Annex 2

Section 16 Planning Application for Proposed Minor Relaxation of Building Height Restriction for Permitted Flat Use at 105 Robinson Road, Mid-Levels West, Hong Kong

Visual Impact Review

February 2024

Table of Contents

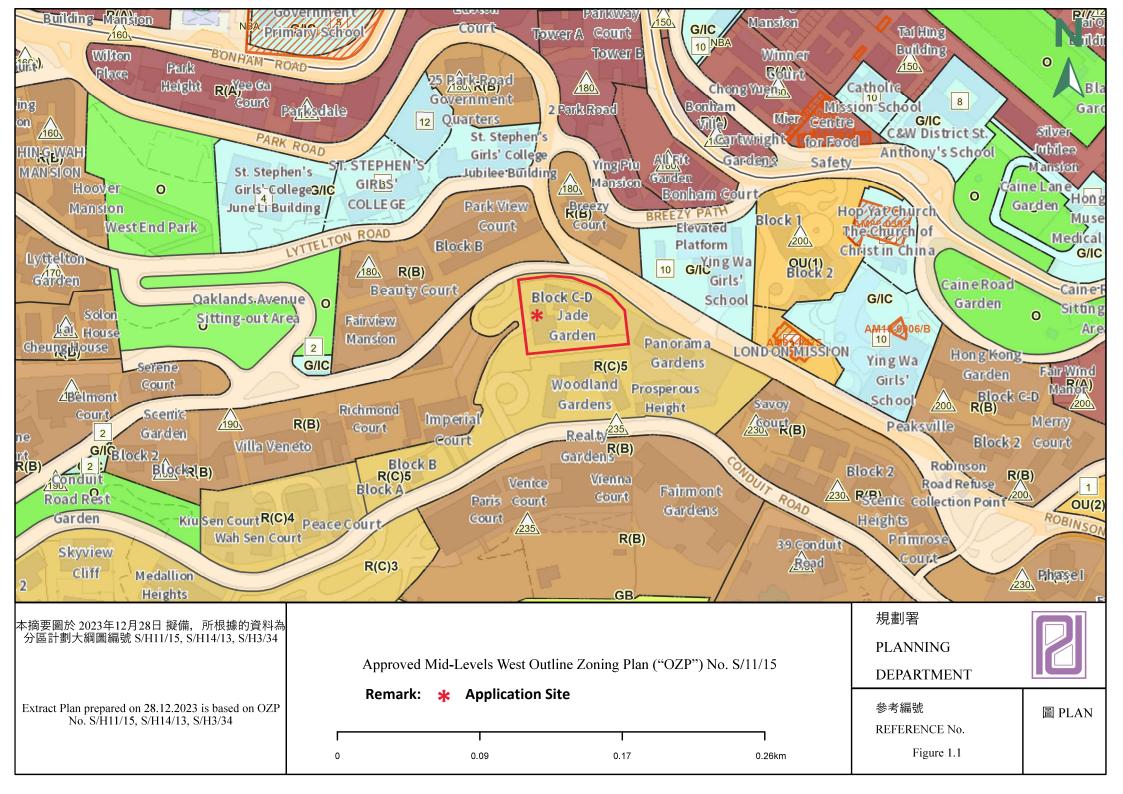
		Pages
1.0	Introduction	4
2.0	Existing Site Description	5
3.0	Baseline Scheme	6
4.0	Proposed Scheme Description	6
5.0	Planning and Design Considerations	7
6.0	Appraisal of Visual Impacts on Different VSRs	8
7.0	Conclusion	19

List of Figures

		Following Page
Figure 1.1	Approved Mid-Levels West Outline Zoning Plan	4
	("OZP") No. S/11/15	
Figure 2.1	Surrounding Existing Building Height Profile	5 (insert)
Figure 5.1	Comparison of Compliant Scheme with Proposed	7
	Scheme (Plan)	
Figure 5.2	Comparison of Compliant Scheme with Proposed	7
	Scheme (Section)	
Figure 6.1	VP01 – View looking Southwest from West	18
	Kowloon Cultural District	
Figure 6.2	VP02 – View looking Southwest from Cultural	18
	Complex Tsim Sha Tsui	
Figure 6.3	VP03 – View looking Southwest from Kai Tak Cruise	18
	Terminal Park	
Figure 6.4	VP04 – View looking South from Sun Yat Sen	18
	Memorial Park	
Figure 6.5	VP05 – View looking North from Lugard Road	18
Figure 6.6	VP06 – View looking West from Caine Road Garden	18
rigule 0.0	VF00 - View looking West from Came Road Garden	10
Figure 6.7	VP07 – View looking Southwest from Bonham	18
	Road Rest Garden	
Figure 6.8	VP08 – View looking Northwest from Bus Stop at	18
	Ying Wa Girls' School, Robinson Road	

