

HONG KONG TOWN PLANNING BOARD

(downgraded on 5.10.2007)

Minutes of 893rd Meeting of the Town Planning Board held on 7.9.2007

Agenda Item 5

Submission of the Draft Urban Renewal Authority Kwun Tong Town Centre – Main Site and Yuet Wah Street Site Development Scheme Plans No. S/K14S/URA1/A and S/K14S/URA2/A Prepared under Section 25 of Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (TPB Paper No. 7894)

Deliberation Session

1. The Chairman said that the Board should focus on the discussion on the boundaries of the Development Scheme Plans (DSPs), the 2-DSP approach and the planning parameters as stated in the draft planning briefs at this meeting. Design and technical matters related to the development schemes should be addressed by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) at the Master Layout Plan (MLP) and detailed design stages.
2. Some Members agreed with the building height of URA's proposed landmark commercial building having regard to project viability, overall design of the project, provision of greening areas and compatibility with neighbouring buildings, while some Members expressed reservation taking into account the building control in the surrounding areas and the infringement of the ridgeline.
3. A Member took the view the proposed building height of the

landmark building was higher than the neighbouring APM by 40% and was undesirable from an overall urban design point of view. Given the Board's established practice towards high-rise buildings in the deliberation of past cases, approval of a commercial building with 280mPD in the Kwun Tong Town Centre (KTTC) would arouse concerns or criticisms from the public, in particular the environmental organizations.

4. In response to some Members' enquiry on whether the Board could consider the DSP based on project viability, the Secretary informed the meeting that based on the previous ruling by the Court of Appeal (CA) on the URA project at Staunton Street/Wing Lee Street, the Board could take into account the project viability in making a decision on the DSP but was not obliged to seek such information. As insufficient information had been provided by the URA, the CA considered that the Board had not duly examined such an aspect for the Staunton Street/Wing Lee Street project. Subsequently, despite the Board's request, the URA had refused to disclose its financial position of that project to the Board on the grounds of confidentiality. For the KTTC redevelopment, the Board should not place too much emphasis on financial viability in the deliberation of the DSPs given that no detailed information had been provided by the URA.
5. Some Members shared the following views and concerns on the building height issues:
 - (a) the design of a landmark in the KTTC should be compatible with its neighbouring developments and it was not necessary to have a high-rise building as a landmark;
 - (b) through innovative design, the egg-shaped GIC building, water features or green area incorporated in the current submission could

also serve as a landmark for the KTTC; and

- (c) to compensate the loss of floor area as a result of the reduction of the height of the commercial building, the URA could explore the feasibility of increasing the height of the egg-shaped GIC building or putting more commercial uses in the underground basements.
6. A Member commented that the URA should consider how to better link up the Yuet Wah Street Recreation Ground with the development schemes to enhance pedestrian accessibility and also explore the feasibility of linking up the Kwun Tong MTR Station and the Main Site by developing an underground shopping mall.

[Ms. Maggie M.K. Chan left the meeting at this point.]

7. A Member considered that in the light of the public request and the merits of the current schemes, the URA should be allowed to proceed with the redevelopment project as soon as possible. Unless additional underground basements could accommodate the commercial floor area, reduction of the building height of the commercial building would only result in a larger footprint of building affecting the open space provision. This Member opined that judgment of building height was a subjective issue and suggested that matters relating to building design should be addressed by URA at the MLP stage.
8. The Chairman noted Members' views on the building height issue and said that it would be difficult for the Board to specify the scope of reduction in the building height of the commercial building without looking into the overall design of the Main Site. Whilst appreciating public concerns that URA should proceed with the development schemes without delay, he suggested to delete the current building height restrictions in the Main Site DSP and planning brief, and request URA to revisit the design of the

commercial and other buildings and justify the proposed height of the buildings at the MLP and detailed design stages on the basis of a fresh Visual Impact Assessment. Members agreed that the building height restrictions on both commercial and residential sub-areas in the Main Site should be deleted.

9. Members were generally supportive of the 2-DSP approach in view of the complexity and development scale of the project. The 2-DSP approach would facilitate the implementation of the project as early as possible.
10. The Secretary said that according to the TPB Guidelines No. 29A, the Board's decision on the DSP would be kept confidential for three to four weeks after the meetings and would be released when the DSP was published under section 5 of the Town Planning Ordinance. Members would be informed by the Secretariat of the date of release of the Board's decision.
11. After further deliberation, the Board decided to make the following amendments:

Draft DSP for the Main Site

- (a) to delete paragraphs (6) and (13) under Remarks on the Notes;
- (b) to delete the last two sentences on building height restriction for composite residential/commercial towers and minor relaxation clause from paragraph 7.15 of the Explanatory Statement;
- (c) to delete the last sentence on building height restriction for the commercial portion from paragraph 7.16 of the Explanatory Statement;
- (d) to add a new paragraph 7.17 to read "The proposed building height of any development at the Main Site should be supported by a

visual impact assessment to be submitted at the Master Layout Plan stage.”; and

Draft Planning Brief for the Main Site

(e) to replace the last sentence in the first bullet in “Particulars” column Item 10 on “Building Height” by “The proposed building height should be supported by a visual impact assessment at the MLP stage.”, and to delete the last two bullets in “Particulars” column and the wording in “Remarks” column.

12. Subject to the amendments in paragraph 11 above, the Board decided to agree with the 2-Development Scheme Plan (DSP) approach for the Main Site and Yuet Wah Street Site and to:

(a) deem the draft Kwun Tong Town Centre - Main Site DSP No. S/K14S/URA1/A (to be renumbered S/K14S/URA1/1 upon exhibition for public inspection) and the draft Kwun Tong Town Centre - Yuet Wah Street Site DSP No. S/K14S/URA2/A (to be renumbered S/K14S/URA2/1 upon exhibition for public inspection) and their Notes at Annex H of the Paper as being suitable for publication as provided for under section 25(6) of the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance, so that the draft DSPs should be exhibited for public inspection under section 5 of the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO);

(b) endorse the Explanatory Statements (ESs) of the two draft DSPs at Annex H of the Paper and adopt them as an expression of the Board’s planning intention and objectives of the two Plans, and agree that the ESs as being suitable for public inspection together with the two draft DSPs;

(c) agree that the two draft DSPs, their Notes and ESs were suitable for submission to the Kwun Tong District Council for consultation/information upon exhibition of the two Plans;

(d)endorse the two draft Planning Briefs in Part 3 of Volume 1 of Annex B of the Paper with the incorporation of the minor relaxation clause on plot ratio restriction for the Main Site as a basis to guide any subsequent planning application for development at the Main Site and Yuet Wah Street Site under the TPO; and

(e)note the Social Impact Assessment (Stages I and II) Reports at Annex 4 of Volume 2 of Annex B and Annex D of the Paper respectively.