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(Attn: Ms Doris LO)
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3 October 2018

Dear Ms Lo,

**Legislative Council
Public Works Subcommittee
23 PP – Reprovisioning of the Hong Kong Post's Headquarters**

Regarding the information requested by Members at the meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) held on 22 June 2018, in consultation with the relevant departments, the consolidated reply is as follows.

Setting out the relevant technical data to compare the commercial floor area to be provided by retaining the General Post Office (GPO) building after appropriate additions/alterations, and the commercial floor area to be provided by demolishing the GPO building for rebuilding into new commercial buildings.

2. The existing construction floor area (CFA)¹ of the GPO building is some 19 000m². Whether the GPO building could be retained for appropriate additions/alterations for converting into commercial uses is subject to detailed investigation. However, even if additions/alterations to the GPO building may be structurally possible, there are limitations in converting the building into offices due to the following technical reasons

- (a) modern offices require a floor-to-floor height of more than 4m in general for accommodating the necessary facilities. Most of the floors of the GPO building have a floor-to-floor height of less than 4m and in some floors it is even less than 3m. Accordingly, without demolishing and altering the internal floor slabs of the existing building, the converted GPO building will not be able to fulfil the basic floor height requirement of a modern office;
- (b) the GPO building was commissioned in 1976. To ensure compliance with the present-day requirements of the Buildings Ordinance and other relevant legislations, considerable changes to the interior architectural layout will be required for this 42-year-old building, such as adding facilities like toilets, staircases, elevators, barrier-free access and enhanced fire service installation, etc. These facilities would take up space, hence further reducing the area of the GPO building which could be used as offices; and
- (c) at present, the CFA of the top floor of the GPO building is just some 2 500m², which is less than that of other floors. According to a preliminary assessment, two floors may be added on top of the roof floor providing an additional CFA of some 5 000m². On the other hand, the height of the existing GPO building is some 30mPD. Assuming a floor-to-floor height of about 4m, adding two storeys will only bring its height to some 38mPD, which could not fully

¹ CFA includes all gross floor area (GFA) and construction area, such as car parks, mechanical plant rooms, refuge floors, etc.; accordingly CFA is numerically larger than GFA.

utilise the height limit of 50mPD (see paragraph 3 below), not allowing the development potential of the location to be released in full.

3. According to the planning brief of Site 3, the site can potentially provide a maximum commercial GFA of 150 000m². How much of this would be attributable to the development of the existing GPO building site, i.e. the specific commercial GFA that could be provided by redeveloping the site after the demolition of the GPO building, would be subject to the design of the future developer. However, in view of the stringent building height restriction of Site 3 (50mPD and 16 mPD for the western and eastern portion respectively), and the requirement of having stepped building height from the inland towards the harbourfront, the GPO building is standing on the part of Site 3 (i.e. the south-western corner of Site 3) that enjoys the highest permissible building height.

4. In addition, the south-western portion of Site 3 where the GPO building is located has a total area of some 5 900m² (see area in purple in **Annex 1**), of which some 3 900m² is currently occupied by the GPO building and its ancillary facilities. Due to development constraints such as road access, underground utilities and infrastructure, etc., as well as requirements for new buildings under the prevalent building code including building separation and ventilation etc., it would not be possible to construct a new commercial building at the area in purple in Annex 1 if the GPO building were to stay. In other words, this would render the area where the existing GPO building currently stands, as well as its surrounding open space and underground space, not being optimised. The overall development potential of Site 3 would be impeded, which would in turn affect the potential of achieving the maximum commercial GFA of 150 000m² at Site 3.

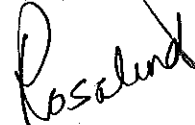
5. Due to the abovementioned circumstances, we are of the view that the loss in commercial GFA by retaining the GPO building could not be compensated by any alterations or additions to the GPO building. Moreover, retaining the GPO building will render the design concept recommended by the Urban Design Study of the New Central Harbourfront (see **Annex 2**) not realisable. The design concept has balanced the need between development and public enjoyment of the harbourfront, providing quality and green public open space for public

enjoyment at this prime harbourfront location² while increasing the supply of Grade A office in the Core Business District.

The commercial GFA to be provided by the Rumsey Street Carpark site after its conversion into commercial use.

6. Relevant departments need to carry out technical assessments in respect of land use compatibility, traffic, visual impact, ventilation etc., for converting the Rumsey Street Carpark into commercial use, and will formulate development parameters taking into account the results of the technical assessments and other relevant factors. Therefore, the parameters of the proposed development are not available at present. Upon completion of the relevant assessments and preparatory work, the Government will consult the public, including the Central and Western District Council, and proceed with the required town planning procedure.

Yours sincerely,



(Rosalind Cheung)
for Secretary for Development

² The future developer is required to provide no less than 25 000m² public open space (i.e. over half of the total site area of 47 500 m² of Site 3), of which 12 000m² will be at grade.



Proposed Development at Site 3 三號用地建議發展項目