

NOTE FOR PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Supplementary information on 688CL – Site formation for primary school at Inverness Road, Kowloon City

INTRODUCTION

In considering the paper referenced PWSC(2005-06)40 on the above project at the Public Works Subcommittee meeting held on 11 January 2006, Members requested the Administration to provide the following information before the relevant Finance Committee meeting –

- (a) historical background of the proposed school;
- (b) design plans of the proposed school;
- (c) justifications for the site formation of about 4 000 square metres (m²) of a single level school platform instead of a multi-level platform and the proposed retaining walls, and information on options explored and their relative pros and cons; and
- (d) explanation on why site formation works and the construction of the school would not proceed at the same time.

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THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE

Historical background of the proposed school

2. The proposed school development is for conversion of Bishop Walsh Primary School in Wong Tai Sin district into whole-day operation. A site location plan of the school development is at Enclosure 1.

3. It is Government's policy to implement whole-day primary schooling for virtually all students by the 2007/08 school year. In the 2005/06 school year, over 80% of primary school places are in the whole-day mode. In late 2002, the School Allocation Committee¹ recommended the allocation of a primary school premises at Site 1C under the South East Kowloon Development (SEKD) to the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, the school sponsor of Bishop Walsh Primary School, for the School's conversion into whole-day mode. Subsequently, the Court of Final Appeal's ruling on the interpretation of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance in January 2004 called for a review of the SEKD. The need for a comprehensive review of the SEKD has thus led to the suspension of the school building project at Site 1C. In late 2004, two Legislative Council (LegCo) Case Conferences were held to explore the possibility of allocating a replacement site in Kowloon to the affected school sponsor for the concerned conversion of Bishop Walsh Primary School. Attending LegCo Members requested at that time that a replacement school site should be accorded to the School as a matter of priority. The School Allocation Committee recommended the allocation of the primary school premises at Inverness Road, Kowloon City to the school sponsor for converting Bishop Walsh Primary School to whole-day operation in the 2005 School Allocation Exercise, having considered the views of LegCo Members and other applications for the site from schools awaiting conversion into whole-day operation.

Design plans of the proposed school

4. Preliminary design plans² including perspective view of the proposed school from Lok Fu Park and sections through the proposed school platform are attached at Enclosures 2, 3 and 4.

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¹ The School Allocation Committee makes recommendations to PSEM on the allocation of school premises/sites to suitable school sponsors. The Committee comprises an equal number of official and non-official members familiar with the Hong Kong education system.

² Since the proposed school is still at an early stage of the development, only a preliminary school design is available at present. It is subject to revision, pending further discussion with the school sponsoring body which is encouraged to participate in the design of the school such that the design could cater for its curriculum, teaching and learning needs.

Justifications for the site formation of about 4 000 m² of a single level school platform instead of a multi-level platform and the proposed retaining walls, and information on options explored and their relative pros and cons

5. The Civil Engineering and Development Department and Architectural Services Department, which are responsible for the design of site formation and school construction works respectively, have been working closely to ensure compatibility of their design. Justifications for adopting a single level school platform with retaining walls are -

- (a) the existing site is on sloping ground with a level difference of about 15 metres (m) between its boundaries at Inverness Road (i.e. the low side) and Lok Fu Park (i.e. the high side). Adopting a multi-level platform design to suit the site topography will involve formation of a lower platform adjacent to Inverness Road for loading/unloading of school buses, car parking and access for emergency vehicles and an upper platform adjacent to Lok Fuk Park to accommodate the main bulk of the classroom accommodation. Compared with the single level platform design, this multi-level platform design has the following disadvantages -
 - (i) it will not reduce the scope of site formation works as slope and retaining wall construction works will still be required to cope with the sloping topography of this small site and to make the upper platform safe for school construction. On the other hand, the school construction cost will increase as it will involve construction of school building with deeper foundation and piled decks on the upper platform and the slopes between the lower and upper platforms. The estimated total cost for site formation and school construction for the multi-level platform design is about \$126.0 million, which is about \$5.0 million higher than that for the single level platform design; and
 - (ii) given the relatively small size of the site, multi-level development will result in a relatively high-rise school building which is not desirable for a primary school for safety reasons in the event of an emergency. In terms of operation, time may be wasted when students commute between classrooms and playground.

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In view of the above, the multi-level platform design will not bring about cost-savings. Rather, it will limit the development potential and operational use of this small site.

- (b) a single level platform design with retaining walls can effectively accommodate the school facilities within the height restriction imposed by the Education Ordinance³, and allow more flexibility in school design. To maximize the development potential of the site and obviate the need for an extensive vehicular ramp system, the level of the platform is set to match with the level of the existing access road. Please refer to Enclosures 3 and 4 which illustrate sections through the proposed school platform.

