

**For discussion  
on 20 December 2011**

**Legislative Council  
Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services**

**Proposed Construction of  
the West Kowloon Law Courts Building**

**PURPOSE**

This paper aims to consult Members on the design of the proposed West Kowloon Law Courts Building (“WKLCB”).

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Judiciary consulted the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services (“the Panel”) on the construction of the WKLCB at its meeting held on 26 April 2010. As indicated in the relevant discussion paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1349/09-10(04)), it was intended that the Panel would be consulted again on the design of the project in the second quarter of 2011. On 21 February 2011, the Judiciary informed the Clerk to the Panel that as advised by the Architectural Services Department (“ArchSD”), the invitation of tender for the WKLCB would be deferred to March 2011, and as a result, the discussion of this item at the Panel would have to be deferred to the fourth quarter of 2011.

3. Subsequent to the Panel meeting on 26 April 2010, the Judiciary provided to the Panel a supplementary information paper (“the information paper”) setting out the detailed requirements for the proposed WKLCB project (including principles for the building design, and requirements for its location and surroundings, courtrooms/tribunals therein, as well as other court associated facilities), and how the proposed facilities in the new court building compared with the existing facilities in the law courts buildings to be reprovisioned.

## **LATEST POSITION**

4. ArchSD invited tenders for the “Design and Build” contract for the proposed WKLCB on 31 March 2011. Three tenders returned by the submission deadline on 24 June 2011. Tender assessment was completed in November 2011. The contract is now ready for award, subject to funding approval from the Legislative Council Finance Committee (“FC”).

## **THE PROJECT**

### **Building Location**

5. In planning for the new law courts building, the Judiciary aims to situate it at a site that is strategically located at a convenient and accessible location in the West Kowloon area to facilitate listing the many cases in the West Kowloon and north-west region of the New Territories, that is of appropriate size to fully accommodate the Judiciary’s space requirement in a stand-alone law courts building, and that is located in spacious and pleasant surroundings with sufficient open space.

6. The proposed WKLCB (a stand-alone law courts building) will be located at a site of about 7,509m<sup>2</sup> at the junction of Tung Chau Street and Tonkin Street West in Sham Shui Po. The site is easily accessible via existing means of public transport along Tongkin Street West, and is within ten minutes’ walking distance from either the Nam Cheong or Cheung Sha Wan MTR station.

7. From the planning point of view as advised by the Planning Department, the proposed WKLCB will be located within the cluster of “Government, Institution or Community” areas including existing schools, proposed Government offices cum clinic, the proposed Tung Chau Street Government Complex (mainly comprising a district library and an indoor recreation centre) and open space. The site is considered suitable for the development of a law courts building. With the approved space requirement of about 16,500m<sup>2</sup> Net Operational Floor Area (“NOFA”) and the adoption of a reference plot ratio of six, the Judiciary would be able to optimize the utilization of the subject site.

## **Design Objectives**

### **(A) Court Image**

8. The proposed WKLCB should be iconic and able to express the independent, solemn and dignified image of the Court and the transparency of justice. The design of the building is required to symbolize an independent, open and transparent judicial system which upholds the rule of law and safeguards the rights and freedoms of the individual. It is vital that the external architectural expression, built form and interior design of the proposed WKLCB would be able to establish the symbolism and functionality commensurate with a law courts building.

9. The exterior architecture should be aesthetical attractive and distinguishable from general commercial office buildings and the surrounding developments. The external design of the building should give a sense of independence, an identity of its own and a high degree of visibility in relation to its immediate surroundings. It should also be welcoming and humane which portrays justice as an integral part of and accessible to the community, while preserving the independent, solemn and dignified image of the judicial system. The architectural design should achieve a tactful balance between upholding the transparency and public-appealing image of the building on one hand, and maintaining a high level of security on the other.

10. The interior design of the building should also carry the same characteristics and values as the external design. The proposed WKLCB should provide a multi-purpose judicial facility that gives tangible and transparent access to justice. The design of public space, courtrooms and chambers should be able to optimize daylight access and outlook. The design should also emphasize a high degree of accessibility in which court users are able to gain access to various court services conveniently.

11. The design of the winning bid from the tender exercise (please see paragraph 4 above) would best meet the court image objectives and requirements set out in paragraphs 8 to 10 above. It can meet our design requirement for an iconic building, as well as the technical requirement for a highly functional law courts building for the administration of justice. Details would be presented at the Panel meeting on 20 December 2011.