1. Introduction

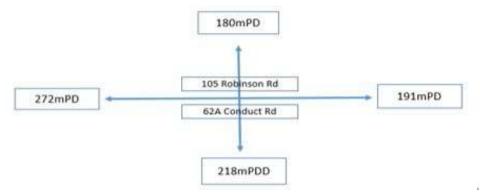
- 1.0 This Visual Impact Review was prepared in support of the proposed minor relaxation of building height (BH) restrictions of a permitted flat use at 105 Robinson Road, Mid-Levels West, Hong Kong (i.e. hereafter referred to as the Application Site).
- 1.1 The Application Site falls within "Residential (Group C) 5" ("R (C)") under the approved Mid-Levels West Outline Zoning Plan ("OZP") No. S/11/15 (**Figure 1.1 refers**). According to the Notes of the OZP, the application site has no plot ratio limitation but a maximum building height of 161mPD.
- This Review was prepared in accordance with the 'Town Planning Board Guidelines on Submission of Visual Impact Assessment for Planning Applications to the Town Planning Board' (TPB PG-No. 41) in order to evaluate the degree of potential visual impacts on visual sensitive receivers (VSRs) from major public viewpoints (VPs) due to the Proposed Development at the Application Site.
- 1.3 This Visual Impact Review will cover the potential impacts which might arise as a result of the proposed relaxation of the building height from current 161mPD up to 215mPD. According to the OZP, each proposal will be considered on its individual planning merits. The report makes a comparison between the Base Scheme which is compliant with the OZP and the Proposed Scheme.
- 1.4 The increase in BH of the proposed S16 scheme is designed to be more comparable to adjacent existing urban context.
- 1.5 The proposed S16 scheme will also support a good planning intention/ vision for urban renewal in the area. Without such vision and incentive for relaxing BH, chance of urban renewal is very limited.



2. Existing Site Description

2.1 The Application Site is situated between Robinson Road and Conduit Road, Mid-Level West. The site resting on existing slopes and situates amid tall buildings with dramatic level difference of +180 mPD to + 272 mPD (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Surrounding Existing Building Height Profile



- 2.2 The Application Site is now vacant with area of 2,557.62m2 (previously 3 blocks of Jade Garden). It is situated at the Mid-Levels Schedule Area No. 1 and subject to the Bulk Excavation Limit (BEL) which prescribes the bottom level of any bulk excavation.
- 2.3 The development potential of application site is dictated by Bulk Excavation Limit (BEL) under Mid-Levels Scheduled Area No. 1. The BEL contours across the application site is from about +105mPD to about +121mPD.

3. Baseline Scheme

- 3.1 The existing residential buildings (Jade Garden Block A-D) were demolished in 2022 and the site is now undergoing site formation works and slope stabilization works.
- 3.2 The current approved GBP consists of 2 residential towers of Building Height up to +161mPD which is the height limit in current Outline Zoning Plan ("OZP"). Due to the building height restriction, a floor-to-floor height of only 2900mm (approx. 2700mm measured from floor to ceiling) is adopted reluctantly. After taking account of structural beams and sunken slabs for drainage pipes, the resulted floor height is close to the minimum standard of Regulation 24 of Building (Planning) Regulations (2.5m measured from floor to ceiling and 2.3 m measured from the floor to the underside of any beam). This is not the desirable quality of living in contemporary standard.
- 2 new residential towers scheme were firstly approved by Buildings Department and relevant departments on 27 May 2022 and subsequent amendments were also approved on 17 March 2023. The 2 towers of 17 storeys providing a total of 217 flats will form a building group with an unavoidable wall effect in that location subject to maximize permitted building height 161mPD.
- 3.4 Due to the Height restriction and Bulk Excavation Limit, there will be no allowance for transfer plate, the screen walls and columns of residential towers will penetrate to the car parking floors. Given the extreme limitation of maneuvering space between structural columns and walls, there will be limited provision of car parking spaces. Only 14 private car parking can be provided.

4. Proposed Scheme

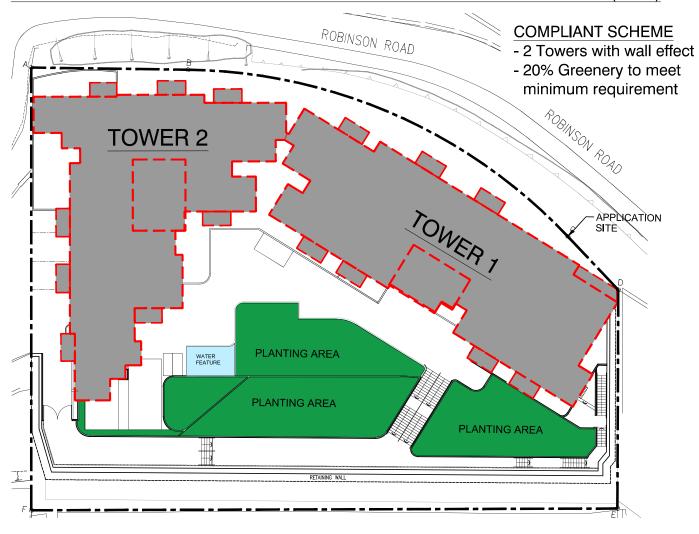
4.1 The proposed single tower adopts the same development parameters as per approved GBP for 217 units except building height has been increased to 215mPD allowing a large setback from the western boundary.

