

Section 12A of the Town Planning Ordinance

**Proposed Amendment to the
Central District Outline Zoning Plan**

**The Conservation of the Central Government Offices
Compound, Lower Albert Road, Central.**

February 2011

This Application is Jointly Submitted By:

1. Central and Western Concern Group
2. Clear The Air
3. Community Alliance for Urban Planning
4. Community Development Initiative
5. The Conservancy Association
6. Designing Hong Kong Limited
7. Government Hill Concern Group
8. The Green Environmental Health Group
9. Green Sense
10. Greeners Action
11. Heritage Hong Kong
12. Heritage Watch
13. HK Redevelopment Concern Group
14. Mini Spotters
15. The Professional Commons
16. Soho Residents Committee
17. Save Our Shorelines
18. Society for the Protection of Harbour
19. South Tokwawan Concern Group
20. World City Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- S.1 The Development Bureau of the Government has announced the intention of selling part of the Central Government Offices (CGO) site for development and a simple public consultation has been undertaken. The Town Planning Board (TPB) was given an inadequate presentation that did not address the issues of concern to a wide cross-section of the public. This application provides a more balanced approach and proposes a conservation zoning for the CGO site.
- S.2 This application has been made on behalf of NGO's which have a long term interest in the quality of urban life and the importance of retaining and respecting Hong Kong's heritage. It is made in the public interest and for the long term benefit of Hong Kong people.
- S.3 The Planning Departments Paper to the TPB made a brief reference to a Historical and Architectural Appraisal carried out by a consultant for the Antiquities and Monuments Office. A full consideration of the Appraisal shows that it can be applied to the rezoning of the CGO site in that:-
- (a) The site is more significant than the buildings in heritage terms and a priority should be given to preserving the site;
 - (b) The site and buildings should be considered in the context of the surrounding green and low rise heritage buildings;
 - (c) The existing CGO buildings are in good physical condition and could be continued to be used for office use for many years. The West Wing could be retained and with modification could be used for offices;
 - (d) There is no immediate need to do anything;
 - (e) The West Wing is the building of lesser architectural value compared with the Main and East Wing, but if alternative suitable uses could be found it should be retained. Uses by NGO's may be appropriate;
 - (f) If the West Wing is to be demolished consideration should first be given to retaining the site as a public garden;
 - (g) If development is considered desirable on the site of the West Wing, then it should respect the existing form and height of the building;
 - (h) A high rise building on the site is not desirable, but if it should be pursued then it should be located near the junction of Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central.
- S.4 The main concerns are :-
- (a) That the conservation of the CGO compound is being subverted by the introduction of the new commercial building which is inappropriate for the site;
 - (b) The consultation undertaken by the Government is inadequate as many issues were not mentioned, and there were wide public concerns which have not been considered in the presentation to the TPB;

- (c) The Government's approach for implementation of the commercial development is incompatible with the conservation objectives for the site;
- (d) The fundamental issue of selling off public land with high heritage value has not been addressed or justified,
- (e) Should the TPB follow the approach outlined by the Government then it would be inconsistent with the way it has dealt with other G/IC sites regarding building heights and the need to provide areas of low rise contrast with the high rise environment of the city.

S.5 This submission concludes that :

- (a) The CGO site is a place of great historical and social importance;
- (b) There is no over-riding public need that can justify selling the site;
- (c) The old and valuable trees on the site would be at risk if significant excavation and redevelopment outside the existing building foot-print is permitted;
- (d) There should be a consistent planning approach with building height restrictions for this site being the height of the existing buildings, the same approach as taken with other G/IC sites;
- (e) Retaining public ownership should be a priority and efforts should be made to find a suitable government, community or public use of the West Wing building.

S.6 Proposed Changes to the Outline Zoning Plan

Two options are proposed:-

- (a) *"Other Specified Uses" annotated "Heritage Precinct"*

This takes the concept proposed in the Appraisal and applies it to the site occupied by the CGO and the French Mission Building. All of this land is public land, and the historic and landscape features of the whole site would be protected as one important feature of the "Conserving Central" theme. Within this zoning a maximum building height of 55mPD or the height of the existing building would apply. Any changes to the existing buildings would require the approval of the TPB. The demolition of the buildings would be prohibited. The extent of the site is illustrated in **Figure 2**.

- (b) *Government Institution and Community Use (1)*

This special G/IC zone relates to the same area. It is not as restrictive as the OU(Heritage Precinct) zoning, but would have a stated planning intention of retaining the character and heritage importance of the site and a 55mPD building height restriction would apply. Any demolition of any building would require the approval of the TPB and any new building would be limited to the foot-print of the existing building it may replace. Any sale of part of the site would be prohibited and the long term benefit of the site for the community is the most important factor.

