

**Panel on Development
117KA - Relocation of
New Territories West Regional Office
and Water Resources Education Centre
of Water Supplies Department to Tin Shui Wai**

Follow-up Issues of the Meeting held on 24 March 2015

At the meeting on 24 March 2015, the Panel on Development discussed the LC Paper No. CB(1)650/14-15(03) on “117KA - Relocation of New Territories West Regional Office and Water Resources Education Centre of Water Supplies Department to Tin Shui Wai”. Members requested supplementary information on utilisation of GIC site and the rationale for setting the plot ratio (PR) of the project site concerned at 3. This note sets out our response.

Optimising Site Utilisation of Capital Works Projects

2. It is the Government’s established policy to optimise site utilisation of capital works projects including Government, Institution and Community (G/IC) facilities. Arrangements are in place to ensure that relevant government bureaux and departments take steps to economise the use of land resources and optimise the utilisation of G/IC sites –

- (i) The Planning Department (PlanD) will conduct an independent assessment of the appropriate development parameters including height and PR, having regard to the surrounding planning context, prevailing planning parameters, site characteristics, development restrictions/constraints and the nature of the proposed G/IC facilities.
- (ii) The Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) will conduct an initial assessment on whether the proposed user requirements could be accommodated and the PR likely to be achieved.
- (iii) If the proposed development cannot fully achieve an optimal degree of site utilisation, the Government Property Agency (GPA) will advise the project proponent to further enhance site utilisation by exploring different measures, such as incorporating more facilities to the development,

reducing the site area, identifying suitable joint user(s), etc. There had also been cases where the project proponent searched for another site, or used the reserved site on an interim basis whilst allowing room for possible full scale development of the site in future.

- (iv) In the exceptional case where the project proponent considers it necessary to take forward the project notwithstanding that the site potential cannot be optimised according to GPA's initial assessment, there is a mechanism in place whereby the project proponent is required to refer the case to a committee convened by the Treasury Branch of the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau for a decision. The committee will consider the case taking into account of all relevant factors, including whether the site has other competing uses, the operational justifications for early implementation of the project, environmental considerations and efforts made to enhance utilisation of the site potential, etc.

Development Intensity for G/IC Facilities

Increasing Development Intensity for Residential Developments

3. As announced in the 2014 Policy Address, in order to maximise the utilisation of scarce land resources and to meet the acute demand for housing land, the Government will, as a matter of policy, increase the maximum domestic PR that can be allowed in the relevant "Density Zones" of the Main Urban Areas and New Towns by around 20% as appropriate and where planning terms permit, except for the north of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula which are already densely populated.

4. This however does not mean an automatic increase in development intensity for individual housing sites. The increase in the PR of individual housing sites would continue to be subject to necessary approval by the Town Planning Board (TPB) under the statutory planning mechanism, where applicable. In assessing such cases, the PlanD will continue to take into account relevant planning considerations such as the traffic and infrastructure capacity in the area; the existing characters and development intensity of the neighbourhood; the potential environmental, visual and air ventilation impacts, etc. in determining the domestic PR of each housing site. The increase in the maximum domestic PR of a

site will continue to be subject to relevant planning principles and considerations, and will be pursued only when there is scope in terms of development capacity, and the various constraints and impacts so arising, if any, could be addressed or mitigated through appropriate measures.

Optimising Land Utilisation for G/IC Facilities

5. While the above policy of increasing the maximum domestic PR applies to residential developments, the Government is also mindful to optimise the utilisation of land resources in other cases, including G/IC facilities. For instance, G/IC facilities that may co-locate with other developments would be considered for incorporation into new residential and commercial developments, where appropriate. Where standalone G/IC facilities are to be developed as capital works projects, mechanisms are already in place as set out above to optimise the site utilisation.

6. From the planning and urban design perspective, certain G/IC facilities together with other open-air or low-rise facilities in areas zoned “Open Space” and “Amenity Areas” often serve as buffer zones and visual and spatial relief in the urban core among high density developments to create design variations, and are often placed on visual or wind corridors to improve ventilation and visual permeability. Hence, facilities on these G/IC sites would not normally be developed to the same intensity and height as surrounding residential or commercial developments. Moreover, openness is required for some facilities such as schools, sports centres, community and cultural centres, either to provide appropriate educational environment, civic landmark and space for outdoor activities, or as urban relief in a densely populated neighbourhood.

7. When determining the reference PR for such G/IC facilities, more weight will be given to the above urban design considerations and special user requirements. PlanD would consult ArchSD on the special user requirements and design considerations and GPA on possible joint users. However, for development of other facilities that are similar to private developments, such as government offices and departmental quarters, PlanD will also make reference to the PR of surrounding developments and the relevant planning context and considerations in determining the optimal PR.

Proposed Relocation of New Territories West Regional Office and Water Resources Education Centre of Water Supplies Department to Tin Shui Wai

8. The Government applies the general principles stated in paragraphs 2 to 7 above in capital works projects, including the proposed Relocation of New Territories West Regional Office and Water Resources Education Centre of Water Supplies Department to Tin Shui Wai. The concerned site is zoned “G/IC” under the relevant Outline Zoning Plan (OZP). It is surrounded by a secondary school in the south, a swimming pool complex in the west, rural areas in the east, and open spaces in the north which form a continuous green corridor and visual linkage connecting the new town with rural areas in the west.

9. Based on the project scope in the signed Project Definition Statement (PDS) issued in January 2013, ArchSD conducted an initial assessment for design scheme and considered that a PR of 3.0 with a maximum building height (BH) of 7 storeys was likely to accommodate the requirements of the PDS. In February 2013, PlanD confirmed that this level of development was appropriate for the project site taking into account the nature of the proposed development with reference to the design scheme as proposed by ArchSD and relevant planning considerations including the land uses and development intensities nearby, local character and potential air ventilation and visual impacts.

Development Bureau
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