

For discussion on
4 April 2006

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON SECURITY PROPOSED CUSTOMS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

PURPOSE

This paper sets out the proposal to construct a headquarters building for the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED).

BACKGROUND

2. The offices and facilities of the headquarters and various formations of C&ED are presently scattered in different locations and districts of Hong Kong (details at Annex A). This has adversely affected the operational efficiency of the department, raised security concerns and caused inconvenience to members of the public who need to access Customs services in person.

PROPOSAL

3. C&ED proposes to construct a headquarters building to centralise in one location its dispersed offices¹. A site of about 2 944 square metres (m²) at the junction of Java Road and Tin Chiu Street in North Point has been identified for this purpose. Based on an initial plan, the proposed building would have 32 storeys with construction floor area of about 65 200 m² to accommodate offices, general and special facilities and a car park.

4. The project will also include the reprovisioning of the existing Marble Road Refuse Collection Point (RCP) adjoining the site, which will be separately accommodated at the ground level of the proposed building. Given the size of the existing RCP site, it is impractical and inefficient to develop it singly. Incorporating the RCP into the proposed building allows the unused plot ratio of the RCP site to be fully utilized. Temporary refuse collection facilities will be provided adjacent to the site during the construction period. A site plan of the project is at Annex B.

¹ Except those that need to base at specific locations for operational efficacy such as the formations at the airport, land border control points, container terminals and training school

Proposed scope of works

5. The proposed building will have a net operating office area of 27 567 m². It will accommodate some 1 850 C&ED staff of 25 administrative and operational formations. It will also provide common facilities for use by all C&ED staff.

6. Specifically, the proposed building will provide the following offices and facilities for C&ED -

- (a) offices for command and control, intelligence processing, investigation, information technology support and general administration;
- (b) specialised facilities including a radio command control centre*, video interview rooms, detention rooms, an identification parade room*, a strong room, an indoor firing range*, an armoury, an information technology centre and a computer forensic laboratory; and
- (c) general facilities including conference rooms, a customer service centre, a multi-purpose auditorium*, an exhibition centre*, a library cum resource centre, barracks*, locker and changing facilities, mess cum multi-purpose reception facilities, staff catering and fitness training facilities, building management offices, and car parking spaces.

(* indicates new facilities)

A schedule of accommodation of the building is at Annex C.

JUSTIFICATIONS

Enhance operational efficiency

7. Not only are different C&ED formations presently scattered in various locations, some divisional offices within the same formation are accommodated under different roofs. This is not conducive to effective staff communication and management. It also impedes effective resource deployment and creates additional barriers to operations which require cross-formation participation and planning. Typical examples are large scale operations to combat intellectual property violation, illicit cigarettes or illicit fuel, where joint efforts among different investigation

formations are necessary to support surveillance, intelligence collation and analysis, and overall back-up. Furthermore, the dispersed offices make it more difficult for the Department to protect the confidentiality of the tasks and/or the persons involved, especially in cases involving large scale manpower and supporting resources. Bringing the offices under one roof will enable more effective and efficient command and control. Pooling resources together will also eliminate unnecessary duplications of common facilities such as conference venues and video interview rooms.

Improve security

8. The existing investigation offices of C&ED are housed in general government or commercial buildings accommodating other users such as other government departments or commercial firms, and are generally accessible to the public. The security measures adopted in these buildings generally fall short of the security requirements of a law enforcement agency. This is undesirable especially in respect of serious crimes like drug trafficking, smuggling and money laundering. Conveyance of arrested persons and seized goods in lifts and passages into and out of such buildings involves security risks, not to mention that it causes inconvenience to other users. An independent Customs headquarters building will enable the Department to prescribe different levels of access control in different security zones. Arrested persons and seized goods will be processed in a secluded and secured environment, such as dedicated car parking floors with special escort passages which are not accessible to members of the public.

Improve customer services

9. The proposed headquarters building will centralize the various currently dispersed public services on licence and permit applications. At present, licensing services for dutiable commodities, optical discs and controlled chemicals, and assessment of motor vehicle first registration tax are located in Central, Kowloon Bay and North Point respectively, which can be confusing to licence applicants. With the proposed headquarters building, C&ED will provide a customer service centre at a single location to provide centralized counter services to the public and to address public enquiries on Customs services.