- 4.2 If to adopt the approved GBP's floor-to-floor height of 2900mm, the resultant building height is 208mPD. There is a difference of +3.4% (7m).
- 4.3 The re-arrangement includes one E&M/F, car parking on LG1 and LG2, then club house and residential entrance lobby on G/F, and flats on 1/F to 28/F.

5. Planning and Urban Design Considerations

- 5.1 The building height of +215mPD serves several planning merits, namely (a) to regenerate spatial disposition of buildings in this special location (i.e. to provide incentive for urban renewal at 62A Conduct Road); (b) to improve the local area amenity, aesthetic, crowdedness, permeability; and (c) to differentiate private housing of a floor-to-floor height of 3150mm and public housing of 2750mm.
 - (a) The proposed S16 scheme promotes good planning intention/ vision for urban renewal in the area. Without such vision and incentive for relaxing BH, chance of urban renewal for the 62A Conduct Road (last old housing site in this area) is very limited.
 - (b) It allows a much more openness in the area by having a single tower of residential building of 215mPD. The proposed building disposition and orientation is designed to maximize the area of greenery and landscape for the enjoyment not only of the future residents but also the residents in the nearby community. The minimum site coverage of greenery requirement under APP PNAP-152 is 20%. The site coverage of greenery provided in the application scheme is 35%, which is an enhancement in comparison to the minimum provision (Figure 5.1 refers).
 - (c) The proposed scheme of 3150mm floor height is benchmark from PlanD's usual assumption of floor-to-floor height of 3.15m. **Table 1** shows typical floor height of recent residential development by MTR and URA, which are representative to the current private housing standard with enhanced natural lighting and ventilation to the living space. A low floor to ceiling height is leading quality of living to go backward.

FIGURE 5.1 - COMPARISON OF COMPLIANT SCHEME WITH PROPOSED SCHEME (PLAN)



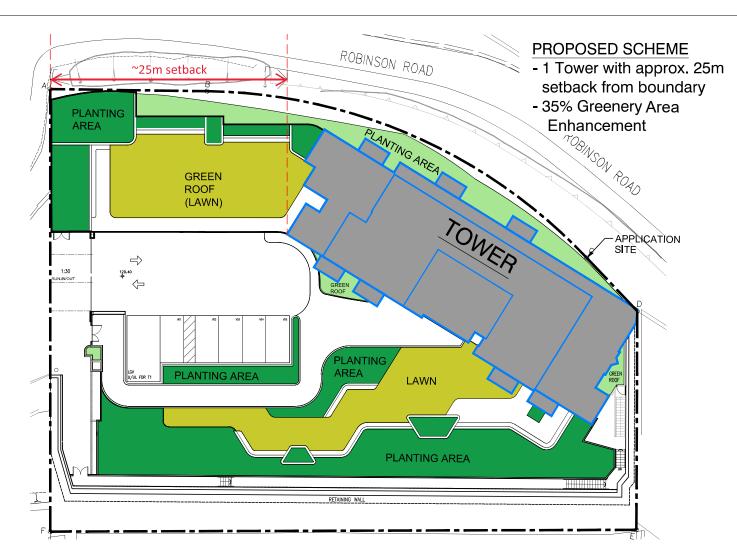
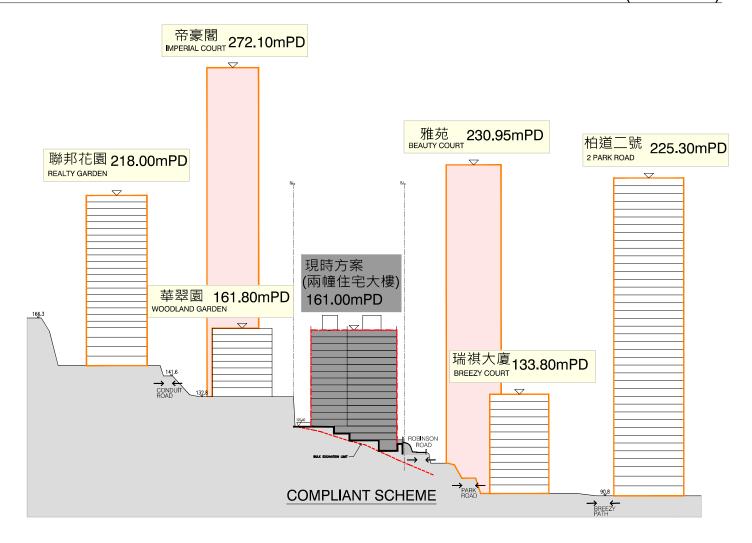