行政摘要

- S.1 發展局已宣佈出售中區政府合署〔政府總部〕現址的某部份以作發展的意向，並進行了一次簡單的公眾諮詢。城市規劃委員會〔城規會〕沒有被給予足夠的資料去解決廣泛市民關注的問題。這申請提供一個比較平衡的方法，並為政府總部擬議一個保育地帶。
- S.2 此申請由授權代理人代表非政府組織擬備。這些組織一向重視城市生活質素，並關注保留和尊重香港的文物遺產。此申請是為公眾利益和香港人的長遠利益而擬備。
- S.3 規劃署為城規會準備的文件簡單提及古物古蹟辦事處的顧問做的歷史和建築評估報告。全面考慮該評估報告後顯示政府總部現址可基於以下各點進行改劃：
- (a) 現址在文物方面比其上的建築物重要，應優先為現址進行保育；
 - (b) 應考慮現址及其上的建築物的周遭綠化及低矮文物建築環境；
 - (c) 現時政府總部的建築物狀態良好，應可繼續用作辦公室多年。西座可以保留，經修改後用作寫字樓；
 - (d) 現在沒有迫切需要去作出任何行動；
 - (e) 相對於中座及東座，西座擁有較低建築價值，但假若有其他合適的用途，西座應予保留。非政府組織或適合使用；
 - (f) 假若西座要被拆除，應先考慮保留它作公園；
 - (g) 假若西座被認為適合進行發展，發展應尊重現有建築外形和高度；
 - (h) 於現址建高層樓宇並不理想，但假若進行此方案，樓宇應位於鄰近雪廠街和皇后大道中交界。
- S.4 以下是主要關注的問題：
- (a) 政府總部群組的保育正被不符合此地點的新商業大樓所推翻；
 - (b) 政府所舉行的公眾諮詢並不足夠，很多問題也沒有提及，於城規會的報告也沒有考慮到廣泛市民關注的問題；
 - (c) 政府計劃於現址進行商業發展與保育該址的目標不配合；
 - (d) 沒有理據支持把具高文物價值的政府地皮變賣；
 - (e) 假若城規會依從政府建議的方案，它便會與處理其他「政府、機構或社區」地帶的建築物高度一樣，需要提供與周遭高樓大廈環境成對比的低

層地方的做法不符。

S.5 此申請有以下結論：

- (a) 政府總部現址是一個具重大的歷史和社會意義的地方；
- (b) 沒有凌駕性的需要去變賣現址；
- (c) 假若容許在現有建築物的範圍以外進行大量挖掘和重建工程，對現址的古樹名木有一定風險；
- (d) 於現址應該有一致的規劃方法，包括與現有建築物相同的高度限制，並與其他「政府、機構或社區」地帶的規劃一致；
- (e) 應優先維持現址為政府土地，並為西座大樓尋找一個適合的政府、社區或給予公眾使用的用途。

S.6 分區計劃大綱圖的擬議改變

擬議兩項方案：

- (a) 「其他指定用途」註釋為「文物專區」

這是採用評估報告擬議的概念，並用於政府總部和法國外方傳道會大樓。這塊全是政府土地，而現址的歷史和景觀特色將是「保育中環」主題的一個重要特徵。在這用途地帶中，最高建築物高度為主水平基準以上 55 米或與現有建築物相同。對現有建築物作出任何改動均須要向城規會申請批准。拆卸建築物將會被禁止。圖 2 顯示地盤的範圍。

- (b) 「政府、機構或社區〔1〕」

這特別的「政府、機構或社區」地帶是關於同一地區。這地帶的限制沒有「其他指定用途〔文物專區〕」那麼嚴謹，但會有明確的規劃意向，以保留現址的特徵和文物重要性。現址的高度限制將會是主水平基準以上 55 米。拆卸任何建築物須要向城規會申請批准，新的建築物將會被現有建築物的範圍所限制。變賣現址任何部份均會被禁止，最重要的因素是現址對社區的長遠利益。

Proposed Amendment to the Central District Outline Zoning Plan The Conservation of the Central Government Offices Compound, Lower Albert Road, Central

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Development Bureau of the Government has announced the intention of selling part of the Central Government Offices (CGO) site for development. A relatively simple consultation has been undertaken and submissions have been made by members of the public, many in opposition to the proposal.
- 1.2 As part of the consultation process the Town Planning Board was given a presentation of the proposal by Government. The submission to the Town Planning Board was simple and inadequate, and did not address the issues that are of concern to a wide cross-section of the public. The Town Planning Board has a significant role to play in considering the future of the CGO site as any change in use will require a rezoning.
- 1.3 This application has been made on behalf of numerous NGO's which have a long term interest in the quality of urban life and the importance of retaining and respecting Hong Kong's heritage. This application therefore presents to the Town Planning Board the wider issues which were omitted from the Government's presentation on the CGO. It presents an assessment of various options that are essential in considering the future of the site and proposes an amendment to the Outline Zoning Plan which reflects the conclusion of the assessment.
- 1.4 This application is made in the public interest and for the long term benefit of Hong Kong people.

2. Background

Consideration by the Town Planning Board on the 5 November 2010

- 2.1 The Development Bureau and Planning Department presented the "Proposed Redevelopment Scheme for West Wing of Central Government Offices" to the Town Planning Board on the 5 November 2010. The proposal was contained in Town Planning Board Paper Number 8661, which was a very brief paper of only 7 pages with attachments of a Preliminary Traffic Assessment and a copy of the Information Pamphlet produced by the Development Bureau.
- 2.2 The proposal presented to the Town Planning Board was for the sale of a large portion of the existing CGO complex to a private developer for the development of a 32 storey retail and office tower along the Ice House Street portion of the site. A large portion of the existing CGO site would be sold to the developer who would then be required to provide open space on part of the site which would be open to the public. Proposals for improved pedestrian connections were also made.
- 2.3 The Town Planning Board Paper made a very brief reference to a Historical and Architectural Appraisal carried out by a consultant for the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO). It was stated in paragraph 2.1 of the paper that:-

"The Appraisal, completed in September 2009, recommends that the Main and East Wings should be preserved for appropriate new uses while the West Wing may be demolished in whole or in part and that consideration should be given to making use of a part of the West Wing site as a public park.