

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION
UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE

APPLICATION NO. A/TP/672

- Applicant** : Hong Kong Housing Authority
- Site** : Government Land at Tai Po Area 9 and Chung Nga Road East, Tai Po, New Territories
- Site Area** : 77,880m² (about)
- Land Status** : Government Land
- Plan** : Approved Tai Po Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/TP/28
- Zoning** : “Residential (Group A) 9” (“R(A)9”)
- Restricted to a maximum total plot ratio (PR) of 6.0 and a maximum building height (BH) of 140mPD
- Application** : Proposed Minor Relaxation of Maximum PR and BH Restrictions for Permitted Public Housing Development

1. The Proposal

- 1.1 The applicant seeks planning permission for minor relaxation of PR and BH restrictions for permitted public housing development at the application site (the Site) (**Plan A-1**). The Site, comprising two portions with Tai Po Area 9 (TP9) on the east and Chung Nga Road East (CNRE) on the west (**Plan A-2**), is zoned “R(A)9” on the OZP subject to a maximum total PR of 6.0 and a maximum BH of 140mPD. According to the Notes of the OZP, based on the individual merits of a development proposal, minor relaxation of PR and BH restrictions may be considered by the Town Planning Board (the Board) on application under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance.
- 1.2 According to the applicant, the public housing development mainly comprises one social welfare block and one housing block at CNRE, and eight housing blocks at TP9 (**Drawing A-1**). The piling works for the Site have already been completed. The building blocks at CNRE are largely completed whereas construction works of topside buildings at TP9 are under way which is scheduled for completion in 2022/23. The Site is accessible from Chung Nga Road.

- 1.3 In pursuit of the Government's initiative to increase the maximum domestic PR of public housing sites where their technical feasibility permits, the applicant has reviewed the intensification feasibility of the public housing development at the Site. Upon reviewing the existing foundation design, three housing blocks at TP9 (i.e. Blocks 6, 8 and 9) could be added with one domestic storey which will provide a total of 84 additional flats. In this connection, the applicant proposes for a minor relaxation of the PR restriction from 6.0 to 6.15 (+2.5%) and the BH restriction from 140mPD to 143mPD (+2.14%).
- 1.4 The applicant has submitted a visual impact assessment (VIA) to demonstrate no adverse visual impacts arising from the proposed development (**Appendix Ia**).
- 1.5 In support of the application, the applicant has submitted the following documents:
- (a) Application form received on 26.11.2020 (**Appendix I**)
 - (b) Supporting planning statement with VIA (**Appendix Ia**)

2. Justifications from the Applicant

The justifications put forth by the applicant in support of the application are detailed in the supporting planning statement at **Appendix Ia**. They are summarized as follows:

In Line with Government's Policy on Intensification of Public Housing Sites

- (a) the Government announced in December 2018 the policy on 'Enhancement of the Development Intensity of Public Housing Sites'. For sites located in Density Zones 1, 2 and 3 of New Towns, the maximum domestic PR of the public housing sites will be allowed to increase beyond the current 20% cap by up to 10% (i.e. maximum 30% in total) where their technical feasibility permits. The Site is under Density Zone 1 of New Towns and the maximum domestic PR is allowed to be increased from 5.0 to 6.5. Taking into account the existing foundation design with construction already commenced in 2017, one additional storey to three blocks with 84 additional flats are proposed, resulting in an increase of maximum total PR from 6.0 to 6.15 and BH restriction from 140mPD to 143mPD. The proposed increase is in line with Government's policy;

Meet Acute Demand for Public Housing

- (b) the Government has committed to increase public housing supply substantially to meet the community's demand, and the supply target for public housing is set at 301,000 from 2020/21 to 2029/30. As at end September 2020, the average waiting time for general applicants was 5.6 years. The subject application will increase the public housing production which is in line with the Government's policy, contribute to the fulfilment of the imminent housing need and maximize the utilisation of developable land resources;

No Adverse Impacts

- (c) the VIA submitted has demonstrated that the proposed increase of one storey for three housing blocks will only result in slight visual change in BH and is unlikely to cause any significant adverse visual impact (**Drawings A-2 to A-4**);

