

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1652/10-11
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

Minutes of special meeting
held on Tuesday, 23 November 2010, at 5:00 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

Members absent : Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat

Public officers attending : Agenda item I

Mrs Carrie LAM CHENG Yuet-ngor, GBS, JP
Secretary for Development

Mr Thomas CHOW Tat-ming, JP
Permanent Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands)

Ms Gracie FOO Siu-wai, JP
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands)1

Ms Phyllis LI Chi-miu
Assistant Director of Planning / Special Duties

Mr Tom MING Kay-chuen
Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Attendance by invitation : Agenda item I

Ms Annelise CONNELL

Ms Melanie MOORE
Representative
Lung Fu Shan Environmental Concern Group

Mr Kelvin SIT
Research Officer
The Professional Commons

Mr Albert LAI Kwong-tak
Vice-chairman
Civic Party

Miss HO Ka-po
Project Manager
Green Sense

Mr Evans IU Po-lung
President
Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

Ms Katty LAW
Convener
Central & Western Concern Group

Mr CHAN Hok-fung

Ms Anna S Y KWONG
President
Hong Kong Institute of Architects

Prof Bernard V LIM, JP
President
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design

Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN
Chief Executive Officer
Designing Hong Kong Limited

Miss Winnie WAI
Member
CW Power

Ir Prof Reuben CHU Pui-kwan
President
Hong Kong Institute of Engineers

Mr Wilhelm TANG Wai-chung
Convenor
Action Group on Presentation of Heritage in Central
and Western District

Mr YONG Chak-cheong
Representative
United Social Service Centre

Mr HUI Chi-fung
Representative
Heritage Guard

Ms CHENG Lai-king
Central and Western District Council member

Mr MAN Chi-wah
Member
Central and Western District Council

Mr CHIU Kin-keung
Director, Rights and Benefits committee
Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees
General Union in Hong Kong

Mr Michael MO
Representative
Community Development Initiative

Clerk in attendance : Mr Stephen LAM
Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance: Mr Simon CHEUNG
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

- I Proposed redevelopment scheme for West Wing of Central Government Offices**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)2867/09-10(01) -- Administration's paper on proposed redevelopment scheme for West Wing of Central Government Offices
- LC Paper No. CB(1)155/10-11(08) -- Paper on conserving Central -- redevelopment scheme of West Wing, Central Government Offices prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief))

Submissions from organizations/individuals not attending the meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)187/10-11(01) -- Submission from The Conservancy Association dated 22 October 2010
- LC Paper No. CB(1)515/10-11(03) -- Submission from The Hong Kong Construction Association Limited dated 19 November 2010)

Members noted the following submissions tabled at the meeting --

- (a) Submission from Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union dated 18 November 2010;
(*LC Paper No. CB(1)555/10-11(01)*)
- Submission from The Professional Commons dated 23 November 2010;
(*LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(01)*)
- (b) Submission from Central & Western Concern Group;
(*LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(02)*)
- (c) Submission from the Hong Kong Institute of Engineers;
(*LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(03)*)
- (d) Submission from Mr KJR Borthwick dated 19 November 2010;
and
(*LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(04)*)
- (e) Joint submission from various parties.
(*LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(05)*)

(Post-meeting note: Soft copy of the submission dated 29 November 2010 from the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong (LC Papers No. CB(1)634/10-11(01) was issued by email on 1 December 2010.)

Presentation by deputations

2. The Chairman welcomed the deputations and invited them to present their views.

Ms Annelise CONNELL

(LC Paper No. CB(1)477/10-11(01) issued on 17 November 2010)

3. Ms Annelise CONNELL delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in her submission. She objected to the Administration's proposal to sell Inland Lot 564 where the Central Government Offices (CGO) West Wing currently stood. The Government resumed the land in 1934 on the ground that it would be put to public use. It never did. By proposing to sell part of the land for building a commercial complex, the Administration was operating contrary to the intent of land resumption. In sum, the Administration's move was a huge mistake involving legal issues.

