

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

For discussion
on 17 September 2020

TFK/04/2020

Proposed Topside Development at West Kowloon Station – a Walk to Connect, a Place to Engage, a Harbour to Enjoy on the West Kowloon Parkway

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the conceptual design of the Proposed Topside Development above the High-Speed Rail Link (XRL), at West Kowloon Station (WKS). The proposal is the subject of a Section 16 application that was recently submitted to the Town Planning Board (TPB).

BACKGROUND

2. The Application Site is located in the inland area of West Kowloon. Although the Application Site does not lie immediately adjacent to the waterfront, it falls within the Harbour-front Areas (**Figure 1**). It is also under the Approved South West Kowloon OZP No. S/K20/30 ("OZP"), and is largely within the "Comprehensive Development Area (1)" ["CDA(1)" zone (**Figure 2**). The Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) and Planning Brief of the CDA(1) zone, states that the site is intended to be a high-quality office hub with open space and other supporting facilities. It is for a development with "outstanding planning or design merits" and a "Grade A office hub" to enhance Hong Kong's competitive position as an international financial centre. The OZP allows flexible relaxation of the Building Height Restrictions (BHR) to achieve "innovative design adapted to the characteristics of the site", and "an iconic and sustainable architectural design". The Proposed Topside Development will meet all of these requirements.

3. The north-western portion of the Application Site is referred to as the "Development Site" (or Topside Development Zone) (**Figure 2**). The location of the Application Site and the extent of the Proposed Topside Development within the Development Site are indicated in the plan in **Figure 3**.

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OVERALL VISION

4. The overall vision of the Proposed Topside Development is to enhance walkability and connectivity of the inland areas to the harbourfront; create spaces with place-making values for public enjoyment; and establish a world-class, iconic and sustainable development that would magnify this location as an international gateway of Hong Kong.

5. The Development Site occupies a pivotal position in the heart of West Kowloon, a focal point that has the potential to connect both physically and socially with its surrounding area. It is also an opportunity to join the West Kowloon waterfront area to the traditional urban districts inland, which is currently segregated by infrastructure developments. This unlocks a new, uninterrupted pedestrian link, the West Kowloon Parkway (WKP), stretching from the Central Kowloon Route open space in the north, to the Central Square in WKCD waterfront in the south (**Figure 3**).

PROPOSED TOPSIDE DEVELOPMENT

6. The general form of the Proposed Topside Development consists of two office towers (i.e. Tower 1 and Tower 2) that are placed on opposite north and south ends of the Development Site, which maximizes the space in between for a Central Open Space, and also allows generous space for the WKP to run along the eastern boundary of the site.

7. Tower 1 has a total of 30 floors, and Tower 2 has a total of 20 to 25 floors. Below the office towers are primarily retail/ open space uses from G/F to 4/F (i.e. the retail levels).

8. The maximum building height of Tower 1 is 159mPD and that of Tower 2 are 114mPD and 131mPD. The Towers have adopted a cascading tower top arrangement, where the BH steps down from Tower 1 to Tower 2 towards the WKCD waterfront. The Proposed Scheme will provide a total of 8,500 s.m. of private open space (open to the public) at Levels 2 and 4. There is an additional

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1,500 s.m. of private open space at the roof levels for communal use. The proposed design features, building form, scale, and mix are reflected in the MLP and Section A-A (**Figure 4** and **Figure 5**).

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE APPROVED SCHEME

9. The previous Approved Scheme was formulated and approved by the TPB about 10 years ago. The Approved Scheme consists of three pairs of linear office towers in an east-west direction atop a retail podium in the Development Site.

10. The Proponent has reviewed the previously Approved Scheme to improve the total development. In summary, the major changes that have been made include: -

- i) Reallocation of 26,600 s.m. GFA from office to retail/ commercial uses;
- ii) Decrease in number of towers from 3 to 2, which significantly increases the open space from about 2,260 s.m. in the Approved Scheme, to about 10,000 s.m. in the Proposed Scheme (an increase of about 7,740 s.m. or 3 times), and additional viewing platforms and place-making elements;
- iii) Consequential increase in the maximum building height of the office towers of about 34%;
- iv) Enhanced north-south connectivity of the WKP within the site and its surroundings.

