

Response from Lingnan University

(a) Follow-up work as raised by the Tuen Mun District Council

(i) To provide a community hall and other facilities for residents in the vicinity

At the District Council meeting in January 2007, the University undertook to reserve certain areas of the new building for community use when designing the new building. In this regard, the University has designated a multi-purpose room of about 300 m² of floor space on ground level of the building, which will be available for application by the residents for organising community events/activities on a rental basis. In addition, the ground level of the new building will adopt an open-plan design. Residents may use the open space within the campus during the university opening hours. This is expected to achieve resource sharing and cultivate a harmonious relationship with the community.

(ii) To explore the feasibility of establishing a traffic interchange facility and bus terminal at ground level of the new building

This proposal has been discussed in the Tuen Mun District Council in the past. While some members raised the possibility of establishing a traffic interchange and bus terminal at the ground level of the building, there were other members holding different views. The University agreed to consider the suggestion but expressed that the feasibility and necessity must be sorted out as soon as possible. Transport Department had subsequently considered the suggestion and concluded that there is no need to develop the above-mentioned facilities under the building.

(iii) To maintain and improve the footpath from the University to Fu Tai Estate, and to minimise the problem of noise and wall effect.

The University had conducted briefing sessions to introduce the development project to the residents in the vicinity and consulted the District Council. The University undertook to improve and maintain the footpath from the campus to Fu Tai Estate for public use upon the completion of the building.

To mitigate possible noise problem, the student hostel has been located away from the neighboring buildings. The student activities areas are located at the central part of the hostel building to minimise any possible disturbance to nearby residents. Moreover, the use of the window type air-conditioner (instead of central air-conditioning) will minimise noise disturbance to the neighboring estates.

To address residents' concern about wall effect, the project has adopted a cascading style building for better space distribution, and there is an open atrium located between the academic building and the student hostel (from 4th floor to 8th floor) for better air circulation as well as minimizing visual obstruction to nearby buildings.

(b) Changes to the design of the new building

There are no major changes to the design of the new building, including the layout, the plot ratio and the building height, etc., presented to the District Council meeting in January 2007, though the exterior of the building has been fine-tuned to fit in with the surrounding environment. The University arranged a number of briefing sessions in mid 2007 to brief the representatives of the owners' committees of the neighboring estates, including South Hillcrest, Beneville and Fu Tai Estate, on the overall design of the new building.

(c) Planning of the land usage

The design of the new building is based on the terms and conditions of the land grant on development height and plot ratio. The new building was so designed to minimize its impacts on residents in the vicinity and factors such as air ventilation, noise from student activities, daylight, and sightlines of nearby buildings have been taken into account in the design by the University. Due to the limited site space available for development, the new building has to be built up to the present design height, which is still relatively low in terms of number of storeys in the neighborhood.

(d) Development of additional Student Hostels

The University has been exploring the feasibility of building additional hostels, but there are no concrete plans at this stage.

(e) Recommendation

The University has established procedures for handling complaint(s) about noise disturbance. Upon receipt of a complaint, the University's staff at the security office would look into the case and take remedial measures immediately. The complainant will be informed of the follow-up action taken. On the other hand, the University's Student Services Centre has issued clear guidelines to the students about the noise problems and would also follow up with the concerned student(s), so as to prevent similar incidents.

Moreover, the University is planning to establish a working team to enhance communication with the residents in the vicinity on issues of concern to the community.