Lung Fu Shan Environmental Concern Group

(LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(05), tabled and soft copy issued by email on 25 November 2010)

4. Ms Melanie MOORE, Representative, Lung Fu Shan Environmental Concern Group, delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in her submission which formed part of a joint statement with other signatories. She believed that the Government Hill should be conserved as a whole for public use. She had no confidence that the developer would be keen to preserve the existing trees and greenery on the West Wing site after acquiring the land. She urged the Administration to remove the gates around CGO to facilitate pedestrian accessibility from Botanic Garden down to Central, and vice versa.

The Professional Commons

(LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(01), tabled and soft copy issued by email on 25 November 2010)

5. Mr Kelvin SIT, Research Officer, The Professional Commons, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in his submission. A study by the group showed that there was no genuine need to demolish CGO West Wing for commercial development, given that 9.53 million square feet of Grade A office space would be turned out to the market in the future. Increasing traffic flow and worsening air quality,

redevelopment of CGO West Wing would have a negative impact on the environment of Central.

Civic Party

(LC Paper No. CB(1)515/10-11(01) issued on 22 November 2010)

6. Mr Albert LAI Kwong-tak, Vice-chairman, Civic Party, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in his submission. He said Civic Party (CP) did not see an "overriding need" for the Administration to sell the land for \$6 to \$7 billion which was negligible in comparison with the huge fiscal reserve of the Government. Besides, there would be no shortage of Grade A office space in Hong Kong. CP was worried that the CGO West Wing site would repeat the same mistake committed by the Administration in the redevelopment of the Former Marine Police Headquarters in Tsim Sha Tsui.

Green Sense

(LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(05), tabled and soft copy issued by email on 25 November 2010)

7. Miss HO Ka-po, Project Manager, Green Sense, delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in her submission which formed part of a joint statement with other signatories. Green Sense did not support the proposed CGO West Wing redevelopment project, fearing that it would break up the integrity of Government Hill, produce unnecessary construction waste and adversely affect the traffic and environment of Central.

Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

8. Mr Evans IU Po-lung, President, Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, said the Institute in principle supported the redevelopment proposal. It believed that the Administration should strive to preserve trees and greeneries on site, and maintain tranquillity of the public open space for the use by visitors and those working in Central. Further, efforts should be made to improve the landscape, designs of the commercial complex and pedestrian accessibility of the site round the clock.

Central & Western Concern Group
(LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(05), tabled and soft copy issued by email on 25 November 2010)

9. Ms Katty LAW, Convener, Central & Western Concern Group, delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in her submission which formed part of a joint statement with other signatories. She reiterated the Group's objection to any of the Administration's attempt to sell the Government Hill which she believed was an important public asset owned by the people of Hong Kong. It was inappropriate for the Administration to mislead general public by conducting a consultation after presenting the redevelopment proposal to the Town Planning Board (TPB). The Administration should withhold land sale, and conduct a fresh round of public consultation seeking public views on the sale of the Government Hill for private development.

Mr CHAN Hok-fung

10. Mr CHAN Hok-fung opined that it was wrong to treat heritage conservation simply as maintenance of status quo. In his view, it was possible to revitalise historic buildings/sites by adding new substances to them, and such an approach would work in the CGO West Wing redevelopment scheme. He was worried that the public open area of the site would become another case similar to that of the rear garden of Cheung Kong Centre. It was necessary for the Administration to continue to own and manage the CGO West Wing site. The Administration should scale down the office building/commercial building since this would only induce additional pedestrian flow, more traffic and air pollution.