Against the above considerations, the Administration considers it appropriate to adopt a single level platform design for this small site for school development.

Explanation on why site formation works and the construction of the school would not proceed at the same time

6. The Administration considers it appropriate to proceed with the site formation works and construction of the school separately for this particular project. This decision has been made at the planning stage due to both project management and resource considerations.

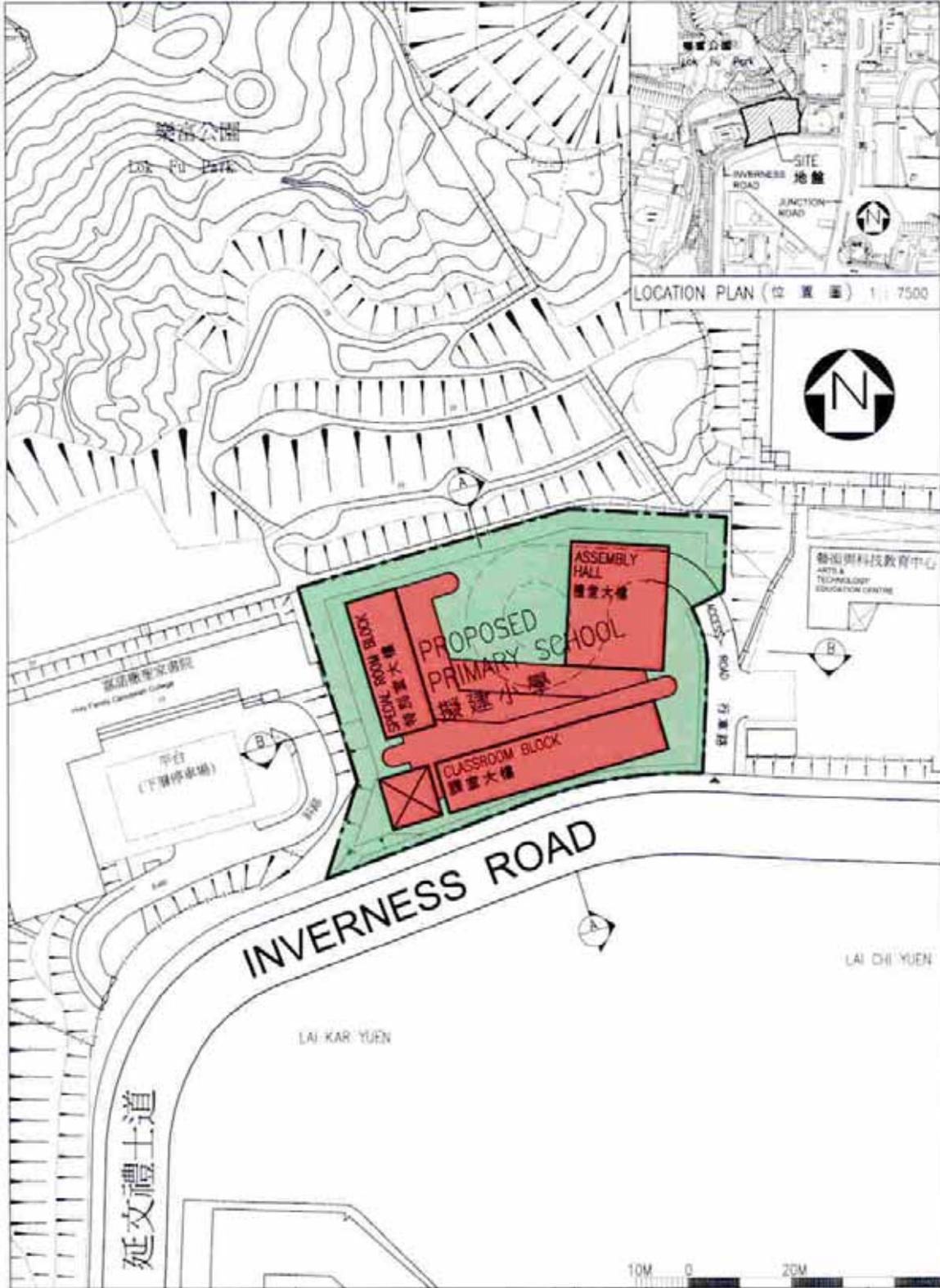
7. As the site is small and that site formation works should be required for the entire site due to the sloping topography, there will not be adequate working space for carrying out site formation and school construction works in parallel. Furthermore, additional temporary site preparatory works will need to be carried out if the school construction works are to commence before completion of the site formation works. Given the above, it is only reasonable, from both the project management point of view and on resource considerations, for the Administration to plan ahead and schedule the commencement of the school construction works to tie in with the completion of the site formation works.