FIGURE 5.2 COMPARISON OF COMPLIANT SCHEME WITH PROPOSED SCHEME (SECTION)



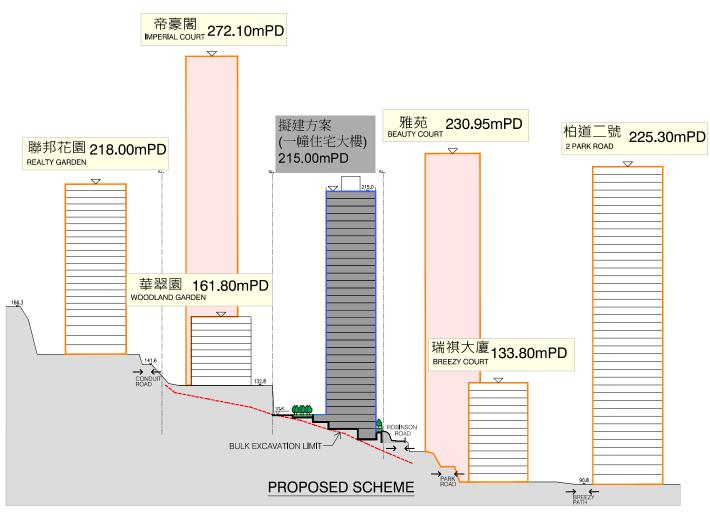


Table 1 - Typical floor height of recent private residential projects

Developed	Development	Location	Year of	Typical floor
Ву	Name		Completion	height (mm)
URA	Downtown 38	To Kwa Wan	2020	3150
URA	Grand Central	Kwun Tong	2021	3150
URA	Artisan Garden	Kowloon City	2021	3150
MTR	Southland	Wong Chuk Hang	2022	3150
MTR	La Marina	Wong Chuk Hang	2022	3150
MTR	LP10	Tseung Kwan O	2022	3150
URA	The Harmonie	Cheung Sha Wan	2023	3250
URA	Bal. residence	Kwun Tong	2024 (estimate)	3150
URA	One Central Place	Sheung Wan	2024 (estimate)	3450

- 5.2 It does not contravene the planned building height bands adopted for the Mid-Levels West OZP (**Figure 2.1**) to maintain a step down in building heights from southern (upper levels) to north areas (lower levels).
- Approval to the height relaxation for the application scheme from 161mPD to 215mPD will not undermine this statutory intent, given the physical proximity of taller buildings south of Conduit and it will avoid the future 'sore-thumb' effect if such height relaxation approved. (Figure 5.2 refers).
- The relaxation in building height will obviously not impinge on views to the Peak Ridgeline or Victoria Harbour from major public vantage points as per Ch. 11 of Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) (VP-01) and from various local accessible public sensitive receivers (VP-02 to VP-08).

6. Appraisal of Visual Impacts on Different VSRs

- 6.1 The proposed building height has been considered either +208mPD or +215mPD.

 The recommended building height is +215mPD because all the VPs confirm no significant adverse impact but improvement of contemporary living quality.
- 6.2 The perspectives of visual impact of building height between +215mPD and +208mPD reveal that it is negligible (refer to **VSRs Figure 6.1 to 6.8**), the floor-to-floor height of 3150mm is adopted just to align to meet community expectation.

- 6.3 The selected VSRs, as per Para. 4.5 of the TPB PG No. 41, are nearby parks/open spaces users and other passers-by in the neighbourhood. In this regard, eight key VSRs have been identified best representing public views to the proposed scheme (also comparing the 7m difference due to the different in ceiling height).
- 6.4 The appraisal of visual impacts on VSRs at the key VPs induced by the Proposed Development are described below. The corresponding photomontages are attached in Figures 6.1 to 6.8.

<u>VP01 – View looking Southwest from West Kowloon Cultural District</u> (Figure 6.1 refers)

6.1.1 This vantage point is located at West Kowloon Cultural District, situated approximately 2.1km to the Northeast of the Application Site, on the opposite bank of Victoria Harbour. It is a district known for its vibrant cultural quarter, situated on a dramatic harborfront site in the heart of Hong Kong. This vantage point is identified as only strategic vantage point can view the proposed development according to the HKPSG.

