

Southern District Council
District Development and Environment Committee

Revised Preservation-cum-Development Proposal for Jessville
at 128 Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong

Purpose

At the Southern District Council (SDC) meeting held on 25 June 2009, we informed Members of the “preservation-cum-development” proposal for Jessville at 128 Pokfulam Road. The SDC noted the arrangement and raised no objection to it. This paper briefs Members on the revised proposal for the site.

Background

2. Constructed in around 1931, the building is a private residence known as “Jessville”, named after Jessie Tam, the wife of Mr William Ngar Tse Thomas Tam. The building is of Italian Renaissance architectural style with Art Deco variations, and is one of the few remaining European style buildings in the Southern District. “Jessville” has been confirmed as a Grade 3 historic building by the Antiquities Advisory Board¹. Location and photos of the building are at **Annexes A and B** respectively.

3. The Government recognises that on the premise of respecting private property rights, we need to offer appropriate economic incentives to encourage or in exchange for private owners to conserve historic buildings in their ownership. In implementing this policy, we aim to strike a proper balance between preservation of historic buildings and respect for private property rights. Given the particular circumstances, the needed economic incentives to achieve the policy objective would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. Jessville has been under the threat of demolition in the past. As a result of discussions between the Development Bureau (DEVB) and the owners, the owners

¹ According to definition, Grade 3 building refers to a building of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable.

proposed to preserve the building in a preservation-cum-development scheme within its own site (hence no need for any government land exchange) with a scale of new development at a plot ratio of 2.1 (in addition to the gross floor area of the historic building of Jessville which represents a plot ratio of about 0.2). Under the proposal, the owners would develop two residential towers of 21 and 17 domestic storeys with the taller one at 246.85 metres above Principal Datum (or 74.85 metres in absolute terms), providing a total of 72 residential units (with a total gross floor area of about 13 524 square metres). The historic building of Jessville would be fully preserved as a club house for the residents of the private residential units, with some degree of public access. We informed the SDC at its meeting on 25 June 2009 of the latest development plan for Jessville and the need to partially uplift the Pokfulam Moratorium concerned for implementing the scheme. The SDC noted the arrangement and raised no objection to it. At the meeting of the Executive Council on 22 September 2009, the Council advised and the Chief Executive ordered that the Pokfulam Moratorium be partially uplifted to enable the Lands Department (LandsD) to consider the application from the owners for a land lease modification to facilitate the preservation-cum-development proposal for Jessville at 128 Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong.

The Revised Preservation-cum-Development Proposal

5. Since 2009, the owners have been mapping out the detailed design for the preservation-cum-development proposal for Jessville, and taking up the issue of land lease modification with LandsD. Recently, the owners put forward a revised proposal for the preservation of Jessville based on commercial considerations. Under the revised proposal, the owners will substantially reduce the scale of the new residential development by building just a single residential tower of 17 domestic storeys instead of the two towers with 21 and 17 domestic storeys. The height will also be reduced from 246.85 metres above Principal Datum (or 74.85 metres in absolute terms)² to 234.35 metres above Principal Datum (or 63.25 metres in absolute terms). Plot ratio of the residential part will be reduced from 2.1 to 0.9. The number of units to be provided will be reduced from 72 (with a total gross floor area of about 13 524 square metres) to 33³ (with a total gross floor area of about 5 796 square metres).

6. In the original preservation-cum-development proposal for Jessville, the

² Calculated on the basis of the height of the taller tower. The height of the other tower is 234.25 metres above Principal Datum (or 62.25 metres in absolute terms).

³ The new tower will provide 29 units, and the other 4 units will be provided by redeveloping Jessville.

owners proposed to preserve the building as a club house with some degree of public access. In the revised proposal, the building will still be preserved, but will be converted into four private residential units. For the security and privacy of future occupants of the building, the owners cannot allow public access to the building. But since Jessville is currently not visible by members of the public on Pokfulam Road, the owners plan to set up a public viewing area on Rural Building Lot No. 324 (where Jessville stands) under their ownership to facilitate the public to appreciate the external façade of the building. As for the ancillary servants' quarters, the owners propose to demolish it. The Commissioner for Heritage's Office of DEVB and the Antiquities and Monuments Office consider that the owners' revised preservation-cum-development proposal is commensurate with the heritage value of Jessville.

7. The plans of the proposed development submitted by the owners under the revised proposal are at **Annex C**.

The Town Planning Process

8. The revised proposal is in compliance with all the requirements under the approved Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan.

The Lease Modification Process

9. To implement the revised preservation-cum-development proposal, the owners have recently submitted an application to LandsD for a land lease modification to remove a number of restrictions, including but not limited to the following key ones –

- (a) restriction of one European-type house; and
- (b) building with height not exceeding 35 feet.

10. The site concerned falls within the Pokfulam Moratorium area. The moratorium has been imposed administratively on the developments in that district, aiming to avoid generating additional traffic which would exacerbate the prevailing traffic congestion within the area. The owners have commissioned a consultant to conduct traffic impact assessment for the original proposal at the early planning stage. The assessment result shows that the traffic impact on Pokfulam Road and the nearby junctions will be insignificant. The traffic impact assessment has been accepted by

the Transport Department (TD). At the meeting of the Executive Council on 22 September 2009, the Executive Council advised and the Chief Executive ordered that the Pokfulam Moratorium be partially uplifted to enable LandsD to process the application from the owners for a land lease modification under the revised preservation-cum-development proposal.

11. According to the revised preservation-cum-development proposal, the scale of the new residential tower has been reduced from 72 residential units under the original proposal to 33 residential units, and the traffic generation will be also reduced accordingly. Under the original proposal, the peak hour two-way traffic generation is 33 passenger car units per hour (pcu/hr). Under the revised proposal, the peak hour two-way traffic generation will be reduced by more than half to 15 pcu/hr. Since the traffic generation under the revised proposal is less than that of the original proposal, there will be less impact on the nearby traffic under the revised proposal than that under the original proposal. The Transport and Housing Bureau and TD have therefore indicated no objection to the proposed partial uplifting of the Pokfulam Moratorium for the implementation of the preservation-cum-development proposal from the traffic viewpoint.

12. Upon the approval of the partial uplifting of the Pokfulam Moratorium, LandsD will continue to process the lease modification application, including the assessment of full market value premium payable for the proposed lease modification in accordance with the established policy and practices. LandsD will include in the land lease necessary conditions to require the owners to protect the building from being demolished.

Advice sought

13. Members are invited to comment on the above proposal.

Development Bureau
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