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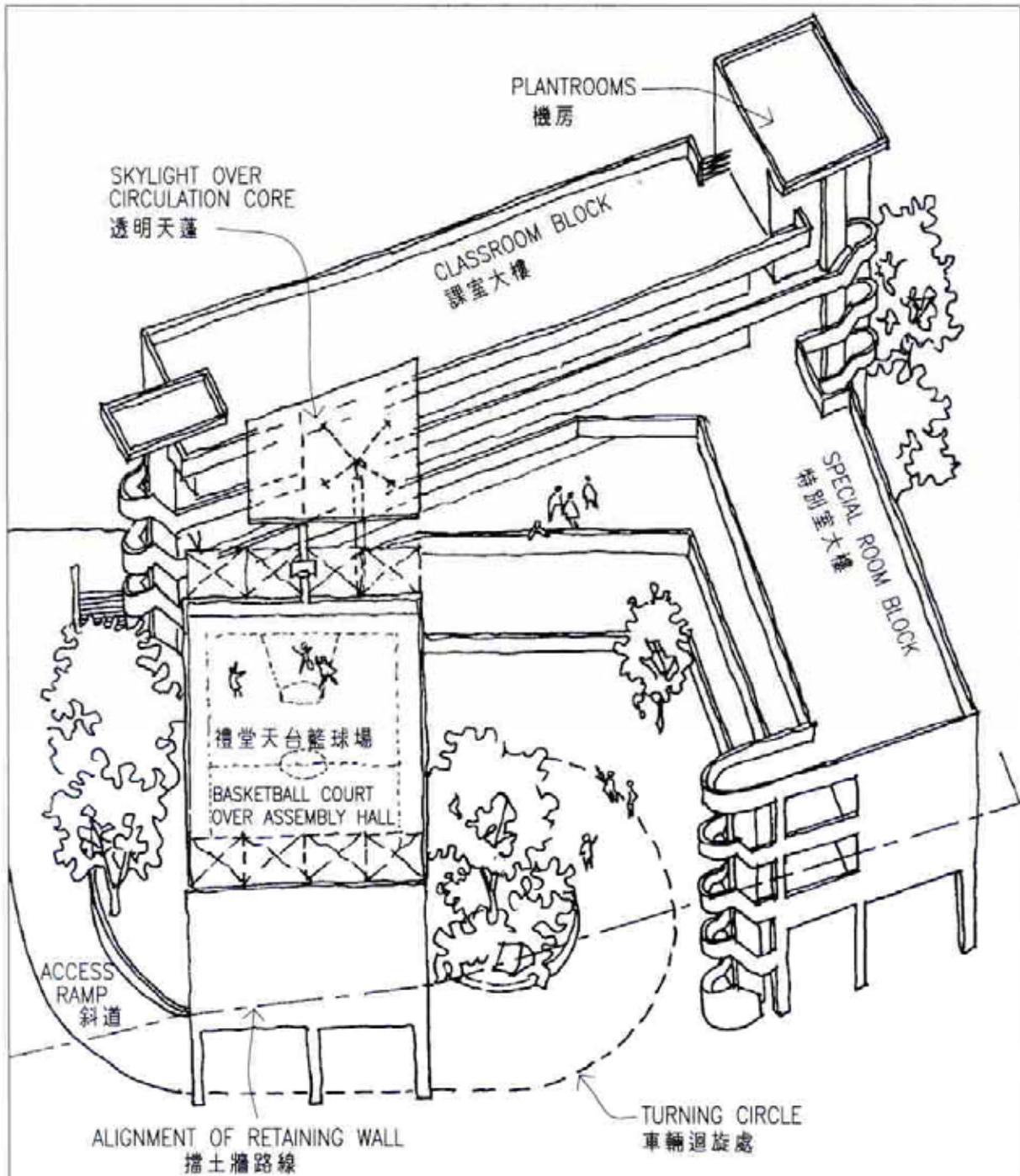
³ Regulation 7 of Chapter 279A Education Regulations under the Education Ordinance stipulates control on the maximum height of schools. It provides that no part of any school premises, except the parapet wall round a roof playground, shall be situated at a height more than 24 m above ground level: Provided that the Permanent Secretary, with the advice of the Director of Fire Services, may by notice in writing authorize that any part of such premises be situated at such height greater than 24 m as may be specified in the notice.