DESIGN CONCEPTS OF PROPOSED TOPSIDE DEVELOPMENT

11. The design concepts of the Proposed Development include:

Enhancing Walkability and Connectivity of the Site and its Region

12. The creation of the new, uninterrupted pedestrian spine of

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the WKP will ensure better connections and integrations between the Development Site and the surrounding areas, with greater access to the harbourfront.

13. The WKP is intended to create a pleasant and convenient visual and physical access for pedestrians, mainly elevated and separated from vehicular traffic. The WKP would act as a catalyst for social and leisure activities, as the Proponent envisions a diversity of activities, facilities and programming which will be anchored throughout the route (**Figure 6**). This will encourage and attract pedestrian movements through and around the site to go towards the harbourfront.

14. The Proposed Development is an important segment of the WKP, distinct from the other spaces along the WKP and adds to the overall character. It will be the only one located within a commercial/ office hub along the WKP with a large open space. Together with and complementing the waterfront activities and programming in WKCD, it would be a focal point to bring vibrancy and energy to the district.

Creating Spaces with Placemaking Values

15. The Proposed Development will enrich public realm and open spaces with designs that adhere to placemaking values. The lively public spaces in the site will attract visitors and locals to the waterfront environment, with opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles, recreation and exercise, plazas for social interaction and gathering, and pleasant walking environment. The spaces are supported by commercial facilities like cafes, restaurants and retail shops that will make it enjoyable to walk through and encourage people to stay and enjoy the various attractions and leisure uses (**Figure 7**).

Provision of Open Space

16. The conceptual design proposes to create a major Central Open Space, namely “The Plateau” providing about 3,400 s.m. of open space within the development (**Figure 8**). The Central Open Space will have peripheral retail and dining facilities to create focal points, informal public gathering spaces for both local residents,

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workers, visitors and tourists of all ages, and a large central space for hosting cultural and social events.

17. The Development Site will contain physical and visual landscaping elements that would integrate seamlessly with the existing landscaping and open spaces in the WKS, and form one whole development in the Application Site. It will be connected by a landscape deck to the WKCD and waterfront in the south; and link up the open space network to the north.

Creating a symbol of Urban Design Excellence and Enhancing the Brand Identity of Hong Kong

18. The Development Site will be an office hub with a significant area of supporting commercial/ retail and open space amenities. The location of the Site is over 300 metres from the harbourfront. The design has taken account of the Harbour Planning Guidelines which focus on connecting the site to the waterfront. It will allow seamless pedestrian connectivity and create a visual beacon to attract people to the waterfront, with public areas and views to and from the harbour-front (**Figure 9**).

19. There are additional public viewing decks created that act as wayfinding landmarks to welcome and guide visitors at the North and South entry points. This includes “The Harbour Lookout” which is a new iconic viewing platform feature at the southern entrance for visitors to enjoy views to the harbourfront (**Figure 10**).

Forming an Iconic Development as a Whole

20. The distinctive and iconic architectural form of the Proposed Topside Development serve as a landmark that is individually distinct, yet responsive to the characteristics of the adjacent waterfront and urban setting (**Figure 11**). The functions of the development also benefit both the site itself and its surrounding neighborhood which is crucial for the overall vision.

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Sustainable Development

21. To identify sustainable elements for incorporation into the Proposed Development, a Preliminary Sustainability Assessment (PSA) was carried out with focuses on the prime requirements in delivering a sustainable development at the Development Site. The Proponent targets to achieve Platinum rankings under Hong Kong's BEAM Plus by the Hong Kong Green Building Council and the LEED certification program operated by the US Green Building Association, which are both recognised internationally.

22. The PSA has demonstrated that the Proposed Development outperforms the Approved Scheme in the sustainability indicators developed by the Harbourfront Commission.

23. In determining the function and the positioning of the development in its neighbourhood location, the social sustainability functions have been given a high priority. The site has been designed to become a major vibrant social focal point with a diverse range of economic activities, accessible, and usable to all. The unique north-south connection will facilitate achievement of this overarching objective.

HARBOUR PLANNING GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES

24. The Proposed Development will strengthen the relationship with Victoria Harbour by following the Harbour Planning Guidelines and Principles where applicable.

25. In particular, the following principles have been applied:-

(a) Principle 3: Sustainable Development – The revised design increases the opportunities for including more sustainable design features. In addition to increased greening opportunities, the building will be designed to meet the highest levels of environmental design standards.