Hong Kong Institute of Architects
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1025/10-11(01) issued by email on 25 November 2011)

11. Ms Anna S Y KWONG, President, Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) delivered her presentation, the details of which were given in her submission. HKIA believed that the merits for preserving the CGO Complex as a whole were: (a) existing buildings blended in well with natural landscape; (b) West Wing was a fine example of a “climbing building” on a slope; (c) West Wing ensembles with a well-designed site plan. Removal of West Wing and building of new office tower on site was like amputating an arm from a healthy body and attaching an oversized prosthetic arm to the disintegrated body; (d) West Wing and Ice House Street was a prime collective memory of Hong Kong people regarding the

physical presence of the Government; (e) if redevelopment scheme was allowed to proceed, a lot of nuisances would be caused by construction during the redevelopment period; (f) erection of a 150m commercial complex would damage the existing characteristic of the site; and (g) though vertical greening was a trendy building feature, its function as greenery would be of less value in comparison with natural trees that provide both greenery and shade. It was a responsibility for the Administration to provide details of "overriding need", if any, for redevelopment of the CGO site. If financial incentive happened to be the only justification, the Administration should duly consult the public with regard to the financial and cultural benefits arising from keeping and demolishing CGO West Wing.

Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design

(LC Paper No. CB(1)914/10-11(02) issued by email on 24 November 2010)

12. Prof Bernard V LIM, JP, President, Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design (HKIUD), delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the submission of HKIUD. He added that HKIUD in general supported the Administration's proposal, and yet believed that the Administration should revise its approach so that heritage of the site could be maintained, and the negative impacts on environment minimised. Redevelopment of CGO West Wing should be considered with other heritage initiatives within Central in the context of Conserving Central. Efforts should be made to preserve Battery Path, and the vegetated slope and landscaped areas. New buildings, if any, had to match well with the existing buildings. To avoid creating a wall effect, a "stepping design" for the commercial tower should be adopted. Further to above, HKIUD queried the need to bring in the office/commercial tower, since it would not relieve much of the existing shortage of Grade A offices. The proposed mall would increase pedestrian and worsen vehicular congestion and air pollution.

Designing Hong Kong Limited

13. Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN, Chief Executive Officer, Designing Hong Kong Limited, said that Designing Hong Kong objected to the selling of the CGO West Wing site to a private developer. The Administration's proposal would generate unnecessary construction waste for the controlled tipping sites, worsen traffic conditions in Central.

CW Power

(LC Paper No. CB(1)914/10-11(02) issued by email on 24 November 2010)

14. Miss Winnie WAI, Member, CW Power, said that members of CW Power were having diverse views on the CGO West Wing redevelopment proposal. While some members believed that the Government Hill should be preserved as a whole, others acknowledged that more Grade A office space were required in Central to make up the longstanding shortfall. However, if decision was eventually taken to bring in the office/commercial building, CW Power believed that the Administration should set limits on its size and height so that no wall effect would arise. The organisation welcomed the provision of public open space, and urged the Administration not to give up ownership of the land. CW Power did not support the proposal to bring in a shopping mall, and considered it necessary for the Administration to strike a balance between commercial needs, heritage conservation and public interest in taking the project forward.

Hong Kong Institute of Engineers

(LC Paper No. CB(1)585/10-11(03) tabled at the meeting and issued via email on 25 November 2010)

15. Ir Prof Reuben CHU Pui-kwan, President, Hong Kong Institute of Engineers (HKIE), delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the submission of HKIE. HKIE was in support of the Administration's proposal, subject yet to some fine-tuning. The strengths of the proposal were the provision of public open space, more greenery, and improved pedestrian connectivity and air ventilation. HKIE hoped that the Administration could conduct a detailed traffic impact assessment to ascertain that the Administration's proposal could improve traffic in the area.

Action Group on Presentation of Heritage in Central and Western District

16. Mr Wilhelm TANG Wai-chung, Convenor, Action Group on Presentation of Heritage in Central and Western District, said that he saw no reasons why the Administration could not meet the intended objectives by keeping the CGO West Wing site. West Wing contained collective memories of the Hong Kong people, and could be put to other uses in the future if left intact. Demolition of CGO West Wing would run contrary to the Administration's environmental policies.

United Social Service Centre

17. Mr YONG Chak-cheong, Representative, United Social Service Centre said that while the Administration alleged that Central was in short supply of Grade A office, he wished to point out that the district was equally short of communal facilities. To relieve pressure on Grade A office, the Administration should move back all its offices currently in private commercial buildings. He urged the Administration to review its heritage conservation policy afresh, and warned that the CGO West Wing redevelopment scheme, if implemented, would make a real shame to the Government.