8. We have therefore submitted a funding request for the site formation works first to facilitate the early commencement of the site preparatory work. We plan to submit a separate funding request for Members' consideration when the detailed design and tender documents for the school construction are completed in June 2007 tentatively. We recommend the current approach as the streamlined programme ensures an efficient and cost-effective use of resources in project planning, achieves the earliest commissioning of the site formation works for the school and facilitates Members' scrutiny of the detailed provisions of the school at a later stage.

Education and Manpower Bureau
February 2006

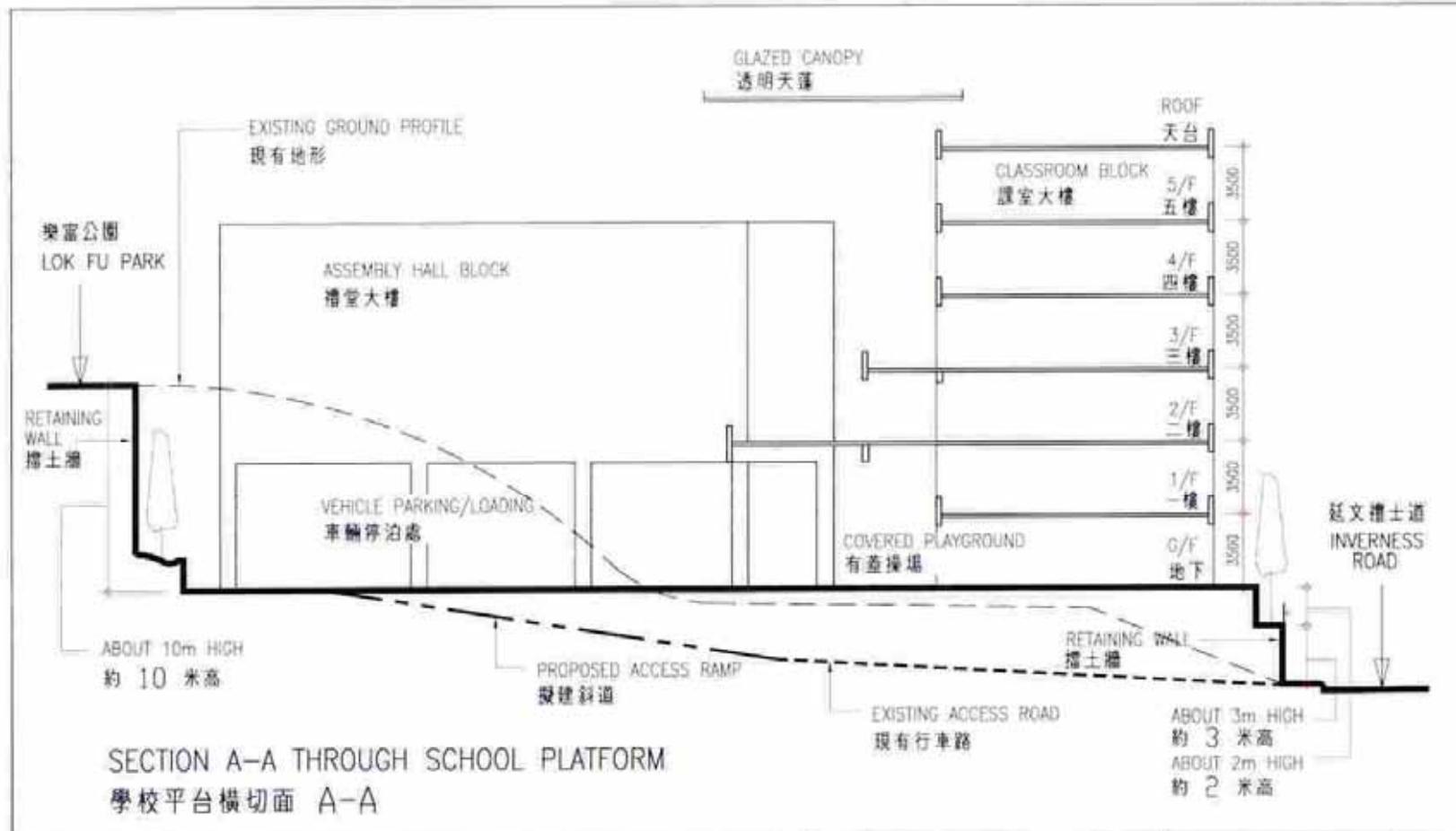


title 340 EP 九龍城延文禮士道 1 所 設有 24 間課室的小學 A 24-CLASSROOM PRIMARY SCHOOL AT INVERNESS ROAD, KOWLOON CITY	drawn by	K.M. HO	date	01/05	drawing no.	AB/6340/XA201	scale	1:1000
	approved	PETER MOK	date	01/05	 ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT			
	office	ARCHITECTURAL BRANCH						

