

LCQ18: Planning of site of former St. Joseph's Home for the Aged

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Ka-piu and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

According to the Approved Ngau Chi Wan Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K12/18, the site of the former St. Joseph's Home for the Aged is zoned for use as Comprehensive Development Area. It has been reported that in July last year, the Buildings Department (BD) granted the building plan for the site (the building plan), approving the construction of five 54-storey buildings (the project), which involves about 137 000 square metres of residential gross floor area (GFA) and about 63 000 square metres of non-residential GFA. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of residential units, the population capacity, the number of parking spaces (set out by vehicle type), the number of loading and unloading spaces (set out by vehicle type), the commercial floor area, the floor area of community facilities (set out by proposed uses) and the open space area of the project, as well as the respective anticipated dates of intake/commissioning of such residential units, parking spaces and various facilities;

(2) as it has been reported that the proposed numbers of podium floors and building floors as well as the proposed non-residential GFA in the building plan are different from the information stated in the developer's application for planning permission A/K12/42 submitted to the Town Planning Board (TPB) in 2021, and that according to the information on TPB Statutory Planning Portal 3, the applicant of the planning permission had withdrawn the application, of which application for planning permission or other documents the BD had based in granting the building plan;

(3) given that there are three Grade 2 historic buildings within the area of the project, whether it knows the plans put in place by the developer of the project to conserve and revitalise such buildings;

(4) given that according to the application for planning permission A/K12/42 submitted by the developer of the project, a 24-hour barrier-free pedestrian link connecting Choi Hung MTR Station and Choi Wan Estate is proposed to be provided in the project, whether it is still planned to construct such a pedestrian link under the building plan; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) as there are views that the additional population to be generated by the project will add to the burden on Clear Water Bay Road, Choi Hung Interchange

and Choi Hung MTR Station, and taking into account the developments of the public housing at Ngau Chi Wan Village and the Choi Hung Estate redevelopment project, whether the authorities have assessed the impact of the project on the traffic in the vicinity when vetting and approving the project; if so, of the plans in place to avoid the traffic in the vicinity of the project and the congestion at Choi Hung Station from worsening, in particular, how to avoid bringing additional traffic flow to Clear Water Bay Road, and whether it will consider making good use of the land vacated after the demolition of Choi Hung Estate to improve the traffic congestion at Choi Hung Interchange; and

(6) whether, in vetting and approving the project, the authorities have considered the land space that may be required for the Smart and Green Mass Transit System in East Kowloon to be set up with a station in the vicinity of the project and even have to be extended to the west, and requested the developer to reserve the relevant land; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President:

Replies to the Hon Tang Ka-piu's questions are as follows:

(1) and (2) The site of the former St. Joseph's Home for the Aged is zoned "Comprehensive Development Area" in the relevant outline zoning plan. According to the Town Planning Ordinance, developers must submit a Master Layout Plan (MLP) to the Town Planning Board (TPB) for approval through a planning application. The plan should set out the floor space for different uses, the layout and height of buildings, and information about the public facilities, etc. Only after the planning application is approved may developers proceed with the development, including the construction works.

As pointed out by the questions, the developer has withdrawn its planning application submitted in 2021. In fact, the developer has submitted, and obtained approval for, a number of planning applications in the past, and the MLP currently in effect is planning application A/K12/34-2 approved by the TPB in February 2010. The building plan approved by the Buildings Department (BD) in July 2024 was based on this approved planning application.

According to the MLP under planning application A/K12/34-2, the proposed development includes five residential towers of 54 stories, involving 2 058 flats and an estimated population of around 5 800 residents, a seven-storey podium for shops, restaurants, residential care home for the elderly, kindergarten, recreational facilities, and carparking facilities, as well as a four-level basement with shops and carpark. The proposed development will provide around 530 private car parking spaces, around 60 motorcycle parking spaces, around 80 light goods vehicles parking spaces, and one light bus parking space. It will also provide around 50 loading/unloading bays, among which five are for the residential portion while more than 40 are for the shops and restaurants. In terms of floor area, the gross floor area (GFA) of

the proposed development is around 201 000 metre square, among which domestic and non-domestic GFA are around 137 000 and 63 800 metre square respectively. The non-domestic GFA includes around 53 500 metre square of commercial GFA and around 4 600 metre square of community facility GFA. The public open space will be no less than 2 200 metre square.

