

In-situ land exchange to enable harbourfront development at Quarry Bay by private lot owner

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (March 3) that the Chief Executive (CE) in Council has approved an in-situ land exchange application by the lot owner of two private lots at Hoi Yu Street, Quarry Bay.

"The concerned in-situ land exchange aims to replace the original plan of the lot owner for a 25-storey high industrial building (IB) development there. Subject to payment of full market premium, the lot owner may, in accordance with the approval given by the Town Planning Board (TPB), pursue a harbourfront leisure, tourism and commercial development at the re-grant lot," a spokesperson for the DEVB said.

With a total area of about 2 477 square metres, the original private lots (i.e. IL 8590 RP and IL 8723 RP) are restricted for industrial and/or godown purposes under leases. They had also been zoned for "Industrial" uses in statutory planning terms until 2003 when they were rezoned to "Open Space" and "Other Specified Uses (1)" annotated "Cultural and/or Commercial, Leisure and Tourism Related Uses" ("OU(1)"). In September 2001, the lot owner obtained building plan approval for constructing a 25-storey IB of about 85 metres above the Principal Datum with a plot ratio of about 15, which complied with the planned use at that time. In 2017, the lot owner commenced foundation works for the IB development but attracted strong public calls for replacing the high-rise IB development with uses and a development intensity more compatible with the harbourfront setting.

The DEVB subsequently approached the lot owner to explore alternatives and positive progress has been made. In July 2018, the Government announced that upon the lot owner's obtainment of the TPB's planning approval, it would seek the CE in Council's approval for a land exchange to enable a harbourfront development at the "OU(1)" site there. The lot owner subsequently obtained the TPB's planning approval in February 2019. The key features of the concerned development proposal is at the Annex.

According to the CE in Council's approval, when implementing its development proposal, the lot owner will be required to construct at the same time a total of about 6 300 sq m of public open space outside the re-grant lot (including new open space of about 2 500 sq m, reprovisioning of a pet garden of about 1 000 sq m at a nearby site, and uplifting the existing waterfront promenade of about 2 800 sq m), as well as a 290-metre long, 6-metre wide barrier-free covered footbridge connecting the waterfront with the hinterland of Quarry Bay. The construction costs of the abovementioned facilities, after vetting by the Government, could be deducted from the land premium. On the other hand, those facilities would be open for public use round-the-clock. Existing facilities being managed and maintained by the

Government will continue to be so managed after reprovisioning/refurbishment, while the new open space and footbridge will be managed and maintained by the lot owner. Detailed arrangements have to be approved by the Harbour Office of the DEVB and relevant departments.

"The land exchange proposal would safeguard public interest from various aspects – (i) successfully replacing an IB development which is highly incompatible with the harbourfront setting; (ii) early development of the underutilised "OU(1)" site in accordance with the planning intent to bring diversity and vibrancy to the harbourfront; (iii) creation of a continuous harbourfront promenade connecting the future Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor and the existing Quarry Bay Park by provision of additional public open space; and (iv) through the proposed footbridge, significantly reducing the walking distance from the hinterland to the harbourfront by as much as 500m (or eight minutes)," the spokesperson said.

The Government will continue to follow-up with the lot owner on the final land exchange arrangement, including finalising the lease conditions in accordance with the framework endorsed by the CE in Council as mentioned above. The land exchange procedure would only be completed and development would only commence after the lot owner has accepted and settled the land premium assessed in accordance with the existing mechanism. Relevant stakeholders will be further engaged on the design of the public open space. Gazettal of the road works relating to the covered footbridge will also be arranged under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) so that members of the public can submit their views during the two-month statutory period.