6.1.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Slight

The view from this vantage point is accessible to recreational users of the park near the waterfront, as well as travelers visiting the area. It offers a long-distance panoramic view of Hong Kong Island West from Kowloon West across Victoria Harbour. The sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered slight.

6.1.3 Visual Composition: Slight

The existing view from this vantage point is characterized by a skyline comprised of high-density urban developments in Hong Kong Island West, with Victoria Peak as the backdrop. The proposed scheme, due to its small scale, would form a relatively small component in this view. It is considered blend-in the existing context and may not be readily apparent.

6.1.4 Visual Obstruction: Slight

Considering the limited visibility of the Proposed Scheme and the backdrop of existing high-density urban developments, the degree of visual obstruction is expected to be slight.

6.1.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Slight

Due to the distance between the vantage point and the proposed scheme, as well as the presence of tall buildings in the surrounding context, the effect on public viewers is expected to be slight. The proposed scheme will be viewed against the backdrop of the existing development.

6.1.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Slight

Considering the long viewing distance from this vantage point and the attention of the VSRs being drawn towards the views of the Peak Ridgeline or Victoria Harbour, the sensitivity of the VSRs at this vantage point is considered slight.

6.1.7 Overall visual Impact: Slight

Taking into account the visual composition and compatibility with the existing dense urban context in Hong Kong Island West, the proposed application scheme is considered to have a slight visual impact. The responsive building profile of the proposed residential building will integrate well with the surrounding building clusters and harmonize with the Mid-Levels West skyline in distant views.

<u>VP02 – View looking Southwest from Tsim Sha Tsui Harbourfront</u> (Figure 6.2 refers)

6.2.1 This vantage point is situated at the Tsim Sha Tsui Harbourfront, located approximately 2.8km to the Northeast of the Application Site, on the opposite bank of Victoria Harbour.

6.2.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Negligible

The view from this vantage point is too far and buried within the existing urban built-up. The sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered negligible.

6.2.3 Visual Composition: Negligible

The proposed scheme, being completely blocked by the tall buildings and high-density context, is not readily apparent and compatible with its surroundings.

6.2.4 Visual Obstruction: Negligible

Since the proposed scheme is obstructed by the tall buildings of the existing high-density urban developments, the degree of visual obstruction is expected to be negligible.

6.2.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Negligible

Considering the long viewing distance and the proposed scheme being overwhelmed by the surrounding high-density urban developments, the effect on public viewers is anticipated to be negligible.

6.2.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Negligible

Given the considerable viewing distance from this vantage point, the attention of the VSRs is likely to be drawn towards the views of the building skyline in Victoria Harbour. Therefore, the sensitivity of the VSRs at this vantage point is considered to be negligible.

6.2.7 Overall visual Impact: Negligible

In terms of visual composition, the proposed application scheme is deemed compatible with the existing dense urban context in the Hong Kong Island West area. Considering this compatibility and the negligible effect on public viewers and visual resources, the overall visual impact of the proposed scheme from the Cultural Complex Tsim Sha Tsui vantage point is assessed as negligible.

<u>VP03 – View looking Southwest from Kai Tak Cruise Terminal Park</u> (Figure 6.3 refers)

- 6.3.1 This vantage point is situated at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal Park, approximately 7.6km to the Northeast of the Application Site, on the opposite bank of Victoria Harbour.
- 6.3.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Negligible

 Due to its long visual distance, the sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered to be negligible.
- 6.3.3 Visual Composition: Negligible

 Being at a considerable distance and not visible, it is not readily apparent and compatible with its surroundings.
- 6.3.4 Visual Obstruction: Negligible
 Since the proposed scheme is located at a long distance and unable to be seen, the degree of visual obstruction is expected to be negligible.
- 6.3.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Negligible

 Considering the long viewing distance and the proposed scheme being overwhelmed by the surrounding high-density urban developments, the effect on public viewers is anticipated to be negligible.
- 6.3.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Negligible
 Given the significant viewing distance from this vantage point, the attention of the VSRs is likely to be drawn towards the views of Victoria Harbour. Therefore, the sensitivity of the VSRs at this vantage point is considered to be negligible.
- 6.3.7 Overall visual Impact: Negligible

 Taking into account the visual composition and compatibility with the existing dense urban context in Hong Kong Island, the proposed application scheme is assessed to have a negligible visual impact.