- (d) the application only involves one additional storey at Blocks 6, 8 and 9, which is considered to be a minor change in the BH for high-rise buildings. Apart from this, there would be no change in building massing and blocking arrangement for the whole Site. The proposed development is therefore expected to achieve similar ventilation performance at the pedestrian level as the scheme currently under construction without intensification; and
- (e) the addition of only 84 flats and the resultant increases in PR and BH are minor in nature. Hence, no adverse impacts on traffic, sewerage, drainage, environmental and landscape aspects are anticipated. Moreover, the addition of 84 flats will only lead to an increase of design population from 18,458 to 18,662 (i.e. +204 persons), community facilities and ancillary parking facilities will be adequately provided in accordance with the prevailing standards and requirements of relevant government departments. Over 5,000m² of retail and commercial facilities will also be provided at the proposed development to serve local needs.

3. Compliance with the “Owner’s Consent/Notification” Requirements

As the Site involves government land only, the “owner’s consent/notification” requirements as set out in the Town Planning Board Guidelines on satisfying the “Owner’s Consent/ Notification” Requirements under Sections 12A and 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (TPB PG-No. 31) are not applicable.

4. Previous Application

There is no previous application at the Site.

5. Similar Application

There is no similar application within “R(A)9” zone of the OZP.

6. The Site and its Surrounding Areas (Plans A-1, A-2 and photos on Plans A-3, A-4a and A-4b)

6.1 The Site is:

- (a) located at the northern fringe of the Tai Po New Town;
- (b) accessible from Chung Nga Road at its south; and
- (c) currently under construction for public housing development.

6.2 The surrounding areas have the following characteristics:

- (a) to the immediate south of the Site are Tai Po Hospital and the Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital;
- (b) to the immediate west of the Site is Hong Chi Pinehill Integrated Vocational Training Centre, and the planned public housing development at Chung Nga Road West (CNRW) falling within the same “R(A)9” zone with a BH restriction of 140mPD;

- (c) to the southwest across Chung Nga Road are the existing public housing developments (i.e. Chung Nga Court and Fu Heng Estate) which are zoned “R(A)” with a BH restriction of 110mPD; and
- (d) a private residential development at Fung Yuen zoned “Comprehensive Development Area (1)” is located to the further east of the Site whereas the Fung Yuen “Site of Special Scientific Interest” is at the further north of the Site.

7. Planning Intention

- 7.1 The planning intention of the “R(A)” zone is primarily for high-density residential developments. Commercial uses are always permitted on the lowest three floors of a building or in the purpose-designed non-residential portion of an existing building. The “R(A)9” zone is intended for public housing development.
- 7.2 According to the Explanatory Statement of the OZP, to provide flexibility for innovative design adapted to the characteristics of particular sites, minor relaxation of PR/BH restrictions of the “R(A)” sub-areas may be considered by the Board through planning permission system. Each application will be considered on individual merits.

8. Comments from Relevant Government Departments

- 8.1 The following government departments have been consulted and their views on the application are summarized as follows:

Land Administration

- 8.1.1 Comments of the District Lands Officer/Tai Po, Lands Department (DLO/TP, LandsD):
 - (a) no objection to the application; and
 - (b) the Site falls within Short Term Tenancy (STT) No. 1717 which was granted to the applicant, Hong Kong Housing Authority, for a term of 73 months commencing on 21.8.2017 for the purposes to carrying out such building and associated works as are necessary in connection with the development of a public rental housing estate.

Urban Design and Landscape

- 8.1.2 Comments of the Chief Town Planner/Urban Design and Landscape, Planning Department (CTP/UD&L, PlanD):

Urban Design and Visual

- (a) the VIA conducted by the applicant has demonstrated that the proposal under the application would not have significant adverse visual impact. He has no comment on the application from the urban design and visual perspectives;

Air Ventilation

- (b) no comment on the application from the air ventilation perspective as there is very slight difference between the proposal under the current application and the scheme currently under construction without intensification;

Landscape

- (c) no objection to the application from the landscape planning perspective;
- (d) according to the supporting planning statement, the applicant proposes to add one storey over three out of eight domestic blocks, where the overall development layout of the compliance development remains unchanged. Significant adverse impact arising from the proposed additional storey over existing domestic blocks layout is not anticipated; and
- (e) according to the supporting planning statement, the proposed open space provision has been increased for the designed population under the proposed development to meet relevant standards/guidelines.