(B) Building Design

12. The development of the project should address a number of issues including but not limited to visual impact, air ventilation, traffic, security control and integration with the neighbourhood. The layout of the building at ground floor level should be designed to provide generous connectivity across the southwest boundary and integration with the Local Open Space adjacent to the site of the proposed WKLCB. Suitable building massing and configuration should be adopted to achieve optimal visual impact and to enhance air ventilation. A basement should be provided for carparking spaces to reduce the building mass above the ground level.

13. The winning bid from the tender exercise adopts a twin tower design to address the air ventilation and visual impact requirements and to avoid “wall building effect”. The two towers will be connected at the podium floor, 9/F and 10/F of the building for internal circulation and services connection to meet the operational requirements. Public facilities, staff areas and defendant areas will be segregated and separated to meet different users’ and security requirements. Details would be presented at the Panel meeting on 20 December 2011.

(C) Provision of Adequate, Up-to-standard, and User-friendly Facilities to Enhance Court Services to Court Users

14. According to the finalized Schedule of Accommodation, the proposed WKLCB will have a NOFA of about 16,500m<sup>2</sup>.

15. The existing accommodation of the four Courts and Tribunals to be reprovisioned to the proposed WKLCB, namely, the Tsuen Wan Magistrates’ Courts, Small Claims Tribunal, Coroner’s Court and Obscene Articles Tribunal, is grossly inadequate in many of the basic facilities such as courtrooms, consultation rooms for parties and legal representatives, witness waiting rooms, custody areas for defendants, facilities for the disabled, etc. which are essential facilities in a law courts building of present-day standard for the proper administration of justice. The deficiencies have not only adversely affected the smooth functioning of court processes, but also imposed constraints on the Judiciary in implementing new initiatives to support the administration of justice.

16. In planning for the proposed WKLCB, we target to bring improvements to the provision of facilities, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to meet the present-day court services requirements of different court users, including the Judicial Officers, staff, litigating parties and the legal profession, institutional users, the press and members of the public; and to enhance productivity and operational efficiency of the courts.

17. The approved provision of major facilities for the WKLCB, and the existing provision of the respective facilities, are listed at **Annex A**.

18. We will introduce the provision and design of the improved facilities, and how they would benefit court users at the presentation at the Panel meeting on 20 December 2011.

(D) Green Building

19. The proposed WKLCB should incorporate various green building features and fulfill the required standards set out at **Annex B**.

20. The winning bid from the tender exercise fully meets the stipulated requirements. Details would be presented at the Panel meeting on 20 December 2011.

(E) Barrier-Free Access

21. Having regard to the Government's policy of providing a barrier-free environment in Government premises and facilities for persons with disabilities, the design of the proposed WKLCB should comply with the latest standards set by ArchSD and Buildings Department.

22. There will be adequate provisions for the handicapped and the visually impaired. The design of public areas and facilities (including entrance lobby, reception counter, public lifts and lift lobbies, public toilets, public waiting areas, etc.) will give due consideration to the use by the aging population.

## PROPOSED USE OF THE VACATED SPACE OF THE RELOCATED COURTS AND TRIBUNALS

23. The proposed use of the vacated space of the relocated Courts and Tribunals is set out at **Annex C**.

### CONSULTATION

24. We consulted the Sham Shui Po District Council on 27 October 2009 on the project. Members expressed support for the project.

25. We have also consulted the Criminal Court Users' Committee<sup>1</sup>, the Civil Court Users' Committee<sup>1</sup>, the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Law Society of Hong Kong in March 2010 on the project. The two Committees and the two legal professional bodies generally support the project.

26. On 26 April 2010, the Judiciary consulted the Panel on the proposed project. Members expressed support for the project, having regard to the inadequacies in the existing accommodation and facilities of the Courts and Tribunals identified for reprovisioning to the WKLCB.

27. At the Panel's request, the Judiciary provided on 17 May 2010 a supplementary information paper setting out the detailed requirements for the project, and how the proposed facilities in the new court building compared with the existing facilities in the law courts buildings to be reprovisioned.

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<sup>1</sup> The Criminal Court Users' Committee and the Civil Court Users' Committee are appointed by the Chief Justice and chaired by a High Court Judge to discuss matters of concern to users of the criminal and civil courts, including all matters of practice and procedure, and the administration of the courts. Members comprise judges, representatives of the legal profession, representatives of other court users and lay members.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

28. The estimated cost of the project is \$2,723.1 million in money-of-the-day prices. The estimated annual recurrent expenditure arising from this project is \$50.4 million.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

29. We will present the detailed design of the winning bid as well as introduce the provision and design of the improved facilities, and how they would benefit court users at the presentation at the Panel meeting on 20 December 2011, and listen to Members' views.

