

THE EXPERIENCE GROUP

CB(1)769/04-05(03)

17th January, 2005

Panel on Economic Services and Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
c/o Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

Re: Domestic Heliport In Sheung Wan – Joint Meeting on 31 January 2005

Honorable Chairman and Members,

We agree with the tourism benefits of helicopter flights and the need for supporting infrastructure around Victoria Harbour. It is regrettable that commercial flights have been barred from shared use of the temporary helicopter facility in Causeway Bay – however, rushing a decision on an ad-hoc solution is not sustainable and we propose a comprehensive planning process.

Clearly, helipads and heliports have downsides:

1. Noise
2. They require land around the harbour of which little is left, and material reclamation is not feasible
3. They are obstacles to harbour-front enhancement.

To support a heliport on land anywhere immediately around Victoria Harbour, the following information is required for a sustainable solution:

1. A long-term strategy and comprehensive plan covering all heli pads and ports around the harbour - both existing and required in the future.
2. Any comprehensive plan must demonstrate that the number of heliports is minimized, for example by making sure that facilities are shared by all relevant users.
3. Clear principles must be established including, among others, safety requirements, flight path (security as well as noise mitigation!), available supporting transport infrastructure, and, importantly, noise screening by non-residential HIGH-RISE buildings.
4. Multiple helipads used only for emergencies and high-level security matters could be located around the harbour, as long as they do not obstruct public access (i.e. a landing mark on a roof, grass or pavement).
5. Any design and layout for a proposed site must demonstrate great care for harbour-front enhancement, using the Harbour Planning Principles as guidelines.

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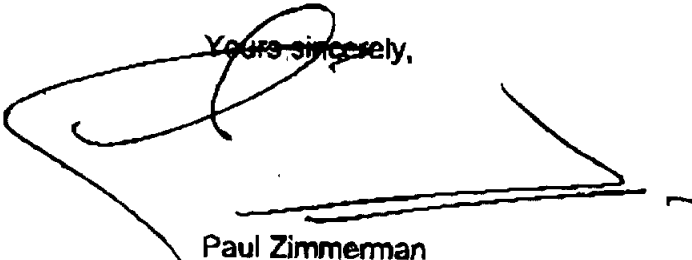
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8. Due public participation is required in deciding on the principles for the final sites. This will also provide the basis for assessing any public overriding needs test required in case the best options involve reclamation. (For example, piling for the conversion of one of the Central Ferry Piers into a heli-port, an additional helicopter pier in Central or Wanchai, or an extension of one of the Macau Ferry Piers).

The proposal for the Sheung Wan site presented to the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee on January 13, 2005 fell short of the above requirements.

Herewith we so submit for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Zimmerman
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Convenor, Designing Hong Kong Harbour District