

For discussion on
28 March 2014

Legislative Council
Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project

Technical Assessment Results of the Planning Application for
Minor Relaxation of Development Intensity of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Site

PURPOSE

This paper serves to brief Members on the technical assessment results of the planning application for minor relaxation of development intensity of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) site.

BACKGROUND

2. At the last Joint Subcommittee meeting on 24 January 2014, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) sought Members' views on the proposed planning application for minor relaxation of maximum gross floor area (GFA) and building height restrictions under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance. The WKCDA also reported that a full range of technical assessments were being carried out by the consultant on the traffic, environmental, air ventilation, visual impacts and building height implications of the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

3. In preparing the planning application, consultation meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders where the proposed major planning parameters of the proposal were presented. These include meetings with the Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing of Harbourfront Commission on 12 February 2014, Yau Tsim Mong District Council on 27 February 2014, and local resident

representatives on 14 March 2014. Views were expressed by the various groups on the following issues –

- (a) Justifications for the GFA increase;
- (b) Building height increase and impact to existing residential buildings. It was suggested to explore utilisation of underground space in the WKCD as well as those land parcels with lower building height limits to accommodate the increased GFA;
- (c) Application / enhancement of the Harbour Planning Principles;
- (d) Potential benefit on vibrancy and financial situation of the WKCD development; and
- (e) Pedestrian and vehicular connectivity and crowd dispersal arrangements for major events.

4. A range of technical assessments have been completed and the results show that the proposed increase in development intensity of the WKCD site is technically feasible with no insurmountable impacts. The planning application, together with the supporting technical assessment reports, was submitted to the Town Planning Board on 21 March 2014.

PLANNING PROPOSAL

5. The main objective of the planning application is to optimise the development potential of the whole WKCD site. A 15% increase of the overall GFA of different land uses on a pro-rata basis is sought to ensure a balanced development mix with good day and night vibrancy. The proposed GFA in the planning application is shown in the table below –

Table 1: Comparison of GFA by Broad Use Types

	Development Plan (DP) Provision (m²)	Planning Application Proposal (m²)	Proposed Changes (m²)
Maximum total GFA for the whole site	740 350	851 400	+111 050 (+15%)
*Maximum GFA for Arts and Cultural Facilities, RDE and GIC ("Non-HOR GFA")	421 550	484 780	+63 230 (+15%)
Maximum GFA for HOR uses	318 800 (including not more than 148 070 for residential use)	366 620 (including not more than 170 280 for residential use)	+47 820 (+15%) (including not more than 22 210 for residential use (+15%))
Equivalent to Plot Ratio	1.81	2.08	+0.27 (+15%)

* RDE refers to retail / dining / entertainment. GIC refers to government, institution or community. HOR refers to hotel / office / residential.

6. An overall 15% GFA increase of different land uses on a pro-rata basis ensures that the development mix proposed by the planning application is within the permitted range in the Explanatory Statement (ES) of the approved DP.

Table 2: Development Mix

Development Components	% of Total GFA
Arts and Cultural Facilities	About 35-40%
RDE	About 15-20%
Hotel/Office	About 20-25%
Residential	Not more than 20%
GIC	Not less than 1%
Total	100%

7. The maximum building heights in the majority of land use zones across the WKCD would remain unchanged. However, in order to accommodate the increase in development intensity without jeopardising the original stepped building height profile as set out in the approved DP, the maximum permissible building height for some

of the sub-zones would be relaxed. The proposed building height profile has been carefully worked out by taking into account the views and comments of stakeholders as mentioned in paragraph 3 above, in particular that the building height for developments in front of existing residential buildings should not exceed 100mPD.

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

8. A full range of review and technical assessments have been carried out to examine the traffic, environmental, air ventilation and visual impacts as well as infrastructure implications of the proposal. Issues of concern are highlighted below.

Traffic Impact Assessment

9. Assessment shows that the traffic impact on the adjacent road networks as a result of the minor relaxation of development intensity of the WKCD would be minor and manageable. The planned road network for the WKCD presented in the approved DP could cater for the potential traffic to be generated by the additional GFA. The construction-related traffic generated during the construction of the WKCD can be accommodated on the adjacent road networks.

10. The WKCD is well served by public transport in the vicinity, including the MTR Kowloon Station, Austin Station and West Kowloon Terminus of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link. People will be encouraged to visit the WKCD by rail with the provision of seamless pedestrian connections between the WKCD and railway stations to the north. Road-based environmentally-friendly transport system, such as electric buses, will serve as the skeleton of public transport service within the District as well as connection to adjacent developed areas in the Yau Tsim Mong district. The WKCD will work with concerned government departments and public transportation companies to sort out the details involved.

Visual Appraisal

11. Notwithstanding the proposed minor relaxation of maximum building height, the original visual character and the dynamic building height profile would not be compromised in that –

- (a) The WKCD will still be dominated by low to medium-rise buildings with a dynamic building height profile;
- (b) The proposed changes of building height are considered generally compatible with the developments in the vicinity;
- (c) The updated building height profile has carefully considered the visual integration of views from both the local context of Kowloon Peninsula and wider context of Victoria Harbour and Hong Kong Island;
- (d) Variation in building height for a coherent building height profile is maintained across the WKCD; and
- (e) Key public viewpoints to maintain a 20% building-free zone below the ridgelines are generally preserved.

Air Ventilation Assessment

12. An Air Ventilation Assessment has been conducted to assess the impact on air ventilation performance induced by the proposed minor relaxation of total GFA. Based on the existing site condition as per the approved DP, the potential air ventilation impacts on the pedestrian level in the vicinity have been assessed. The assessment results concluded that the increase in GFA of the WKCD would not have adverse impacts on air ventilation performance.

Other Aspects

13. Environmental issues including road traffic noise, marine traffic noise, air quality impact during operation phase, water quality and waste management have been evaluated. The results show that the proposed minor relaxation would not have any adverse environmental impacts.

14. Potential impacts on the existing and proposed sewerage, drainage and water supply arrangements as a result of the proposed minor relaxation have been assessed. It is found that the planned facilities serving the WKCD site would have adequate capacity to accommodate the increase in demand arising from the anticipated increase in population and visitors in the WKCD.

RECOMMENDATION

15. Members are invited to note the technical assessment results of the planning application for minor relaxation of development intensity of the WKCD site.

West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
March 2014