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Panel on Education

Meeting on 9 December 2013

**Background brief on issues related to the redevelopment of
Ying Wa Girls' School at Robinson Road**

Purpose

This paper provides a summary of past discussion on the redevelopment of Ying Wa Girls' School ("the redevelopment project").

The redevelopment project

2. On 24 October 2005, the Administration consulted the Panel on Education ("the Panel") on its review of the School Building Programme. Members noted without objection the Administration's plan to proceed with re-provisioning and redevelopment projects to upgrade sub-standard facilities in existing schools. The redevelopment project in question is one of such projects.

Consideration by the Panel

3. In April 2012, an information paper¹ provided by the Administration setting out, amongst others, the scope of the redevelopment project, the timeline for implementation, the decanting arrangements and the financial implications was circulated to the Panel. At the request of the Panel, the Administration provided supplementary information² on the relocation of Hong

¹ See LC Paper No. CB(2)1756/11-12(01).

² See LC Paper No. CB(2)1865/11-12(01).

Kong Institute of Technology and preservation of the former kindergarten block built in 1926 ("1926 building") in the existing campus of Ying Wa Girls' School.

Consideration by the Public Works Subcommittee

4. The proposal for the redevelopment project was considered by the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") on 16 May 2012³. Members endorsed the upgrading of the project to Category A at an estimated cost of \$432.7 million in money-of-the-day prices. In the course of deliberation, members raised concern on the following matters.

Pedestrian connection between the sites of the campus

5. Noting that upon redevelopment, the School would comprise two separate sites to be linked up by an uncovered public walkway along Robnison Road, members called on the Administration to explore with the School Sponsor ways to optimize the design of the pedestrian facility, such as by providing a covered walkway or a connecting subway. As explained by the Administration, the School Sponsor had decided to make use of the existing walkway to connect the two sites since the subway option was not cost-effective. The fact that the campus was located on a hillside slope had also limited the options for pedestrian facility. While the suggestion of providing cover for the walkway would require further consultation with the local community, the School Sponsor would be encouraged to optimize the design of the walkway through an extension of the design concept of the campus.

Heritage protection

6. Members were pleased to note that the 1926 building, a proposed Grade 3 historical building which housed the first kindergarten in Hong Kong, would be preserved, revived and blended in with the future school campus design. Whilst welcoming the School's future plan to set up a School Archive at the 1926 building showing the historical records of the former kindergarten and the development of the School, some members said that consideration should be given to opening the 1926 building for public visits.

7. According to the Administration, the School welcomed the suggestion of opening the 1926 building for public visits in a manageable way and within the capacity of the School. The efficiency and security of the daily operation of the

³ See PWSC(2012-13)16.

School was the key consideration. The School could arrange public visits on special occasions such as the Founder's Day, Parents' Day or Open Day. The School would also contemplate accepting advanced booking of visits on a regular basis as part of the docent training programme for its students.

Environmental concerns

8. As the redevelopment project was not a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap 499), some members requested for details of the Preliminary Environmental Review ("PER") conducted on the project.

9. According to the information provided to PWSC, the School Sponsor had engaged a consultant to conduct PER in March 2012 in accordance with the standard practice for school projects. The PER concluded that the redevelopment project would not have any long-term adverse environmental impact. In addition, the School Sponsor had commissioned an Environmental Assessment ("EA") on the redevelopment project. The EA recommended a number of mitigation measures for implementation during the construction phase, which included the use of physical noise attenuating barriers, locating equipment away from surrounding residential buildings as far as practicable, the use of quiet equipment etc.

Traffic impact

10. In response to members' concern about traffic impact, the Administration advised that due to the heavy use of Robinson Road, the School Sponsor had taken the opportunity of the redevelopment project to move the school buses lay-by and private vehicle parking spaces into the school premises. The vehicular access would also be relocated to Breezy Path alleviate the busy traffic on Robinson Road.

11. The proposed redevelopment project was subsequently approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") on 8 June 2012.

Latest position

12. The Administration has recently advised that in the light of the lowest returned tender price of the redevelopment project exceeding the project estimate approved by FC in the 2011-12 session, it will seek approval from FC to increase the approved project estimate of the project. It will also consult the Panel on its proposal at the meeting on 9 December 2013.

Relevant papers

13. A list of relevant papers is at the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
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List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	20.4.2012 (Item II)	CB(2)1756/11-12(01) CB(2)1865/11-12(01)
Public Works Subcommittee Meeting	16.5.2012	PWSC(2012-13)16 Minutes PWSC69/11-12

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