(b) Principle 5: Proactive Harbour Enhancement – The development will be a symbol of urban design excellence

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and will enhance Hong Kong's brand identity to the international community. The open space provision of the proposed scheme will be significantly increased and improved with quality design.

- (c) **Principle 7: Accessible Harbour** – A major role of the site is to improve the pedestrian accessibility of the hinterland to the harbour-front, by providing a high-quality access through the site as part of the vision of the WKP. The design creates visual and physical access to the harbour.
- (d) **Principle 8: Public Enjoyment** – The Proposed Scheme will enhance the accessibility of the harbour, with high quality, easy to use and highly identifiable landscaped pedestrian linkages. The design will encourage public enjoyment of the area.

CONCLUSION

26. The Proposed Topside Development will be iconic, not only in architectural and design terms, but in its spatial function as a landmark and focal point in West Kowloon. It is compatible with the harbourfront setting and character, and respects the relationship of the site to the WKCD development. This has been realized by a compatible building form, the creation of new public viewing points of the harbour and better north-south pedestrian connections. The public realm is improved with the new Central Open Space, as a new community focal point. By emphasising pedestrian connectivity through the Site to the harbour-front, a continuous, major landscape feature of West Kowloon will be created.

ADVICE SOUGHT

27. Members' views are sought on the above conceptual design for the site and in particular on the provision of open space for the public and the improved pedestrian connectivity.

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**Masterplan Limited
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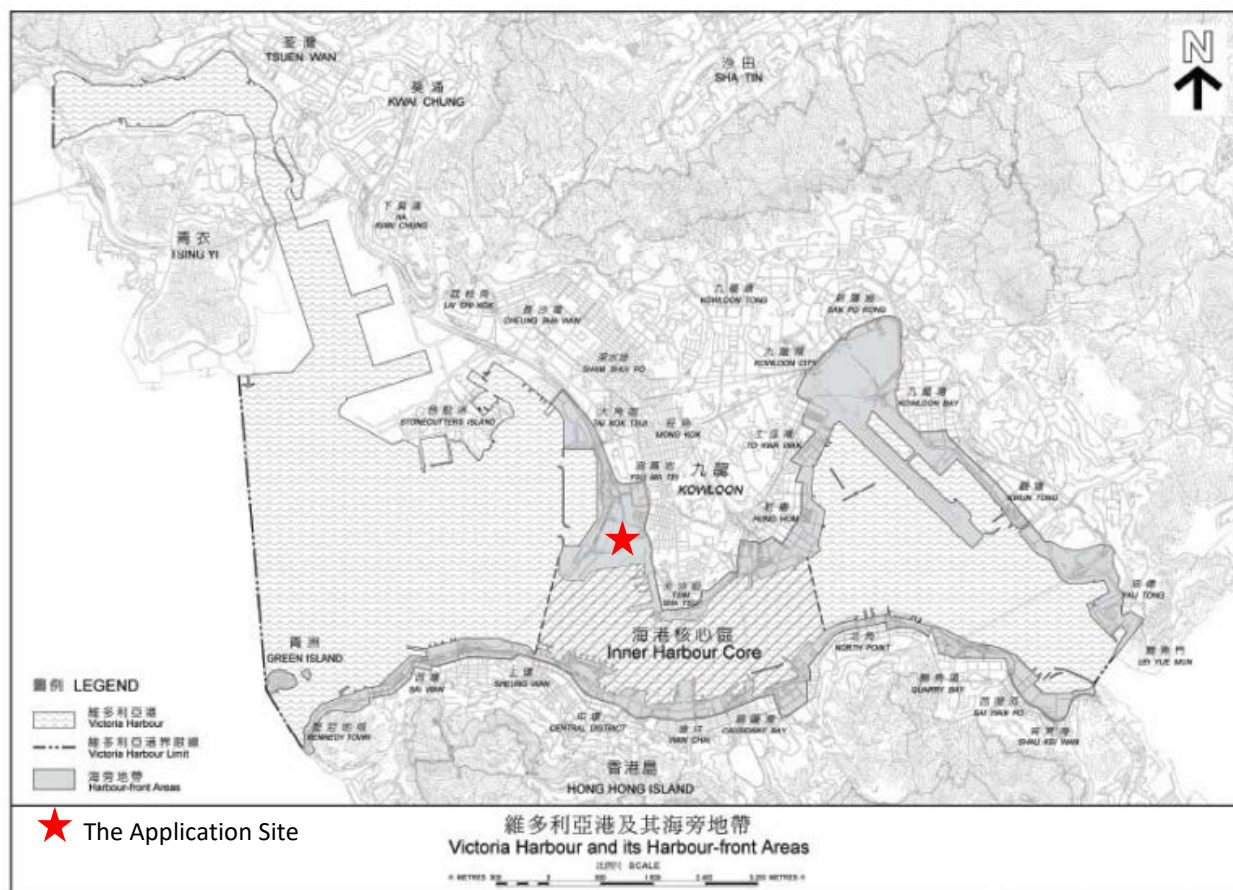


