

LCQ8: Redevelopment of Junior Staff Married Quarters of the Correctional Services Department at Hong Fai Road

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (July 12):

Question:

It is learnt that the Government plans to redevelop three existing blocks of three to four-storey Junior Staff Married Quarters of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) at Hong Fai Road, Siu Lam, Tuen Mun, and its adjoining land (the site) to a 21-storey departmental quarters. However, I have received from time to time strong objections to the redevelopment project from local residents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it is learnt that there are currently two CSD's Married Staff Quarters in Tai Lam which have reached a certain building age, but due to the strong objections from local residents, the Government eventually chose the site which lacks transport facilities, instead of the two Married Staff Quarters in Tai Lam, for redevelopment of the quarters, of the relevant reasons and considerations;

(2) as there are views pointing out that at present, residents in Siu Lam have to pass through a road maintained by Palatial Coast, a private housing court, to access the only supermarket in the district where they can purchase daily necessities, and the significant increase in the local population after the redevelopment of the site will lead to an increase in the usage and repair and maintenance costs of the road, whether the Government will take the initiative to bear all the maintenance costs of the road; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as currently the nearly 10 000 residents of the housing courts in the vicinity of Hong Fai Road only rely on one two-lane dual carriageway for access, with footpath on only one side of the road and its narrowest section is only about 0.9 metres wide, and coupled with the completion of the Siu Lam Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex which provides day training and residential care service for persons with disabilities, some local residents anticipate that Hong Fai Road can hardly cope with the additional passenger and vehicular flows after the redevelopment of the site into quarters, whether the Government will enhance the transport support measures in the district, including but not limited to widening of roads; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

After consulting the Development Bureau, the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Correctional Services Department (CSD), a consolidated reply is provided as follows.

(1) It is the Government's established policy to provide departmental quarters (DQs) to married disciplined services staff subject to the availability of resources, in order to maintain staff morale and retain disciplined services staff. In view of the current tight land supply in Hong Kong, the CSD plans to give priority to the redevelopment of existing staff quarters to increase the supply of DQ units.

At present, the CSD has three staff quarters in Tai Lam and Siu Lam areas, they are located at Tai Lam area, 16 1/2 Milestone, Castle Peak Road and Hong Fai Road, Siu Lam respectively. The CSD will take into account a series of factors when deliberating the site selection for the redevelopment of staff quarters, including security risks, ancillary transport facilities, building conditions, the principle of optimising land use, etc. The CSD has considered the above factors when deciding which staff quarter site to redevelop in Tai Lam and Siu Lam areas. The CSD's staff quarters in Tai Lam area are located within the prison area, adjacent to Tai Lam Correctional Institution and Tai Lam Centre for Women. The building height after redevelopment would pose security risks to the correctional institutions. Furthermore, the absence of comprehensive public transport facilities in the vicinity would cause inconvenience to the residents who moved in after the redevelopment. As for the CSD's staff quarters at 16 1/2 Milestone, Castle Peak Road, the building aged only 34 years, the building and living conditions of the quarters are relatively good. Besides, there were building height restrictions for the staff quarters, limiting the number of DQ units that can be built. As for the staff quarters at Hong Fai Road, there is a high-rise residential development nearby, thus the building height restriction of the quarters can be further relaxed. In terms of the compatibility of land use and building height, the staff quarters at Hong Fai Road, Siu Lam is suitable to be redeveloped into high-rise quarters, which is in line with the Government's principle to fully utilise land resources. Moreover, there is a certain distance between the staff quarters at Hong Fai Road and the nearest correctional facility, i.e. Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre. Even if the building height after redevelopment will be about 21 storeys, it would not pose security risks to the correctional facility. Besides, there are major public transport facilities in the vicinity of the subject quarters, providing comprehensive public transport services to facilitate commuting by the residents in the future. The CSD, after considering various factors, noted that the staff quarters at Hong Fai Road, Siu Lam is the best option for redevelopment.

(2) According to the land lease clauses of Tuen Mun Town Lot No. 400 (i.e. the lot where Palatial Coast is located), owners of the lot are liable for the repair and maintenance of the vehicular access to/from Siu Lam Road. Currently, the abovementioned housing estate is liable for the repair and

maintenance of the access. With respect to the redevelopment of the staff quarters at Hong Fai Road, Siu Lam, the CSD conducted a traffic impact assessment for the proposed redevelopment project. The assessment indicated that the proposed project would not cause significant traffic impact to the area. Nevertheless, having considered that part of the abovementioned vehicular access will serve both nearby private housing estates and the subject staff quarters in the future, in accordance with the established procedures, the Government would conduct further reviews and discussions on the liability for the repair and maintenance of the relevant part of the vehicular access.

(3) As abovementioned, the CSD conducted a traffic impact assessment for the redevelopment project of staff quarters at Hong Fai Road, Siu Lam that has already taken into account the establishment of the Siu Lam Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex. The assessment indicated that the proposed project would not cause significant traffic impact to the area.

Regarding the current traffic conditions and facilities at Hong Fai Road, the one section of Hong Fai Road between Siu Lam Road and Castle Peak Road – Tai Lam is a single two-lane carriageway. Both sides of the road are steep slopes and due to site constraints, there is only a single-side footpath of about one metre wide. Some sections of the footpath are even narrower due to site constraints. The Transport Department (TD) and the Highways Department (HyD) are currently studying feasible technical options to widen the relatively narrow sections of the footpath mentioned above. In addition, in response to the opinions received earlier from housing estates in the vicinity, the TD and the HyD are also studying the possibility of providing pedestrian crossing facility across Hong Fai Road near its junction with Siu Lam Road to facilitate residents crossing Hong Fai Road. The TD is now in discussion with relevant parties the plan of providing pedestrian crossing facility and the construction matters that require the co-operation of relevant housing estates.