Heritage Guard

18. Mr HUI Chi-fung, Representative, Heritage Guard, objected to the Administration's plan to demolish CGO West Wing for redevelopment. The Administration should preserve rather than redevelop CGO. Together with other historic buildings in the vicinity, CGO made up a complete chapter of Hong Kong's history. He did not think the Administration was facing genuine financial pressure making it a must to sell the CGO West Wing site to a private developer.

Ms CHENG Lai-king, Central and Western District Council member

19. Ms CHENG Lai-king, Central and Western District Council member, said that Central & Western District Council (C&W DC) had failed to arrive at a consensus view on CGO redevelopment at its meeting on 6 October 2010. Nevertheless, some DC members including herself were in favour of preserving Government Hill as a whole, as CGO with its surroundings was marking an important chapter of Hong Kong's history. She urged the Administration to remove the iron gates around CGO, and expressed concern that the concerned site would become a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA). She hoped that the Administration could preserve collective memories brought by CGO and the old Victoria City, and extend the consultation period for a year to collect public views.

Central and Western District Council

(LC Paper No. CB(1)515/10-11(02) issued on 22 November 2010)

20. Mr MAN Chi-wah, Member, Central and Western District Council, delivered his presentation, the details of which were given in the submission from Central & Western District Council (C&WDC). Representing

C&WDC, he said that there were diverse views amongst members of C&WDC on the redevelopment scheme. Motions urging the DC to raise objection to the Administration's proposal to construct a 32-storey Grade A office/commercial building on CGO West Wing site had failed to get through at the DC meeting on 6 October 2010. Some members objected to the proposed conversion of the West Wing site to CDA, and believed that the selling of the West Wing site to a private developer would deprive the public of the ownership of the land and upset the Government Hill as a whole. Other members in support of the redevelopment scheme considered it necessary to enhance pedestrian connectivity and greeneries on site. Miss Tanya CHAN queried whether Mr MAN Chi-wah had proper authorisation from C&WDC to speak for it at the meeting.

Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union in Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(1)555/10-11(01) tabled at the meeting and issued by email on 24 November 2010)

21. Mr CHIU Kin-keung, Director, Rights and Benefits committee, Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union in Hong Kong, said his Union supported the Administration's proposed redevelopment scheme, which would benefit substantially the environment of Central and Hong Kong's economy. The Union also supported the Administration using infrastructure projects as a means to create employment opportunities of construction workers. It believed that the CGO West Wing redevelopment scheme would create a large number of jobs, and hoped that the concerned works could be started as soon as practicable. The Union hoped that the Administration could formulate long-term plans to ensure steady employment of construction workers.

Community Development Initiative

22. Mr Michael MO, Representative, Community Development Initiative, believed that the Administration had misled members in different aspects of the CGO West Wing redevelopment scheme. He sought clarification on the public open space, traffic flow analysis and possible damage the planned office/commercial building might bring to the inside of the Government Hill. He also cast doubt on the Administration's information with regard to the connectivity of the green belt and the height of the proposed commercial building. Given the presence of many missing and misleading information, he did not support the redevelopment proposal. He urged the Administration to step up public consultation on the redevelopment

scheme and refrain from damaging the collective memories of Hong Kong people.

Discussion

General views

23. Miss Tanya CHAN urged the Administration to consider HKIA's proposal to exclude the CGO Complex from the Conserving Central package, since its proposal was seeking to redevelop CGO West Wing, rather than to preserve it.

24. Mr IP Kwok-him said that while he believed that more should be done to preserve collective memories of Hong Kong people, the Administration should still be selective in choosing sites and buildings for conservation. As for the CGO Complex, he believed that the retention of the East and Main Wings would be good enough in serving conservation purpose.