30. Subject to Members' views, we will consult the Legislative Council Public Works Subcommittee and FC on the proposed project on 8 February 2012 and 13 April 2012 respectively. Subject to the FC's funding approval, construction works for the proposed WKLCB are expected to commence in April 2012 for completion by the end of 2015.

Judiciary Administration  
December 2011

**Future Facilities in the West Kowloon Law Courts Building (“WKLCB”)  
Compared to Existing Provision**

Facilities	Existing Number	Number to be provided in the WKLCB
<b>(A) Tsuen Wan / West Kowloon Magistrates’ Courts</b>		
(1) Courtroom	9 (size around 50 – 150m <sup>2</sup> )	16 <sup>1</sup> (size around 70 – 240m <sup>2</sup> )
(2) Jury Retiring Room	-	1
(3) Witness Protection Room	-	3
(4) Witness Waiting Room	2	32
(5) Secured Waiting Room (for Juvenile cases)	2	6
(6) Consultation Room	-	16
(7) Search Room for Public	-	1
(8) Changing Room (for lawyers)	-	2
(9) Registry	1	1
<b>(B) Small Claims Tribunal</b>		
(1) Courtroom	8 (size around 40 – 120m <sup>2</sup> )	12 (size around 70 – 150m <sup>2</sup> )
(2) Consultation Room	-	12
(3) Interview Room	8	16
(4) Registration Room	-	10
(5) Information and Enquiry Centre	-	1
(6) Search Room for Public	-	1
(7) Registry	1	1
<b>(C) Coroner’s Courts</b>		
(1) Courtroom	2 (size around 90 and 120m <sup>2</sup> )	3 (size around 100 – 180m <sup>2</sup> )
(2) Jury Retiring Room	2	3
(3) Witness Waiting Room	-	2
(4) Consultation Room	-	1
(5) Jury Assembly Room	-	1
(6) Meeting Room for Research Teams	-	1

<sup>1</sup> Including 1 multi-purpose mega courtroom



Facilities	Existing Number	Number to be provided in the WKLCB
(7) Waiting Room for Deceased's Family	-	1
(8) Registry	1	1
<b>(D) Obscene Articles Tribunal</b>		
(1) Courtroom	1 (size around 85m <sup>2</sup> )	1 (size around 110m <sup>2</sup> )
(2) Consultation Room	-	1
(3) Waiting Room for Adjudicators/Jury	1	-
(4) Viewing Room for Public	1	1
(5) Registry	1	1
<b>(E) Ancillary Facilities</b>		
(1) Interview Room within Police area (for detainees' meeting with lawyers)	2	8
(2) Interview Room within Correctional Services Department area (for detainees' meeting with lawyers)	-	4
(3) Interview Room within Social Welfare Department Probation Office area	2	7
(4) Interview Room within Duty Lawyer Service area	7	13
(5) Convenience Store	-	1
(6) Centralised Accounts Office	Note 1	1
(7) Press Room	Note 2	1
(8) Library	-	1
(9) Baby-care Facility	-	2
(10) ATM Machine	-	2
(11) Vending Machine	-	1 per floor
(12) Coin Phone	-	2 per floor

Note 1: Tsuen Wan Magistrates' Courts ("TWMC") and Small Claims Tribunal ("SCT") have their own Accounts Offices whereas Coroner's Courts and Obscene Articles Tribunal share the same Accounts Office with Eastern Magistrates' Courts ("EMC").

Note 2: One Press Room in the Eastern Law Courts Building for shared use of Coroner's Courts, Obscene Articles Tribunal and Eastern Magistrates' Courts.

**Green Building Features in the  
West Kowloon Law Courts Building (“WKLCB”)**

The proposed WKLCB aims to obtain at least the second highest grade under an internationally or locally recognized building environmental performance assessment system, such as BEAM Plus of the Hong Kong Green Building Council. The green building features in paragraphs 2 to 8 below will be provided as a minimum.