8.1.3 Comments of the Chief Architect/Central Management Division 2, Architectural Services Department (CA/CMD2, ArchSD):

- (a) no in-principle objection to the application from architectural and visual impact points of view; and
- (b) it is noted that the proposed public housing development mainly consists of nine residential towers with BHs ranging from 107.3mPD to 143mPD, which may not be incompatible with the adjacent developments.

Traffic

8.1.4 Comments of the Commissioner for Transport (C for T):

- (a) no objection to the application from traffic engineering point of view;
- (b) the increased population in the current application is within the design development parameters adopted in the approved Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) conducted by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) for the public housing development at CNRE and TP9. The results from the TIA indicated that all junctions within the study area will be operating with ample capacity, except for the junctions at Chung Nga Road / Chuen On Road (North), Chuen On Road / access road to Tai Po Hospital, Chung Nga Road / Chuen On Road (South), and Ting Kok Road / Chung Nga Road / Nam Wan Road. Junction improvement schemes for the above mentioned four junctions were proposed and adopted for implementation. The corresponding junction improvement works were completed by CEDD in 2020 and are currently in operation. Besides, the TIA results showed that the emergency services of the nearby hospitals would not be affected by the public housing development at CNRE and TP9. Meanwhile, Transport Department (TD) is planning to carry out a traffic and transport study in Tai Po to holistically review the traffic condition in the Tai Po district;

- (c) for the parking provision, it is noted that the ancillary parking facility for the proposed development has been increased accordingly with the increased number of flats in the current application, and the upper range of the relevant parking standards under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) have been adopted; and
- (d) a public transport terminus (PTT) has been proposed at TP9 to serve the passenger demand mainly generated from the public housing development, and the approved TIA revealed that the proposed PTT would support the provision of additional public transport services to accommodate the additional demand to/from the development. TD will closely monitor the construction progress of the public housing development, and timely introduce bus routes and other public transport services to meet the commuter demand from new population growth.

Local Views

8.1.5 Comments of the District Officer (Tai Po), Home Affairs Department (DO(TP), HAD):

- (a) no comment on the application; and
- (b) the incumbent Tai Po District Council members of nearby constituencies, namely Mr. YIU Yeuk-sang, Mr. HO Wai-lam and Mr. MAN Nim-chi, as well as the nearby residents have raised grave concerns about the adverse traffic impact to the vicinity due to the increasing population. In addition, they strongly requested to enhance the public transportation services to the residents.

8.2 The following government bureau/departments have no objection to / no comment on the application:

- (a) Secretary for Education;
- (b) Chief Building Surveyor/New Territories West, Buildings Department;
- (c) Chief Engineer/Construction, Water Supplies Department;
- (d) Chief Engineer/Mainland North, Drainage Services Department;
- (e) Chief Highway Engineer/New Territories East, Highways Department;
- (f) Commissioner of Police;
- (g) Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation;
- (h) Director of Environmental Protection;
- (i) Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services;
- (j) Director of Fire Services;
- (k) Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene;
- (l) Director of Social Welfare;
- (m) Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department;
- (n) Project Manager (North), Civil Engineering and Development Department; and
- (o) Project Team Leader/Project Unit, Civil Engineering and Development Department.

9. Public Comments Received During Statutory Publication Period (Appendix II)

The application was published for public inspection. During the statutory public inspection period, a total of 34 public comments were received from local residents and other individuals objecting to the application mainly on the following grounds:

- (a) the increase in population would further aggravate traffic congestion in the area, particularly on Chung Nga Road and Nam Wan Road, of which the Site shares access with the nearby Fu Heng Estate and Chung Nga Court. The residents of the nearby housing developments have to rely on the limited public transportation services to Tai Po Market Station and other areas which are often overcrowded at peak hours. Moreover, Tai Po district is heavily populated and the existing traffic and transport network is already saturated with only Tolo Highway and the East Rail Line as the external transport links. New access road bypassing Nam Wan Road and other transportation improvements should be proposed;
- (b) there is illegal parking problem on Chung Nga Road and a shortage of car parking spaces in the area. A multi-storey car park for private cars and heavy goods vehicles should be provided;
- (c) as the Site shares the same Chung Nga Road with the nearby hospitals, traffic impact arising from the proposed development would hinder emergency medical services;
- (d) there are insufficient supporting facilities for the new public housing developments, in particular eating places, shops and markets;
- (e) the Housing Department has not consulted the District Council or other local organisations on the proposed increase in population;
- (f) there are concerns on the proposed provision of open space/children's playground and whether they are accessible or usable; and
- (g) the proposed development with higher towers than nearby developments may block natural sunlight and the overcrowded conditions of the proposed development lead to social and health problems.