25. Mr Paul TSE considered that recent years saw the swinging of the pendulum from "all-out development" to "all-out conservation" in terms of heritage conservation. As long as conservation was concerned, he would opt for a way out in the middle, having duly balanced the concerns of the relevant parties. As for the proposed redevelopment project, he was convinced of the sincerity of the Administration, and believed that in proposing the construction of the office/commercial building on the West Wing site, the Administration was not after revenue.

26. Mr KAM Nai-wai criticised the Administration for misleading members in its promotion leaflet "Restoring Green Central – The New Landscape of Central Government Offices", since there was no guarantee that the redeveloped site would in the future appear in the same way as what had been printed on the leaflet.

27. Mrs Regina IP said that she supported the Administration's plan to retain East and Main Wings, and to redevelop West Wing for the said purposes. She agreed that Hong Kong should be highly selective in selecting best historic buildings for conservation. In this respect, she felt sorry that Hong Kong had let gone the majestic General Post Office and Hong Kong Club Buildings in the past.

.

28. Ir Dr Raymond HO acknowledged the need to handle heritage conservation in a selective way. He urged members and deputations to be objective with the discussion on heritage conservation. The Administration should, after listening to all the views, come up with a further proposal for further discussion.

29. Secretary for Development (SDEV) advised that the proposed redevelopment scheme was based on a master heritage conservation plan, i.e. Conserving Central, promulgated by the Chief Executive in his Policy Address in October 2010. Given the significant conservation elements, she saw no reason why the proposed scheme should be removed from Conserving Central. On CGO West Wing redevelopment scheme, she advised that in order to pave way for the conservation of CGO Complex in the best possible way, the Administration had engaged a well-known firm of conservation architects led by Mr Michael Morrison to conduct an in-depth appraisal study on the historic and architectural value of the CGO buildings. As a result, West Wing had been found by the study to contain low historical significance and architectural merits. She stressed that heritage conservation did not mean that all historic pieces had to be retained, and it was a responsibility for the Government to strike a good balance between the needs for development and the needs for conservation. Assistant Director of Planning / Special Duties supplemented that with an area of about 6 800m², the public open space created by the redevelopment scheme would create an “oasis” within Central. The redevelopment of the West Wing would open up the site and significantly improve the greening and pedestrian connectivity of Central. The Administration would preserve the existing topography and greenery of the area including 11 old and valuable trees.

Comprehensive Development Area and public open space

30. Some members and deputations had expressed concerns about the adverse consequences of converting the land use of the CGO West Wing site into CDA.

31. Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning & Lands) (PSPL) explained that even after CGO West Wing site became CDA, approval from TPB would still be required before the private developer could proceed with each development item. Apart from submitting a master layout plan to TPB, the developer was also required to submit detailed environmental and traffic impact assessment reports on the proposed development. The town planning process, meanwhile, would be highly transparent during which members of the public would have ample opportunities to express their views.

32. Mr IP Kwok-him considered that the intended CDA should be put to diverse uses, for instance the provision of communal facilities, and that the Government should continue to own the public open space to prevent abusive use and mismanagement by the private developer. Mr Alan LEONG cited the 1881 Heritage, Woo Cheong Pawn Shop and other conservation sites as adverse examples for leaving public open space to the management of private developers.

33. SDEV advised that the Administration was willing to consider members and deputations' views on both aspects. The Administration would soon complete formulation of the Public Open Space in Private Developments Design and Management Guidelines which would improve the management of public open space. SDEV further advised that since the Main and East Wings would be occupied by the Department of Justice, she would consult the Secretary for Justice for his views on the future management of this public open space.

The proposal to bring in office/commercial building on site

34. Some deputations and members felt strongly that the Administration should not bring in a high-rise office/commercial building to a historic site, with the bottom floors of it serving as a shopping mall, since this would upset the integrity of the Government Hill and create additional burden to traffic, environment and air quality of the area. Some members called for the Administration to give up the idea of opening a shopping mall or erecting an office/commercial building in its proposal.

35. Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments) advised that the international charters for heritage conservation did not preclude the addition of new elements to heritage sites. Article 5.2 of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) actually stated that "*relative degrees of cultural significance may lead to different conservation actions at a place*". Further to that, Article 22 stated that "*new work such as additions to the place may be acceptable where it does not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place, or detract from its interpretation and appreciation*". Section 4 of the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China set out that heritage sites should be given reasonable utilization on the ground that it would lead to maximum social benefits. Article 5 of the Venice Charter also stipulated that "*the conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose*". To sum up, conservation should be based on

heritage significance. Sites with cultural and historic value should incorporate new elements, where appropriate, to cater for new social purposes, and this applied to the CGO Complex case. The Administration's stance led to considerable response from deputations who had different interpretations of the international charters on heritage conservation.

36. Mr Paul TSE opined that the Administration should consider leasing out the lower floors of the office/commercial building, i.e. the shopping mall, to statutory bodies such as Equal Opportunities Commission or Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Personal Data which he understood were facing tenancy problems with the existing office premises. Mrs Regina IP shared view of Mr K J R Borthwick that if decision was taken to bring the office/commercial building to site, appropriate measures should be initiated by the Administration to uphold the dignity of the Government Hill and surrounding areas. In this connection, she wondered whether the Administration could have a say in the occupants of the office/commercial building.

37. SDEV advised that the Administration was willing to re-consider the plan for the shopping mall in the light of members' views. Nonetheless, she believed that it would be difficult for the Administration to regulate the intake of occupants of the office building which would be a private development. The Administration would seriously review the design and uses of the shopping mall.

Impact of the redevelopment project on traffic condition in Central

38. Given that Central was a well-known black-spot of traffic congestion, Miss Tanya CHAN enquired whether the Administration would, as suggested by some deputations, launch an in-depth study on the traffic impact likely to be caused by the redevelopment scheme. Mr IP Kwok-him expressed similar concerns.

39. PSPL advised that according to a preliminary study conducted by the Transport Department, the proposed office/commercial building would generate an additional vehicular flow of 50 small cars per hour, and hence would not exert much pressure on the existing traffic in the area. Further, all passengers would go into or off vehicles "off-street" to minimise adverse effect on traffic flow. In the future, in order to take the office/commercial building project forward, the developer would be required to provide a detailed traffic assessment report on the development to TPB.

Selling of CGO West Wing site for private development

40. Miss Tanya CHAN requested the Administration to clarify whether it was having real financial pressure, thereby making it necessary to sell CGO West Wing site for private development. Given the historic value of the Government Hill, Mr KAM Nai-wai could not understand why the Administration was proposing to sell it. He queried the justifications given by the Administration to bring in the redevelopment scheme, and stressed that even without the scheme, the intended purposes of having more greenery and better pedestrian connection were still achievable. He reiterated that Government Hill as a public asset belonging to the Hong Kong people. Under no circumstances should it be surrendered to any private developers. Citing the presentation by Ms Connell, he enquired whether the Administration had already resolved the land resumption legal problem putting the West Wing site to public use. PSPL responded that the Administration did not consider that there was a legal problem relating to the land resumption a long time ago.

41. SDEV advised that the proposal to bring in a private office/commercial building on site was a well-thought move aiming to help meet the city's demand for Grade A offices, after balancing carefully the needs for development and conservation. By way of illustration, for the sake of heritage conservation, the Administration had decided not to demolish the Central Market and the Police Married Quarters at Hollywood Road to give way for heritage conservation.

Public consultation

42. Mr Alan LEONG queried the Administration's approach in gauging and processing public views, and was concerned whether an effective mechanism was in place to truly involve Hong Kong people in heritage conservation.

43. SDEV responded that the Administration had already done a lot of work consulting the public on heritage conservation. Yet, she agreed that public consultation was not an exact science, as it was always difficult to quantify and interpret public views. On the CGO West Wing redevelopment scheme, the Administration had received a lot of views. While there were calls to revise the redevelopment scheme, many of the views gauged were supportive. The Administration would extend the two-month consultation period for a further month, and aimed to present a revised proposal to the Panel for consideration in early 2011.

II Any other business

44. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:20 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 March 2011