Figure 1: Application Site included within the Harbour-Front Areas

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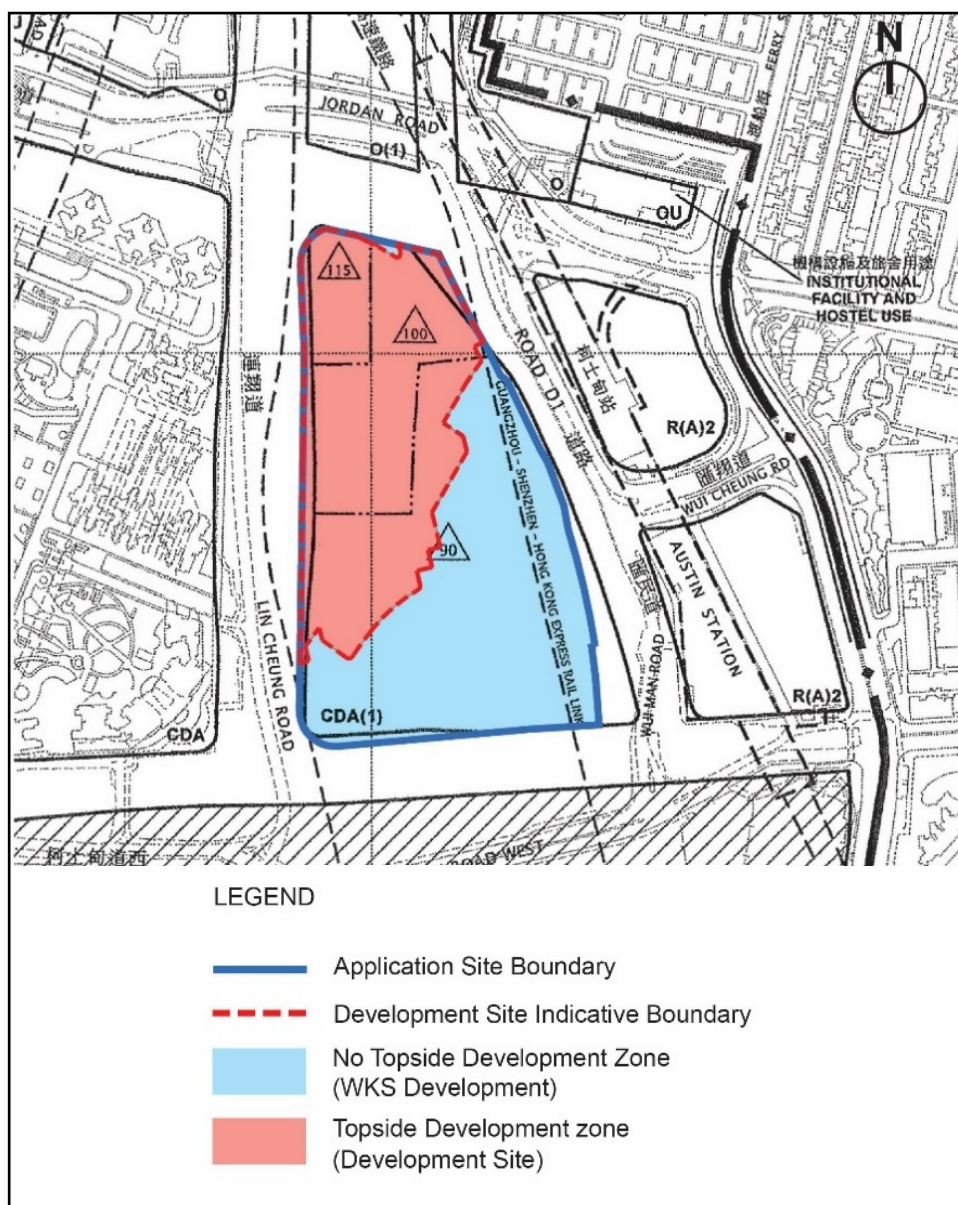