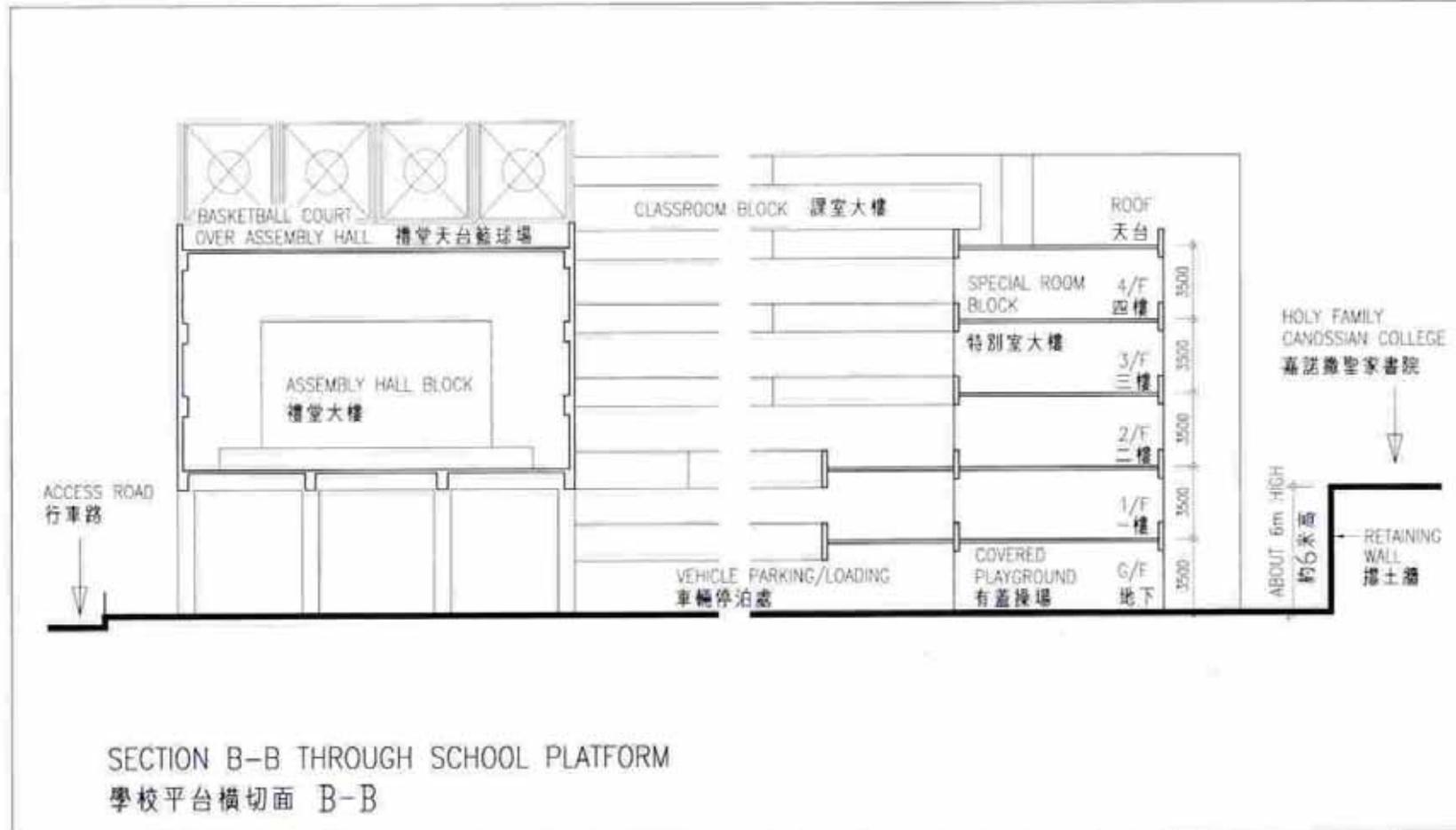


PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF SCHOOL FROM LOK FU PARK
透視圖 (由樂富公園方向)

title 340 EP 九龍城延文禮士道 1 所 設有 24 間課室的小學 A 24-CLASSROOM PRIMARY SCHOOL AT INVERNESS ROAD, KOWLOON CITY	drawn by Y.L.LAM	date 1/05	drawing no. AB/6340/XA202	scale NTS
	approved P. MOK	date 1/05	 ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT	
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	approved P. MOK	date 1/05	 ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT	
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