2. The proposed WKLCB will adopt an overall energy approach for energy conservation and energy efficiency. The building will out-perform Building Energy Codes issued by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department by at least 10%. The following environmental friendly and energy efficient features will be incorporated in the building:

- (a) Water-cooled chillers (evaporative fresh water cooling tower);
- (b) Automatic demand control of chilled water circulation system;
- (c) Automatic condenser tube cleaning equipment;
- (d) Automatic demand control of supply air;
- (e) Demand control of fresh air supply with carbon dioxide sensors;
- (f) Automatic demand control for ventilation fans in carpark;
- (g) Heat pipes for heat energy reclaim of exhaust air;
- (h) Light-emitting diode type exit signs;
- (i) Heat pump for dehumidification; and
- (j) Service-on demand control for escalators.

3. For renewable energy technologies, we will install photovoltaic system for environmental benefits.
4. For green features, we will provide greening on rooftop and vertical greening for environmental and amenity benefits.
5. For recycled features, we will provide rainwater recycling system for irrigating the greenery.

#### Air quality

6. The proposed WKLCB aims to achieve “Excellent Class” of the Indoor Air Quality Objectives in the Guidance Notes for the Management of Indoor Air Quality in Offices and Public Places issued by the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”).

#### Noise emission

7. The level of the intruding noise at the façade of the potential noise sensitive receivers shall comply with the criteria in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines as a minimum. All fixed noise sources will be located and designed in accordance with the technical memorandum issued by the EPD.

#### Landscaped features

8. The landscape design will be of a high amenity value and low maintenance level. The design will aim to harmonize with the building form and integrate with the surrounding environment. Green features, such as greening on rooftop and vertical greening for environmental and amenity benefits, will be incorporated.

## **Proposed Use of the Vacated Space of the Relocated Courts and Tribunals**

### **Coroner's Court and Obscene Articles Tribunal in Eastern Law Courts Building ("ELCB")**

The Eastern Magistrates' Courts ("EMC"), one of the seven Magistrates' Courts, is the only Magistrates' Courts on Hong Kong Island. Besides hearing court cases at the magistracy level of the Hong Kong Island, the EMC also handles exclusively all the committal proceedings, which are in general proceedings for the committal of the accused to the Court of First Instance on indictable offences. The caseload of the EMC is high, accounting for about 23% of the total caseload at the magistracy level. The provision of only eight courtrooms in the EMC is grossly inadequate to meet the demand for court facilities to cope with the caseload of Hong Kong Island. Expansion is badly needed to enhance the services provided, in particular to reduce waiting time for case hearings.

2. Also, there is at present no purpose-built Care or Protection courtroom in the EMC due to limited space available.

3. It is proposed that when the Coroner's Court and Obscene Articles Tribunal, which are in need of expansion, are re-provisioned to the proposed WKLCB, the space vacated will mainly be used for the much needed expansion of the EMC. The additional provision may include additional courtrooms (tentatively three) for summons cases and Care or Protection cases, and associated facilities such as consultation rooms and offices in order to enhance the services provided at the EMC. Part of the vacated area will also be used to relieve the congested accommodation for the office and the data centre of the Information Technology Management Section of the Judiciary, which are currently located in the ELCB.

### **Small Claims Tribunal in Wanchai Tower**

4. The District Court, Family Court and Small Claims Tribunal ("SCT") are currently located in Wanchai Tower, which is a joint-user building under the purview of the Government Property Agency. Since the District Court, Family Court and Lands Tribunal (which is located at 38 Gascoigne Road, Jordan) are under the purview of the Chief District Judge ("CDJ"), it is proposed to relocate the Lands Tribunal to the premises

where the District Court and Family Court are located upon the re-provisioning of the SCT to the proposed WKLCB. This will enable the CDJ to flexibly deploy courtrooms, judges and supporting staff in the light of the caseload situation and operational needs of the three Courts/Tribunal.

5. At present, there is no room for expansion for the District Court and Family Court. Without the provision of additional courtrooms, there are constraints in deploying existing and engaging additional temporary judicial resources to help shorten waiting times even if there are strong operational grounds to do so. The vacated courts from the SCT would provide the much needed space for additional courtrooms and associated facilities for the District Court, Family Court and the relocated Lands Tribunal.

6. As regards the to-be-vacated Lands Tribunal Building, it is a graded historic building under the purview of the Antiquities and Monuments Office. Agreement has been reached with the Administration for it to take up the building for the use of heritage conservation.

#### **Tsuen Wan Law Courts Building (“TWLCB”)**

7. The existing TWLCB is located at 70 Tai Ho Road, Tsuen Wan and has been in use since 1971. In view of the prime location of the TWLCB at Tsuen Wan Town Centre with convenient public transportation, the Social Welfare Department has planned to convert the vacated building/site for provision of social welfare facilities.