

**For discussion
on 27 November 2012**

**Legislative Council
Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services**

**Relocation of the Department of Justice
to the Former Central Government Offices (Main and East Wings)**

PURPOSE

This paper aims to brief Members on the works project for the relocation of the Department of Justice (“DoJ”) to the Main Wing and East Wing of the Former Central Government Offices (“CGO (Main and East Wings)”) in Central.

PROPOSAL

2. As stated in the 2009-10 Policy Address, the CGO (Main and East Wings) will be preserved for use by DoJ after the relocation of the bureaux to the new Central Government Offices at Tamar. This arrangement provides an opportunity for the DoJ to re-organise its offices with a view to enhancing its efficiency and optimising the use of government resources as a whole.

THE PROJECT

Justifications

3. The DoJ plays an important role in the legal system. The Department gives legal advice to other bureaux and departments of the Government, represents the Government in legal proceedings, drafts government bills, makes prosecution decisions, and promotes the rule of law. Since 1986, the offices of the DoJ have mainly been accommodated in the Queensway Government Offices (“QGO”). Over the years, DoJ has increasing demand for office space due to operational and development needs. Given the limited floor area in the QGO, the Department has to accommodate some of its offices in different commercial buildings (including United Centre, Admiralty Centre and Harcourt House) and government-owned properties (at

Fairmont House, Rumsey Street Multi-storey Carpark Building and Murray Road Multi-storey Carpark Building) in the vicinity of Admiralty¹. The offices of the DoJ, therefore, are located in the QGO and other different places². This is not conducive to internal communication as well as the deployment of resources and the arrangements for the shared use of facilities, thereby affecting the operational efficiency of the Department.

4. The net usable floor area of the CGO (Main and East Wings) is about 11 170 square metres. The DoJ will make full use of the two buildings. We plan to relocate the following offices and divisions to the CGO (Main and East Wings), which will serve as the headquarters of the DoJ :

- (a) the Secretary for Justice's Office;
- (b) the International Law Division;
- (c) the Law Drafting Division;
- (d) the Legal Policy Division;
- (e) some offices of the Civil Division; and
- (f) some offices of the Administration and Development Division.

5. According to our plan, the Prosecutions Division will continue to be accommodated at the QGO. We also hope that those offices of the Civil Division, the Prosecutions Division and the Administration and Development Division currently accommodated in different buildings as mentioned in paragraph 3 above and would not be relocated to CGO (Main and East Wings) can be integrated under one roof at the QGO to facilitate daily operation. We are now working with the departments concerned on the necessary arrangements. Under this arrangement, rented office accommodation may be released to achieve rental saving and government-owned office space may be released for use by other government agencies. We are working with departments concerned on the space requirement at the QGO.

¹ The offices accommodated in United Centre and Fairmont House are mainly units of Administration and Development Division, while offices accommodated in Admiralty Centre and Rumsey Street Multi-storey Carpark Building are mainly units of Civil Division. As for Harcourt House, the area is shared by units of Prosecutions Division, Legal Policy Division as well as Administration and Development Division. Areas in Murray Road Multi-storey Carpark Building are mainly used for file storage.

² The total area currently occupied by DoJ in the QGO is about 13 000 m² and that in outstation offices in the vicinity of Admiralty is about 4 700 m².

The Proposed Works Project

6. In view of the historical significance of the Main and East Wings of the former CGO, being completed in 1954 and 1956 respectively, we have taken steps to minimise the impact on or alteration to the original buildings in planning the works project for the relocation. The works are broadly divided into the following three parts :

(a) Preservation and repair of the existing building structure

The objective of this part of the works is to preserve and repair the original buildings and their character-defining elements with minimum intervention. Any alteration and addition works will be properly done to minimise physical damage and visual impact. The necessary structural works include :

- plant rooms currently located outside the buildings and service ducting currently on the exterior surface facing public streets will be replaced in an orderly manner. The original exterior design will be preserved as far as possible and no unnecessary alteration works will be carried out;
- the existing window-type air conditioners will be removed and the respective steel windows will be replaced with new ones to match with the existing windows;
- the added building facilities on the roof surface, which are exposed, will be replaced by new set of facilities with an orderly layout and properly screened to reduce the visual impact; and
- green roof and non-reflective solar panels will be erected to enhance greenery space and improve the building environment. The new design will preserve the original flat roof setting without imposing excessive loading on the roof surface.

(b) Internal office layout restructuring and functional improvements

This part of the works will mainly involve internal alterations, additions and fitting-out works for office use, including offices, libraries, conference rooms, a multi-purpose function hall and a multi-purpose room, etc.

Besides, to meet functional and operational needs, enhancement of the following basic facilities will be covered in the works :

- two lifts and two dumbwaiters will be added to enhance people flow and efficiency of internal document transfer between different floors. Their compatible and distinguishable design will minimise visual impact to the interior of the building; and
- a new layer of windows will be provided to the internal side of the existing steel frame windows to improve the acoustics and indoor environment. The design of the new windows will not impair the design of the original steel frame windows.

