

**FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION NO. A/H15/280
UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE**

**Proposed Minor Relaxation of Building Height Restriction
from 80mPD to 91mPD at Singapore International School (SIS),
23 Nam Long Shan Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong**

1. Background

1.1 On 19.3.2019, the applicant sought planning permission for minor relaxation of building height (BH) restriction from 80mPD to 91mPD at Singapore International School in Wong Chuk Hang (the Site) (**Plans FA-1 to FA-5**). The Site falls within an area zoned “Government, Institution or Community” (“G/IC”) on the approved Aberdeen & Ap Lei Chau Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H15/33. According to the Notes of the OZP, development within the “G/IC” zone is restricted to a BH of 80mPD or the height of the existing building, whichever is the greater. As the proposed development with a BH of 91mPD exceeds the BH restriction of 80mPD stipulated under the OZP, planning permission for minor relaxation of BH restriction is required from the Town Planning Board (the Board). As the existing BH of the school is at 86mPD, the proposed additional floor would involve an increase in BH of about 5mPD (i.e. 5.81%).

1.2 On 17.5.2019, the Metro Planning Committee (the Committee) of the Board considered the captioned application. Members requested for more information on the followings:

Floor-to-Floor Height of the Additional Storey

(a) justification for the floor-to-floor height of 5m for the new additional storey; and

Use of Space

(b) the use of free up space upon restructuring of the existing facilities.

After deliberation, the Committee decided to defer a decision on the application, pending submission of Further Information (FI) by the applicant. A copy of the MPC Paper No. A/H15/280 and the extract of minutes of the Committee’s meeting are provided at **F-Appendices I and II** respectively.

2. Further Information Submitted by the Applicant

2.1 On 31.5.2019, 12.7.2019 and 16.7.2019, the applicant submitted FIs (**F-Appendices III to V**) (*exempted from publication and recounting requirements*) in response to the Committee’s concerns as raised at the meeting and further departmental comments, which are summarised as follows:

Location of the Proposed Staff Office

- (a) The existing car parking building was purposely built for car ramp and car parking only. No loading was planned for any functional space in the area. Moreover, the ramp design is tailor-made for emergency vehicles to access the adjacent main plaza which is located in the middle of the campus and has to remain uncovered as emergency vehicle access (EVA) serving the campus building;
- (b) the existing campus for Secondary Section is 36 years old which could not sustain additional storeys without complicated structural strengthening work. Also, comprehensive modification works would result in longer construction time and bring more nuisance to the surrounding residents;
- (c) the proposed location of the staff office in the Preparatory Years and Primary Section is a purposely-built school building with reserved loading capacity in its foundation;
- (d) the portion of rooftop facing Grandview Garden is used as a multi-purpose playground. It would not be desirable to replace the playground by a staff office at the expense of the students' activity area;
- (e) areas in the remaining buildings in the campus are irregular in shape which does not allow efficient use of floor area. A higher BH than 91mPD will be resulted in order to accommodate the proposed staff office. The buildings at the back closer to Brick Hill will not have convenient access for construction machinery due to the slope features and the presence of trees;
- (f) there are only a number of electrical and mechanical plant rooms situated at the existing roof level and no massive clearance will be required. The area is surrounded by a densely designed prefabricated fencing with a level up to 88.6mPD. As the proposed modification works only involved replacing the existing fencing by the newly proposed staff office up to 91mPD, the proposed location is considered to be appropriate in terms of construction nuisance as well as degree of visual change;

Floor Height of the New Additional Staff Office

- (g) institutional or educational development have variations of floor heights in order to accommodate specially designed facilities for serving different educational purposes;
- (h) the proposed 5m floor height, including (i) 0.5m for a transfer structure in the form of a raised steel platform at the existing roof level; (ii) 0.5m concrete structure at the new roof of the proposed staff office to ensure the overall structure stability and load distribution; (iii) 0.2m for installation of finishing materials including insulation and waterproofing; and (iv) 3.8m effective floor-to-floor height for headroom, has taken into account the architectural and structural feasibility of the subject building without altering the existing foundation;

Use of School Areas Upon Restructuring of Existing Facilities

- (i) the subject building is 24 years old and the design could not cope with the advancements in teaching environment and need for space for learning purposes;
- (j) the proposed additional staff office would allow the consolidation of administrative and management staff into a single area to free up space for other uses;
- (k) the existing Campus Management Room at P6 level (about 72m²) will be restructured for students' use for Special Education Needs (SEN), science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), research skills and information and communications technology (ICT);
- (l) the General Office at plaza level (PL/F) (about 163m²) will also be freed up for new conference room and meeting rooms for counseling, parents' workshops and teachers' professional learning community uses;
- (m) the centralized working space of the new staff office (about 261m²) will allow the consolidation of various streams of staff and manpower for better communication and cooperation; and

Measures to Address Possible Nuisance Caused by Private Cars

- (n) in order to address concerns from the Transport Department and members of the Southern District Council on the existing traffic condition, the applicant would advocate "School Bus Only" policy progressively in future to increase the number of students to take school bus or public transport. To encourage more facilities to use school buses, school bus service registration has already been informed to parents in the coming academic year's circular.