<u>VP04 – View looking South from Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park</u> (**Figure 6.4** refers)

- 6.4.1 This vantage point is located at Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park, approximately 750m to the North of the Application Site. It is a waterfront park in the Sai Ying Pun area of Hong Kong Island, facing Victoria Harbour.
- 6.4.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Negligible

 Due to the blocked view, the sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered negligible.
- 6.4.3 Visual Composition: Not apparent and compatible
 Given the existing view dominated by high-density urban developments in Hong Kong Island West, the proposed scheme, which is completely blocked by tall buildings and the high-density context, is not readily apparent and compatible with its surroundings.
- 6.4.4 Visual Obstruction: Negligible
 Since the proposed scheme is obstructed by the tall buildings of the existing high-density urban developments, the degree of visual obstruction is expected to be negligible.
- 6.4.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Negligible

 Considering that the proposed scheme is being blocked by the surrounding high-density urban developments, the effect on public viewers is anticipated to be negligible. The scheme will be viewed against the backdrop of the existing development.
- 6.4.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Negligible

 As the attention of the VSRs is drawn towards the views to the North,
 particularly the Victoria Harbour, it is considered that the sensitivity
 of the VSRs at this vantage point is negligible.

6.4.7 Overall visual Impact: Negligible

In terms of visual composition, the proposed application scheme is considered compatible with the existing dense urban context in the Hong Kong Island West area.

VP05 – View looking North from Lugard Road

(**Figure 6.5** refers)

6.5.1 This vantage point is located at Lugard Road, approximately 520m to the South of the Application Site. It is situated at Victoria Peak, offering a spectacular panoramic view of Victoria Harbour.

6.5.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Slight

Lugard Road provides the best views over the impressive skyscrapers and the spectacular panoramic view of Victoria Harbour. The sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered slight.

6.5.3 Visual Composition: Not readily apparent and compatible Considering the existing view characterized by a skyline of high-density urban developments in Hong Kong Island West, with Victoria Harbour and Kowloon as a backdrop, the proposed scheme would form a relatively small component in this view due to its small scale. However, it is considered compatible with its context.

6.5.4 Visual Obstruction: Slight

Due to the limited visibility of the proposed scheme and the backdrop of existing high-density urban developments, the degree of visual obstruction will be slight.

6.5.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Slight

Considering the long viewing distance and the fact that the proposed scheme is only apparent on the topmost floor, compared to the surrounding context, its effect on public viewers will be slight. It will be viewed against the backdrop of the existing development.

6.5.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Slight

Given the long viewing distance from this vantage point, the attention of the VSRs should be drawn to the views of Victoria Harbour. Therefore, it is considered that the sensitivity of the VSRs at this vantage point is slight.

6.5.7 Overall visual Impact: Slight

In terms of visual composition, the proposed application scheme is considered compatible with the existing dense urban context. With its responsive building profile, the proposed residential building will fully integrate with the surrounding building clusters and harmonize with the Mid-Levels West skyline in distant views.

<u>VP06 – View looking West from Caine Road Garden</u> (**Figure 6.6** refers)

6.6.1 This vantage point is located at Caine Road Garden in the neighborhood, approximately 250m to the East of the Application Site.

6.6.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Slight

This vantage point is primarily accessible to the local neighborhood, providing a park for resting, playing, and passive recreational activities. The sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered to be slight.

- 6.6.3 Visual Composition: Apparent and compatible

 Considering the surrounding environment, which is already characterized by tall buildings, the proposed scheme is partially apparent but considered compatible with its context.
- 6.6.4 Visual Obstruction: insignificant small partial blockage
 While the visible section of the proposed scheme may result in a very small loss of the sky view, compared to the surrounding development, the blockage is considered insignificant.

6.6.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Slight

Given that only a small corner of the proposed scheme is apparent and considering the presence of the surrounding development, the effect on public viewers is expected to be small and insignificant.

6.6.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Slight

The proposed scheme is well-hidden behind the buildings in the context. The primary visual resources at this vantage point are the playground and greenery of the garden. The sensitivity of the VSRs at this vantage point is considered insignificant.

6.6.7 Overall visual Impact: Slight

In terms of visual composition, the proposed application scheme is considered compatible with the existing context. The proposed residential building is expected to integrate fully with the surrounding building clusters and harmonize with the environment.

<u>VP07 – View looking Southwest from Bonham Road Rest Garden</u> (**Figure 6.7** refers)

6.7.1 This vantage point is located at Bonham Road Rest Garden, approximately 140m to the Northeast of the Application Site. It serves as a local resting garden for the neighborhood.

6.7.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Slight

This vantage point is primarily accessible to the local neighborhood, providing a space for resting and passive recreational activities. The sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered to be slight.

6.7.3 Visual Composition: Apparent and compatible Considering the surrounding environment, which is already characterized by tall buildings, the proposed scheme is partially apparent but considered compatible with its context.

6.7.4 Visual Obstruction: Partial blockage but not significant While the visible section of the proposed scheme may result in a small loss of the sky view, compared to the surrounding high-density development, the blockage is considered not significant.

6.7.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Slight

Given the presence of existing trees in the garden and the surrounding high-density development in the background, the effect on public viewers is expected to be small.