Meet shortfall of office space and provide new facilities

10. In the past ten years, the number of cases involving violation of customs related laws has doubled from 36 000 to 71 000 annually. Additional space is required for the accommodation of staff, for case

processing, storage of seizures and exhibits, and for other administrative support functions. The proposed building will help meet the current shortfall of some 2 800 m² of office space of various formations to be relocated to the new building.

11. It is also necessary to improve certain existing facilities or add new facilities to meet operational requirements, including –

- (a) An indoor firing range. The outdoor firing range at the Customs Training School at Tai Lam has been in use for more than 20 years. It is small in size and lacks a number of standard training facilities such as dim light shooting and computer simulation shooting exercises, which cannot be performed outdoor. Furthermore, the use of the outdoor firing range is subject to weather conditions. With over 4 000 staff requiring regular firearms training two to three times a year and other types of specialist training, the department requires a minimum of 355 firearms training days a year, but the existing firing range can only support some 210 training days a year. Under such constraint, C&ED has to sometimes cut down the non-core training courses, as well as to borrow firing range facilities from other disciplined services. Borrowing facilities is unsatisfactory, as the training programmes are tied down by the availability of borrowed facilities.
- (b) A radio command control centre with upgraded facilities to enhance enforcement capability. The new radio command control centre will function as the Department's command post for major joint operations, and for contingency situations. It will also provide the infrastructural support for any new radio communication system for the C&ED.
- (c) An identification parade room. At present, C&ED has no identification parade room and uses those of other disciplined services. This may slow down the investigation progress as identification of suspects will be subject to the availability of identification parade rooms.
- (d) An up-to-standard information technology centre to centrally house the information technology systems, and other ancillary and back-up facilities. This will enhance computer system management and sharing of computer resources. This will also serve as an infrastructural platform for the Department to

take forward future information technology projects for meeting C&ED's business needs.

- (e) A multi-purpose auditorium with sufficient seating capacity for holding large scale events such as training seminars, briefing sessions, international conferences and Customs-business symposiums with the industries. At present, the Department has to rent or borrow outside venues.
- (f) Barracks for officers who need to work long hours in the investigation formations, or who perform overnight or standby duties during contingency situations.
- (g) An exhibition centre, open to the public, for the display of C&ED's enforcement experiences and services for public education and to enhance public awareness of the Department's work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. We estimate the total capital cost of the project to be \$1,073.4 million in money-of-the-day (MOD) prices, made up as follows –

	\$ million
(a) Site works	6.1
(b) Piling	97.5
(c) Building	470.6
(d) Building services	246.8
(e) Drainage	1.4
(f) External works and soft landscape	3.5
(g) Furniture and equipment	75.0
(h) Re provisioning of the RCP	11.1
(i) Temporary RCP	7.0
(j) Consultants' fees for construction stage	3.8
(k) Contingencies	84.4
Sub-total (in September 2005 prices)	1,007.2
(l) Provision for price adjustment	66.2
Total (in MOD prices)	1,073.4

13. The estimated additional annual recurrent expenditure arising from the project, including that associated with the new RCP, is in the region of \$30.8 million.

14. When the existing C&ED offices (detailed at Annex A) are relocated to the proposed headquarters building, about 5 300 m² of rented office accommodation and 33 rented car parking spaces could be released, resulting in rental saving of about \$17 million per year. In addition, about 18 600 m² of government owned office accommodation and 113 Government owned car parking spaces could be released for use by other departments.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

15. When the project was initially proposed in 1998, C&ED consulted the Eastern Provisional District Board in November 1998. In June and July 2002, the Administration consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Commerce and Industry. The Panel supported the project in principle. The project was then not further taken forward owing to other priorities at the time.

16. In view of the operational need for a C&ED headquarters building, we recommend that the proposed project should proceed. C&ED consulted the Eastern District Council again in October and December 2005. Members supported the proposal in principle.

