

Government to involve TPB in planning of WKCD

(The following press release was issued by the Government's Information Services Department on behalf of the Town Planning Board)

The Town Planning Board (the Board) has received confirmation from the Government who reaffirms its clear commitment to involve the Board in various stages of the planning process of West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD).

With the Government's reassurance, the Board today (January 2) confirmed that a two-stage plan-making approach for the WKCD should be adopted. It also endorsed a set of revised Explanatory Statement (ES) for the draft South West Kowloon Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

The Board considered the objection to the amendments of the draft OZP on December 12, 2003 in relation to the WKCD and decided to uphold the 'Other Specified uses' zoning.

"In brief, the first stage is to reflect the planning intention of developing the site into an integrated arts and cultural district while at the same time allow a sufficient degree of design flexibility for the proponents to come up with the best proposals. The second stage is to incorporate into the OZP the agreed development parameters of the selected scheme for public inspection and comment," a spokesman for the Board explained.

"After the closing of submission of proposals, the Government will brief the Board on the general progress, including the number of proposals received. This will be followed by the submission of the preferred development scheme with its preliminary master plan to the Board for consideration and agreement, before it is submitted to the Legislative Council for consultation and to the Chief Executive in Council (CE in C) for approval", the spokesman said.

"After the approval by CE in C, the Government will enter into a Provisional Agreement with the successful proponent. Following that, the Government will submit the agreed development parameters of the selected scheme, including the development mix and intensity, such as the maximum gross floor area for domestic and non-domestic development, maximum building heights and open space requirements for incorporation into the OZP as amendments for public inspection and comments.

"The revised OZP will go through the normal plan-making process including objection hearing and further amendments, if necessary, before the submission of the OZP to the CE in C for approval", the spokesman continued.

The spokesman of the Board stressed that according to the Government, the Project Agreement will only be finalized and executed after the completion of the statutory planning procedures. Any subsequent changes to the stipulated development parameters of the WKCD project will require the Board's approval and will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Town Planning Ordinance.

"The current OZP can be regarded as an interim plan so as to provide the necessary flexibility at the project conception stage. There is no question of by-passing the Board as it would be involved at various key stages of the planning process.

"The public will have an opportunity to scrutinize the plan again at the 'second stage' and all statutory planning procedures will be completed in accordance with the Town Planning Ordinance before the final Agreement for the WKCD project is executed", the spokesman added.

The ES of the OZP has now been revised to incorporate the Board's intention to adopt the two-stage plan-making approach for WKCD. The ES of the OZP can be conveniently viewed on the TPB website at www.info.gov.hk/tpb.

Ends/Friday, January 2, 2004

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