We have no information on the latest intake date of the development (e.g. residential flats). According to the land lease, before the end of the building covenant period set out in the land lease (i.e. September 30, 2028), the developer has to complete the construction of the minimum GFA stipulated (i.e. 60 per cent of the maximum GFA allowed) and secured the occupation permit from the BD. The land lease also stipulates that certain facilities need to be completed by a certain date, such as the public light goods vehicles parking spaces, as well as the footbridge to Choi Wan Estate, etc.

(3) The Villa, Gate House, and Dormitory A of the former St. Joseph's Home for the Aged were confirmed by the Antiquities Advisory Board as Grade 2 historic buildings in February 2010. When the TPB approved planning application A/K12/34-2 in 2010, one of the approval conditions requires the owner(s) to submit and implement a conservation management plan (CMP) for the three historic buildings. According to the CMP submitted by the owner(s) in 2013, the three historic buildings will be preserved in-situ and revitalised for adaptive reuse. A heritage exhibition area will be set out to display relevant artifacts and public visit arrangements will be formulated. The Antiquities and Monuments Office will continue to provide professional technical advice from the heritage conservation perspective to the owner(s) and relevant government departments to ensure proper conservation of the three historic buildings.

(4) As aforementioned, the MLP currently in effect is planning application A/K12/34-2 approved in 2010. The land lease, which is based on the said MLP, has stipulated that the developer is responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of the footbridge linking the development to Choi Wan Estate, and the footbridge should be barrier-free and accessible round the clock. According to the land lease, the developer only has to reserve space for and construct the connection of the pedestrian link to Choi Hung MTR Station.

(5) The Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) advised that the developer has already conducted traffic impact assessment for the development concerned when making planning applications in the past, and supplemented information/updated the assessment subsequently in view of developments in the district, so as to ensure that the development concerned will not have significant impacts on local traffic. The last update of the assessment was in March 2024. When updating traffic impact assessment, the developer took into consideration planned and due-for-completion development projects nearby. For example, the updated assessment has taken into account the Ngau Chi Wan Village public housing project. According to the traffic impact assessment updated in March 2024, the development concerned will not cause insurmountable traffic impacts upon implementation of related traffic improvement measures.

To facilitate the implementation of the development, the developer will carry out a series of traffic improvement measures, which mainly include:

(i) Provision of new bus laybys on Clear Water Bay Road (on the kerbside outside the development) to facilitate relocation of the existing bus and minibus stops outside Ngau Chi Wan Market to the new bus laybys and the nearby public transport terminus, so as to alleviate the traffic congestion outside Ngau Chi Wan Market caused by boarding/alighting of bus and minibus passengers;

(ii) Construction of a covered footbridge across Clear Water Bay Road for connection to New Clear Water Bay Road (near Sau Man House, Choi Wan (1) Estate) and the existing covered footbridge across Clear Water Bay Road, removal of the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing at the junction of Clear Water Bay Road and New Clear Water Bay Road, and adjustment of the traffic signal control at the junction to meet the future traffic demand and to increase the traffic capacity of the junction; and

(iii) Extension of the existing Ping Ting Road East by constructing an elevated carriageway to connect to the vehicular access of the development, and implementation of traffic management plan at the internal carpark in order to effectively divert some of the traffic away from the vehicular access at Clear Water Bay Road.

In response to the Government's request, the developer will allocate sufficient space for accommodating vehicles heading to the retail facilities to wait within the boundary of the development for access to the carpark, so as not to affect nearby traffic.

Furthermore, the traffic impact assessment for the redevelopment of Choi Hung Estate conducted by the Government will take into account the traffic impact arising from the aforementioned private development, and will also take the opportunity of redeveloping Choi Hung Estate to explore feasible options to improve road traffic at Choi Hung Interchange and surrounding areas.

(6) The TLB advised that the proposed Choi Hung East Station of the Smart and Green Mass Transit System in East Kowloon will be located on the east side of the development concerned, and space will be reserved in the design to retain the feasibility of extending the system to the northwest in the future. Following the principle of minimising impact on private land, the Government will maintain close communication and collaboration with the developer of the development concerned to facilitate the construction works of the system.