3. Comments from Relevant Government Departments

- 3.1 The following government departments have been consulted and their views on the applicant's FI and their comments are summarized as follows:

Floor Height

- 3.1.1 Comments of the Chief Architect/Central Management Division 2, Architectural Services Department (CA/CMD2, ArchSD):
- (a) The proposed new staff office with a height of 5m, which include about 0.5m raised steel platform, about 0.5m concrete structure, about 0.2m waterproof/insulated material and 3.8m effective floor height for staff office, is considered reasonable from architectural point of view.
- 3.1.2 Comments of the Chief Building Surveyor/Hong Kong West, Buildings Department (CBS/HKW, BD):

- (a) no objection in principle under the Buildings Ordinance to the proposed 5m floor-to-floor height;
- (b) applicant's attention is drawn to the provision of site coverage under the First Schedule of Building (Planning) Regulations; and
- (c) detailed comments on the proposal could only be made at formal building plans submission stage.

3.1.3 The Chief Town Planner/ Urban Design and Landscape (CTP/UD&L), PlanD has no particular comment on the floor-to-floor height of the proposed development from urban design perspective.

Use of Space

3.1.4 The Secretary for Education has no comment on proposed arrangement on use of school space.

District Officer's View

3.1.5 Comments of the District Officer (Southern), Home Affairs Department (DO(S), HAD):

- (i) has no comment on the application;
- (ii) the subject application was discussed at the 22nd Meeting of the Southern District Council (SDC) held on 9.5.2019. A SDC Member questioned that SIS may carry out additional works on the rooftop of its car park, which will only involve adjustment to its gross floor area without the need to apply for relaxation of BH restriction. Members of the SDC also raised concern about the nuisance caused by the private cars carrying students to and from SIS over the years and urged SIS to implement the "school bus only" policy to reduce the traffic impact brought by the School and to ease the burden of traffic on Wong Chuk Hang. Representatives from SIS had responded positively to SDC Members' request.

4. Planning Considerations and Assessments

4.1 The planning application is for minor relaxation of the BH restriction from 80mPD to 91mPD by 11m (i.e. 13.75%) to facilitate the school expansion project at the Site. Given the existing BH of the school is at 86mPD, the applicant claims that the proposed increase of BH to 91mPD would only involve increase in BH of about 5m (i.e. 5.81%). In response to information requested by the Committee on 17.5.2019, as detailed in paragraph 1.2 above, the applicant has submitted FIs to provide further information on the floor height of new additional staff office as well as the use of floor space upon restructuring of existing facilities.

Floor-to-Floor Height of Additional Storey

- 4.2 Regarding the floor height of the new additional staff office, the proposed 5m would consist of 0.5m for a raised transfer structure, 0.5m concrete structure, 0.2m for installation of finishing materials and 3.8m as effective floor height for the staff office. All relevant government departments including CBS/HKW, BD and CA/CMD2, ArchSD have no adverse comments on the proposed floor height of 5m from building structure and architectural perspectives.

Use of Space

- 4.3 After the consolidation of administration and management staff into a single area (about 261m²) at the new additional storey, the applicant has explained that the existing floor space at P6 level (about 72m²) and PL/F (about 163m²) will be used for SEN, STEM, research skills and ICT and new conference room and meeting rooms for counseling, parents' workshops and teachers' professional learning community uses respectively (**Drawings FA-1 and -2**). The Secretary for Education has no comment on the proposal.
- 4.4 In view of the above, the planning considerations and assessment as highlighted in paragraph 10 of **F-Appendix I** are still valid.

5. Planning Department's Views

- 5.1 Based on the assessments made in paragraph 4 above, PlanD maintains its previous view of having no objection to the application.
- 5.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, it is suggested that the permission shall be valid until 19.7.2023, and after the said date, the permission shall cease to have effect unless before the said date, the development permitted is commenced or the permission is renewed. The following approval condition and advisory clauses are also suggested for Members' reference:

Approval Condition

the provision of fire service installations and water supply for fire fighting to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services or of the Town Planning Board.

Advisory Clauses

The recommended advisory clause is attached at **F-Appendix VI**.

- 5.3 Alternatively, should the Committee decide to reject the application, the following reasons for rejection are suggested for Members' reference:
- (a) there is no strong justification nor planning and design merit in support of the proposed relaxation of BH restriction; and
 - (b) approval of the application would set an undesirable precedent for similar applications for relaxation of BH restriction without sufficient justifications or planning and design merits in the area.

6. Decision Sought

- 6.1 The Committee is invited to consider the application and decide whether to grant or refuse to grant permission.
- 6.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, Members are invited to consider the approval condition(s) and advisory clause(s), if any, to be attached to the permission, and the date when the validity of the permission should expire.
- 6.3 Alternatively, should the Committee decide to reject the application, Members are invited to advise what reason(s) for rejection should be given to the applicant.

Attachments

F-Appendix I	MPC Paper No. A/H15/280
F-Appendix II	Extract of the minutes of the MPC meeting held on 17.5.2019
F-Appendix III	Further Information submitted by the applicant on 31.5.2019
F-Appendix IV	Further Information submitted by the applicant on 12.7.2019
F-Appendix V	Further Information submitted by the applicant on 16.7.2019
F-Appendix VI	Advisory Clauses

Drawings FA-1 & FA2

Plan FA-1	Location plan
Plans FA-2 & FA-3	Site plan
Plan FA-4	Aerial photo
Plan FA-5	Site photos

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
JULY 2019**