WAY FORWARD

17. Subject to Members' views, we plan to submit the proposed project to the Public Works Sub-Committee in May 2006 and to the Finance Committee in June 2006 for upgrading the project to category A. Subject to funding approval, we plan to start construction in 2007 for completion in 2010.

Security Bureau
March 2006

**Existing Locations of Customs and Excise Offices to be Relocated to
Customs Headquarters Building**

(I) Hong Kong

Location	Premises	Major formations
Central	Harbour Building	Directorate's office General Investigation & Systems Bureau Headquarters Building Project Team Internal Audit Division Information Unit Office of Departmental Administration Office of Service Administration Office of Dutiable Commodities Administration* Office of Management Services Office of Financial Administration Office of Information Technology Office of Strategic Research Office of Planning and Development Special Duties Team
Central	Rumsey Street Multi-storey Carpark Building	Customs Drugs Investigation Bureau Customs Liaison Bureau Intelligence Bureau Office of Service Quality Office of Service Administration
Central	Nam Fung Tower	Customs Drug Investigation Bureau Office of Financial Administration
Causeway Bay	Victoria Centre	Ports and Maritime Command (Marine Strike and Support Division)
North Point	North Point Government Offices Building	Consumer Protection & Prosecution Bureau Customs Drugs Investigation Bureau* Intelligence Bureau Office of Information Technology Office of Departmental Administration Office of Training & Development Office of Dutiable Commodities Administration*