(c) Enhancement works for complying with statutory requirements

Enhancement works will be carried out in the CGO (Main and East Wings) to improve fire safety and provide a barrier-free environment in compliance with prevailing building codes. The works mainly consist of the following :

- separate escape staircases will be provided to all underground levels;
- lift services will be extended to underground level and 7/F at Main Wing and 6/F at East Wing;
- escape staircases with protected lobbies will be added; and
- ramps will be provided at all key passageways to meet the requirement for barrier-free access.

7. A site plan and perspective drawings for the project are at Enclosures 1 and 2 respectively.

Heritage considerations

8. Due to the historical significance of the CGO (Main and East Wings), a heritage impact assessment (HIA) was carried out on the works project when planning the relocation works. It was proposed in the HIA report that the following features of the Main and East Wings with heritage value be preserved for heritage interpretation (photos showing the features concerned are set out in Enclosure 3) :

- (a) the main entrance areas on the west elevation of the Main Wing and at the south elevation of the East Wing facing Garden Road respectively;
- (b) the original internal layout and furniture of the Executive Council Chamber on 1/F and the main staircase connecting the Chamber and the lobby on G/F of the Main Wing;
- (c) the small press room on G/F of the Main Wing and its internal setting;
- (d) the internal layout and fittings of the conference room on 1/F of the East Wing to be incorporated into the reading corner of the future library;
- (e) the commemorative plaque and time capsule in the lobby area of the Main Wing entrance; and
- (f) existing terrazzo wall finishes found at the public lift lobby and along the escape staircase of the East Wing.

9. As for the external area, the HIA report proposes :

- (a) the existing metal fence along the Main Wing and East Wing boundary along Lower Albert Road to be replaced by a lower fence with compatible design;
- (b) the metal fence along the boundary of the northern slope and facing St John's Cathedral to be preserved for public safety reason; and

- (c) existing valuable trees to be retained, and greenery areas in the works areas to be increased subject to the approval of relevant departments.

10. We will ensure that the conversion works will comply with the various requirements and proposals set out in the HIA report.

11. Although the CGO (Main and East Wings) will be mainly used as DoJ offices, we will be happy to open up some designated areas for public access on scheduled days in future provided that the daily operation of DoJ will not be affected. We will examine and discuss with the Antiquities and Monuments Office on the appropriate mode and arrangement in this respect.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The estimated cost of the project is about \$796 million in money-of-the-day prices. We estimate the annual recurrent expenditure arising from the project (mainly for additional staffing resources for building management; service contracts such as for security and cleansing; repair and maintenance; as well as daily running costs) to be in the region of \$17 million.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The project is not a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499). The project will not cause long term environmental impacts. We have included in the project estimates the cost to implement suitable mitigation measures to control short term environmental impacts. During the works, we will control noise, dust and site runoff nuisances to levels within established standards and guidelines through the implementation of mitigation measures as required.

14. At the planning and design stages, we have considered measures to reduce the generation of construction waste where possible. In addition, we will require the contractor to reuse inert construction waste on site or in other suitable construction sites as far as possible in order to minimize the disposal of inert construction wastes at public fill facilities. We will encourage the contractor to maximize the use of recycled/recyclable inert construction waste, and the use of non-timber formwork to further reduce the generation of construction waste. At the works stage, we will require the contractor to submit for approval a plan setting out the waste management

measures, which will include appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle inert construction waste. We will ensure that the day-to-day operations on site comply with the approved plan.

ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES

15. This project has adopted various forms of energy efficient features, including :

- (a) direct seawater cooling air-conditioning system;
- (b) energy efficient fluorescent tubes with electronic ballast and lighting control by occupancy sensors and daylight sensors;
- (c) light-emitting diode (LED) type exit signs; and
- (d) photovoltaic system to provide renewable energy.

16. Apart from the energy efficient measures set out above, the project will also include green features, such as greening on rooftop for environmental and amenity benefits, plus the provision of a rainwater recycling system for irrigating the greenery.

LAND ACQUISITION

17. The project does not require any land acquisition.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

18. The Antiquities Advisory Board discussed the HIA report on the CGO (Main and East Wings) and endorsed the report at its meeting on 14 June 2012.

19. We consulted the Central and Western District Council on 12 July 2012 on the proposed project. Members expressed support for the project.

PROJECT PROGRAMME

20. Subject to Members' views, we plan to submit the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee in January 2013 and the Finance Committee in February 2013 for endorsement and funding approval respectively. The New Annex Hall and some areas in the Main Wing are being used, on a temporary basis, by the "Commission of Inquiry into the Collision of Vessels near Lamma Island on 1 October 2012" for conducting hearings and related purposes. The Commission is expected to submit its report by the latter half of April 2013 or such time as the Chief Executive in Council may allow. In view of this latest development, we anticipate that subject to funding approval, the conversion works will commence in the second quarter of 2013 for completion in the first quarter of 2015.

ADVICE SOUGHT

21. Members are invited to note the above works project and give their views.

Department of Justice
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