No clearance of occupiers or difficult land assembly would be required. The West Rail Depot was designed to allow development on top but demand/values in that area not high enough for commercial offices.
3. Kam Tin/Pat Heung is well connected - on Route 3 and on underutilised West Rail i.e rail and motorway road connections to China, the Airport and through the Western Harbour Tunnel etc.
4. Will be even better connected when proposed extensions to KCRC implemented.
5. Plenty of space to locate IRD, Immigration and many Govt Dept's as well as the Bureaux.

6. Great value in Tamar, Albert Road, Wanchai Govt offices etc etc which will pay for new offices and maybe some more infrastructure e.g KCRC Northern Link or fourth harbour rail crossing.

7. Accessible to great majority of population and good connectivity with Shenzhen. More accessible than Tamar for most of population.

8. It would release much land and many buildings on Hong Kong Island for commercial offices which are in short supply and expensive - lower rents would encourage more multi-nationals and national companies to locate more in HK. If HK is to be allowed to grow as much as possible as a financial centre then more commercial offices would benefit and bring revenue to the Government coffers.

9. It could leave greater space for civic squares etc which may be better near commercial and entertainment/cultural facilities than Govt offices but if the CE really wishes to go ahead with construction speedily at Tamar the land could be disposed of speedily with conditions for development (subject to only minor changes and improvements to development plans proposed) save that the office space created would be commercial offices and built by the private sector.

10. Many jobs will be created (more than just building HQ offices in Admiralty) and some of these jobs would be more accessible for those living in NWNT where unemployment and travel to work times would otherwise be greater. There would also be jobs created by the private /commercial development of the Tamar site. Permanent jobs would be created in the NWNT.

11. It is anticipated that the administrative, planning, DIA, TIA and EIA matters can all be adequately dealt with as the land has already been fully cleared of original occupants, is Government owned and EIA etc completed and mitigation required implemented by the KCRC.

12. It would significantly benefit the KCRC patronage especially as the commute on West Rail would be in both a North and South direction and this would improve the life of many. The value of West Rail and the KCRC would be increased.

This alternative more sustainable and attractive proposal for locating Government offices should be seriously considered on a point by point basis and not dismissed without a reasonable consideration and study as necessary. The benefits to the Hong Kong economy, to the residents (not only in the NWNT) should be considered.

Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss.

Rob Pendleton