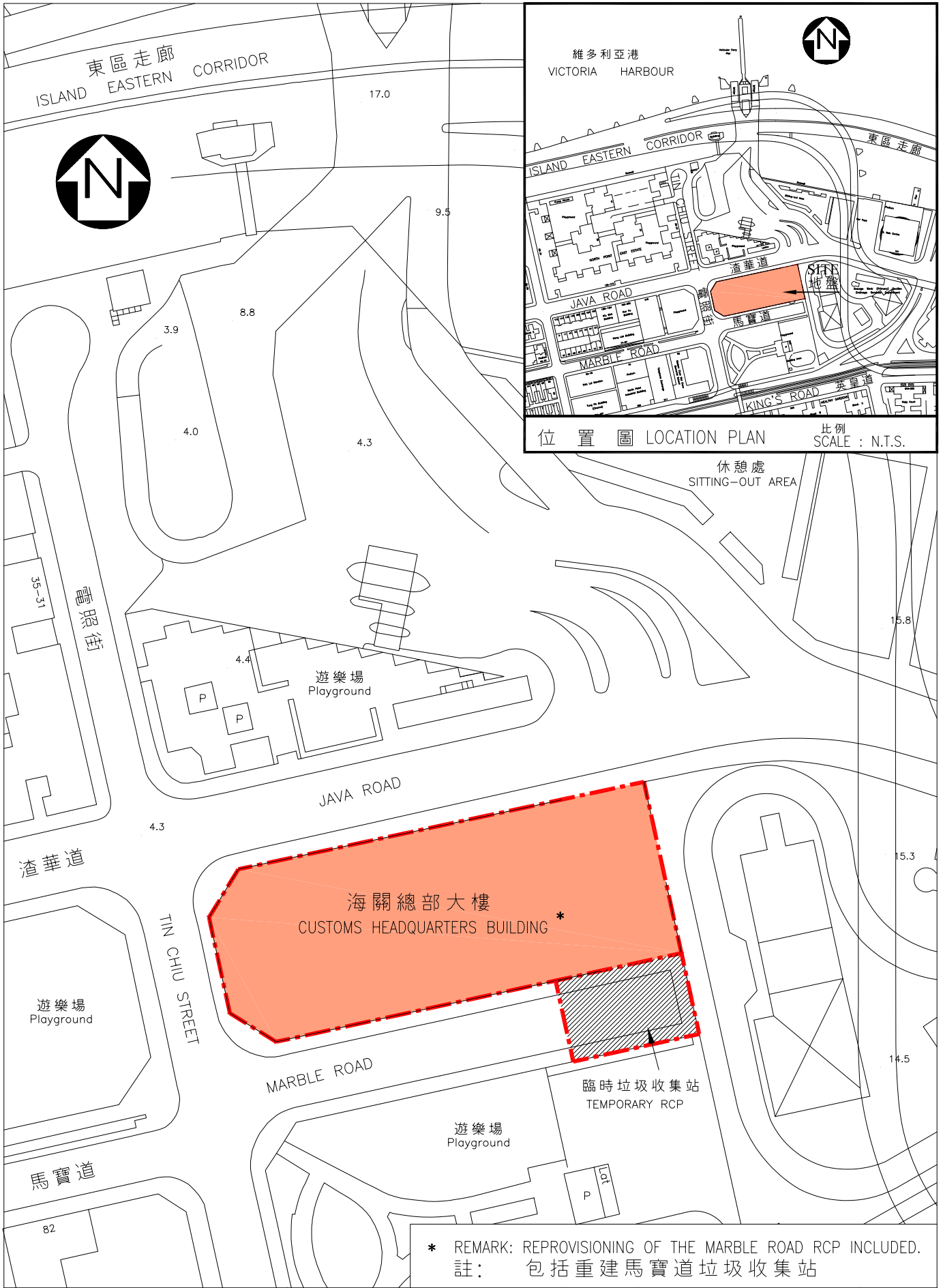
(II) Kowloon

Location	Premises	Major formations
Tsim Sha Tsui	Middle Road Multi-storey Carpark Building	Intelligence Bureau Office of Information Technology Revenue and General Investigation Bureau Special Task Force
Kowloon Bay	Nan Fung Commercial Centre	General Investigation & Systems Bureau
Kowloon Bay	Skyline Tower	Complaints Investigation Group Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau* Intelligence Bureau

(III) New Territories

Location	Premises	Major formations
Tsuen Wan	Tsuen Wan Government Offices Building	Office of Training & Development
Kwai Chung	Kwai Chung Customhouse	Special Task Force
Kwai Chung	Kwai Hing Government Offices Building	Office of Dutiable Commodities Administration

* Offices which provide public service on licence and permit applications



* REMARK: REPROVISIONING OF THE MARBLE ROAD RCP INCLUDED.
 註： 包括重建馬寶道垃圾收集站

065KA 海關總部大樓 CUSTOMS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AT TIN CHIU STREET, NORTH POINT	drawn by	date	drawing no.	scale
	approved	date	5990/DB001	1:1000
PROJECT MANAGEMENT BRANCH			 ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT	

**Customs Headquarters Building
Schedule of Accommodation**

Annex C

	Existing Area (m ²)	Area required (m ²)
A) Office Area	16,722.0	19,498.1 (+17%)
B) Common Facilities	5,265.0	8,068.8 (+53%)
<i>(i) Special Facilities</i>		
• Radio command control centre	43.2	287.0
• Video interview rooms (8)	96.4	100.0
• Detention rooms (20)	164.4	153.0
• Identification parade room	-	145.0
• Strong room	85.0	120.0
• Firing range	680.0	1,239.0
	(outdoor)	(indoor)
• Armoury	134.2	309.9
• Information technology centre	424.0	906.3
• Computer forensic laboratory	102.0	250.0
<i>Special Facilities Subtotal (m²):</i>	<i>1,729.2</i>	<i>3,510.2</i> (+103%)
<i>(ii) General Facilities</i>		
• Customer service centre	1,238.3	886.6
• Multi-purpose auditorium	-	300.0
• Exhibition centre	35.0	200.0
• Library cum resource centre	72.5	200.0
• Conference rooms (7)	543.0	265.0
• Barracks (4)	-	250.0
• Locker and changing rooms (4)	250.8	595.0
• Mess cum multi-purpose reception facilities	950.0	950.0
• Canteen	160.0	160.0
• Fitness room	142.0	200.0
• Recreation room	80.0	130.0
• Printing room	24.2	20.0
• Driver's waiting room and vehicle accessories store	40.0	45.0
• Building management office and store	-	357.0
• Carparking space	208 nos.	201 nos.
<i>General Facilities Subtotal (m²):</i>	<i>3,535.8</i>	<i>4,558.6</i> (+29%)
Total (m²):	21,987.0	27,566.9 (+25%)

() Denotes number of facilities required at the Customs Headquarters Building