6.7.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Slight

Considering the cozy atmosphere in the garden, the sensitivity of the Visual Sensitivity Resources (VSRs) at this vantage point is considered insignificant.

6.7.7 Overall visual Impact: Slight

In terms of visual composition, the proposed application scheme is considered compatible with the existing dense urban context. The proposed residential building is expected to integrate fully with the surrounding building clusters and harmonize with the environment.

<u>VP08 – View looking Northwest from Bus Stop at Ying Wa Girls' School, Robinson Road</u> (**Figure 6.8** refers)

6.8.1 This vantage point is located at the bus stop at Ying Wa Girls' School, Robinson Road, approximately 125m to the Southeast of the Application Site.

6.8.2 Sensitivity of Public Viewers: Slight

This vantage point is primarily accessible to the local neighborhood. The sensitivity of public viewers at this vantage point is considered to be slight.

6.8.3 Visual Composition: Apparent and compatible

Considering the surrounding environment, which is already characterized by tall buildings, the proposed scheme is partially apparent but considered compatible with its context.

6.8.4 Visual Obstruction: Partial blockage but not significant

While the visible section of the proposed scheme may result in a very small loss of the sky view, compared to the surrounding development, the blockage is considered insignificant.

6.8.5 Effect on Public Viewers: Slight

Considering the presence of the surrounding tall buildings, the effect on public viewers is expected to be small and insignificant.

6.8.6 Effect on Visual Resources: Slight

The proposed scheme is well-hidden behind the buildings in the context. The primary visual resources at this vantage point are the locals waiting for the bus. The sensitivity of the VSRs at this vantage point is considered insignificant.

6.8.7 Overall visual Impact: Slight

In terms of visual composition, the proposed application scheme is considered compatible with the existing context. The proposed residential building is expected to integrate fully with the surrounding building clusters and harmonize with the environment.

Figure 6.1



VP01 - View looking Southwest from West Kowloon Cultural District (OZP - Compliant Scheme)



Consideration of the control of the

Location Plan

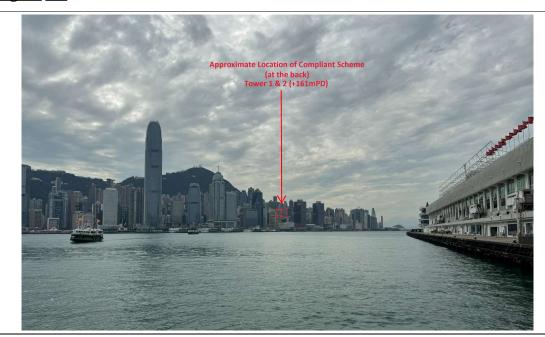
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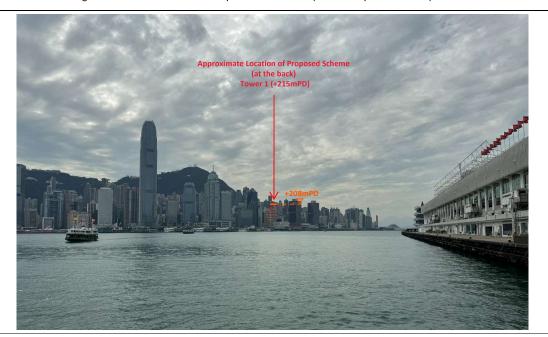
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VP01 - View looking Southwest from West Kowloon Cultural District (Proposed Scheme)

Figure 6.2



VP02 - View looking Southwest from Cultural Complex Tsim Sha Tsui (OZP - Compliant Scheme)





Remarks:

- White colour fill is visually visible

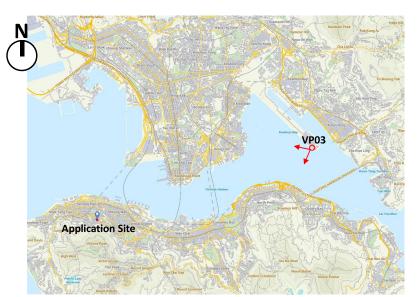
VP02 - View looking Southwest from Cultural Complex Tsim Sha Tsui (Proposed Scheme)

Figure 6.3



VP03 - View looking Southwest from Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (OZP - Compliant Scheme)





Location Plan

Remarks:



- White colour fill is visually visible

VP03 - View looking Southwest from Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (Proposed Scheme)

Figure 6.4



VP04 - View looking South from Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park (OZP - Compliant Scheme)





Location Plan

Remarks:



- White colour fill is visually visible

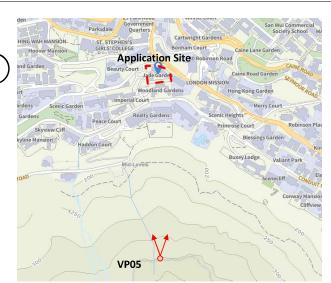
VP04 - View looking South from Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park (Proposed Scheme)