10. Planning Considerations and Assessments

10.1 The application is for minor relaxation of PR and BH restrictions of the Site, which falls within an area zoned "R(A)9" on the OZP, from 6.0 to 6.15 (+2.5%) and from 140mPD to 143mPD (+2.14%) respectively for the permitted public housing development. According to the applicant, the piling works for the Site, comprising the CNRE portion on the west and TP9 portion on the east, have been completed. The building blocks at CNRE are largely completed whereas construction works of topside buildings at TP9 are under way. After reviewing the existing foundation design, only three out of eight housing blocks at TP9 (i.e. Blocks 6, 8 and 9) could be added with one storey which will generate 84 additional flats (the total provision will become 7,431 flats). The proposed minor relaxation of PR and BH restrictions is in line with the Government's policy of enhancing the development intensity of public housing sites to increase housing supply where their technical feasibility permits.

- 10.2 The Site is located at the northern fringe of Tai Po New Town where high-rise public housing developments can be found in the vicinity, i.e. the existing developments of Fu Heng Estate and Chung Nga Court and the planned public housing development at CNRW, which are zoned “R(A)” and “R(A)9” with BH restrictions of 110mPD and 140mPD respectively (**Plan A-2**). The proposed minor increase in PR (+2.5%) and in BH (+2.14%) for the Site will not result in substantial change to the character of the locality and is considered not incompatible with the surrounding area.
- 10.3 The application involves the addition of one storey at Blocks 6, 8 and 9 only is considered to be a minor change in BH for high-rise buildings (increased from 139.89mPD to 143mPD). The VIA submitted by the applicant has concluded that the proposal will only result in slight visual change in BH and is unlikely to cause any significant adverse visual impact. Moreover, according to the applicant, it is expected that the proposal would achieve similar ventilation performance at the pedestrian level as the scheme currently under construction without the additional storey. In this regard, CTP/UD&L of PlanD and CA/CMD2 of ArchSD have no objection to the application from architectural, urban design, visual and air ventilation perspectives. Other relevant departments including C for T, Chief Engineer/Mainland North of Drainage Services Department and Director of Environmental Protection have no objection to / no adverse comments on the application.
- 10.4 The proposal will lead to an increase of design population from 18,458 to 18,662 (an increase of only 204 persons (+1.11%)). Taking into account the requirement of HKPSG and the advice of relevant bureau/departments, the overall planned provision of the community facilities and open space will be adequate to serve the need of the population in the proposed development. In this regard, Director of Social Welfare, Secretary for Education and CTP/UD&L of PlanD have no objection to the application.
- 10.5 Regarding the local views conveyed by DO(TP) of HAD in paragraph 8.1.5 and the public comments objecting to the application on the grounds as detailed in paragraph 9, government departments’ comments and the planning assessments above are relevant.

11. Planning Department’s Views

- 11.1 Based on the assessments made in paragraph 10 and having taken into account the local views and public comments mentioned in paragraphs 8.1.5 and 9, the Planning Department has no objection to the application.
- 11.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, it is suggested that the permission shall be valid until 22.1.2025, 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.
- 11.3 There is no strong reason to recommend rejection of the application.

12. Decision Sought

- 12.1 The Committee is invited to consider the application and decide whether to grant or refuse to grant permission.

12.2 Should the Committee decide to approve the application, Members are invited to consider the approval conditions and advisory clauses, if any, to be attached to the permission, and the date when the validity of the permission should expire.

12.3 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.

13. Attachments

Appendix I	Application form received on 26.11.2020
Appendix Ia	Supporting planning statement with visual impact assessment
Appendix II	Public comments
Drawing A-1	Master layout plan
Drawings A-2 to A-4	Photomontages
Plan A-1	Location plan
Plan A-2	Site plan
Plan A-3	Aerial photo
Plans A-4a & 4b	Site photos

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT
JANRUARY 2021**