Figure 6.5



VP05 - View looking North from Lugard Road (OZP - Compliant Scheme)





Location Plan

Remarks:



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VP05 - View looking North from Lugard Road (Proposed Scheme)

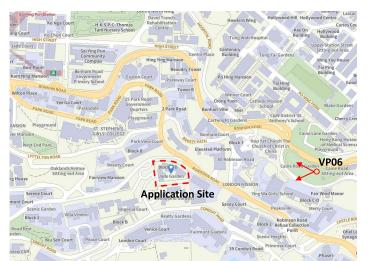
Figure 6.6



VP06 - View looking West from Caine Road Garden (OZP - Compliant Scheme)







Location Plan

Remarks:



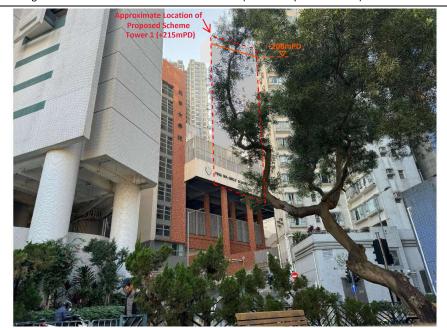
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VP06 - View looking West from Caine Road Garden (Proposed Scheme)

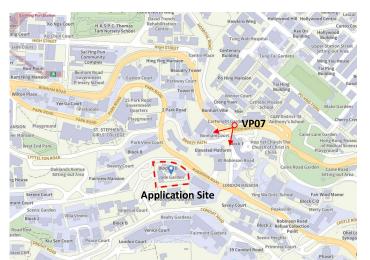
Figure 6.7



VP07 - View looking Southwest from Bonham Road Rest Garden (OZP - Compliant Scheme)







Location Plan

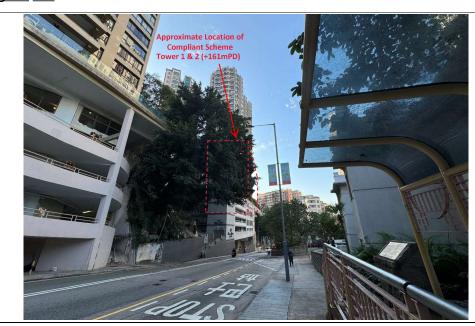
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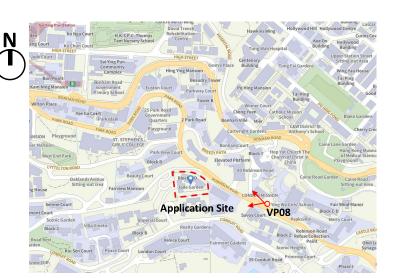
VP07 - View looking Southwest from Bonham Road Rest Garden (Proposed Scheme)

Figure 6.8



VP08 - View looking Northwest from Bus Stop at Ying Wa Girl's School, Robinson Toad (OZP - Compliant Scheme)





Location Plan

Remarks:



- White colour fill is visually visible

VP08 - View looking Northwest from Bus Stop at Ying Wa Girls' School, Robinson Road (Proposed Scheme)

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Realty Gardens at Conduit Road at 218mPD forms a backdrop for the proposed scheme. No adverse visual impact, locally or intrude upon key ridgelines and harbour view corridors, is anticipated.
- 7.2 The proposed building height blends in the planned height bands in the Mid-Levels West OZP and follows the step down planning intention from southern (upper levels) to north areas (lower levels). Approval to the height relaxation for the application scheme from 161mPD to 215mPD will not undermine this statutory intent. It will not be a desirable precedent as it is the last piece of amid "R(C)". There are planning merits, given the physical proximity of taller buildings south of Conduit and it will avoid the future 'sore-thumb' effect rather improving aesthetic and permeability from urban design perspective.
- 7.3 The relaxation in building height obviously not impinge on strategic views either to the Peak Ridgeline or Victoria Harbour (VP-01, VP-02 and VP-03). The visual impact from local short and medium range views (VP-04 to VP-08) are also insignificant.
- 7.4 Even though this single tower will require 215mPD, it matches with its backdrop, Realty Gardens (218mPD). Given this responsive building profile, the proposed residential building will be fully blended in the surrounding building clusters and harmonizes with the Mid-Level West skyline in distant views.
- 7.5 Another important urban design merit is to open up a window for urban renewal of 62A Conduct Road instead of surrendering this last opportunity due to the prevailing statutory height restriction. The proposal has observed the TPB PG-NO. 41 that the highly developed context of Hong Kong not to protect private views if the community benefits warrant.