Figure 2: The Application Site and Development Site on the OZP

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Figure 3: The Application Site and Proposed West Kowloon Parkway

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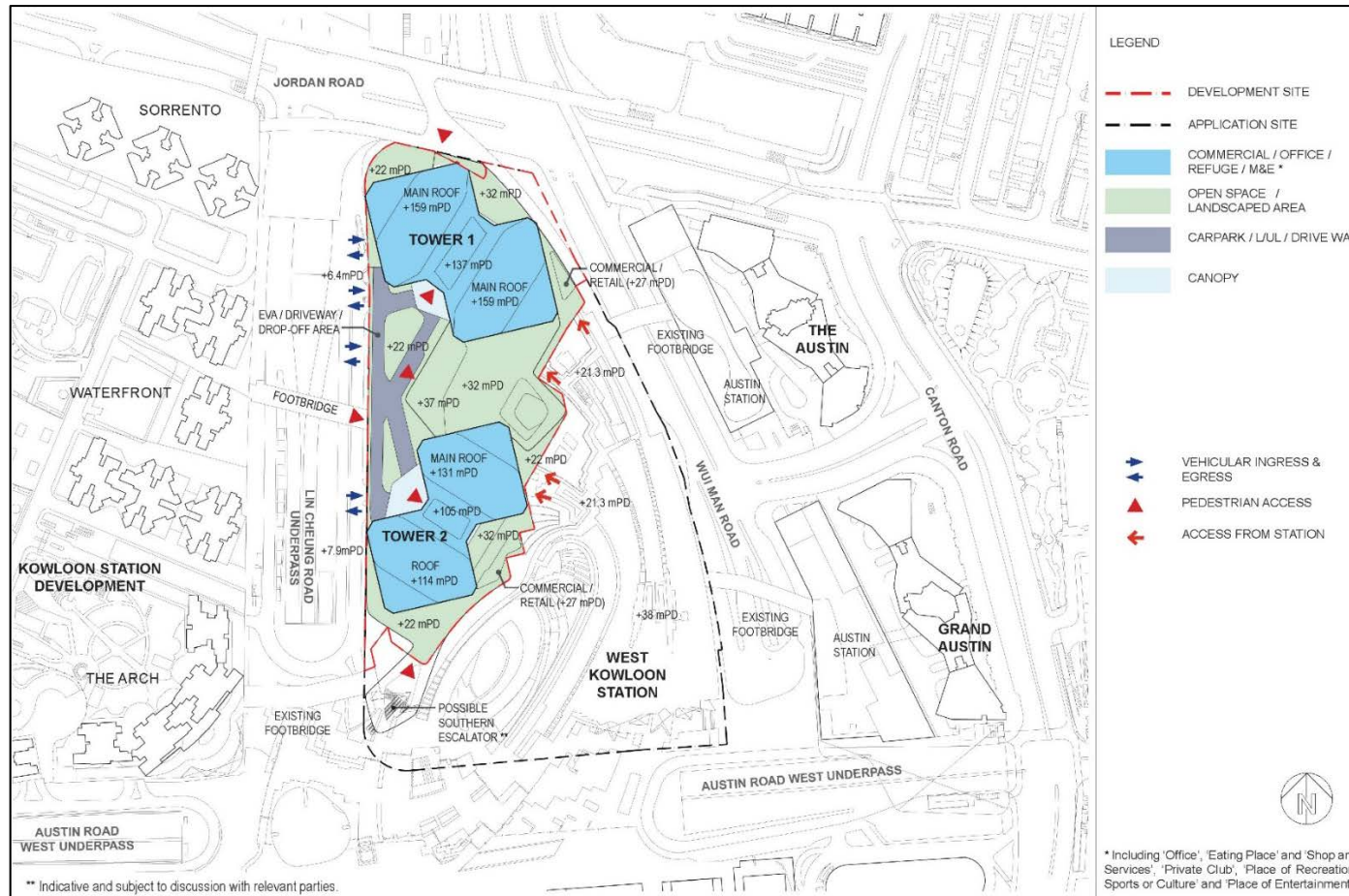


Figure 4: Indicative Master Layout Plan

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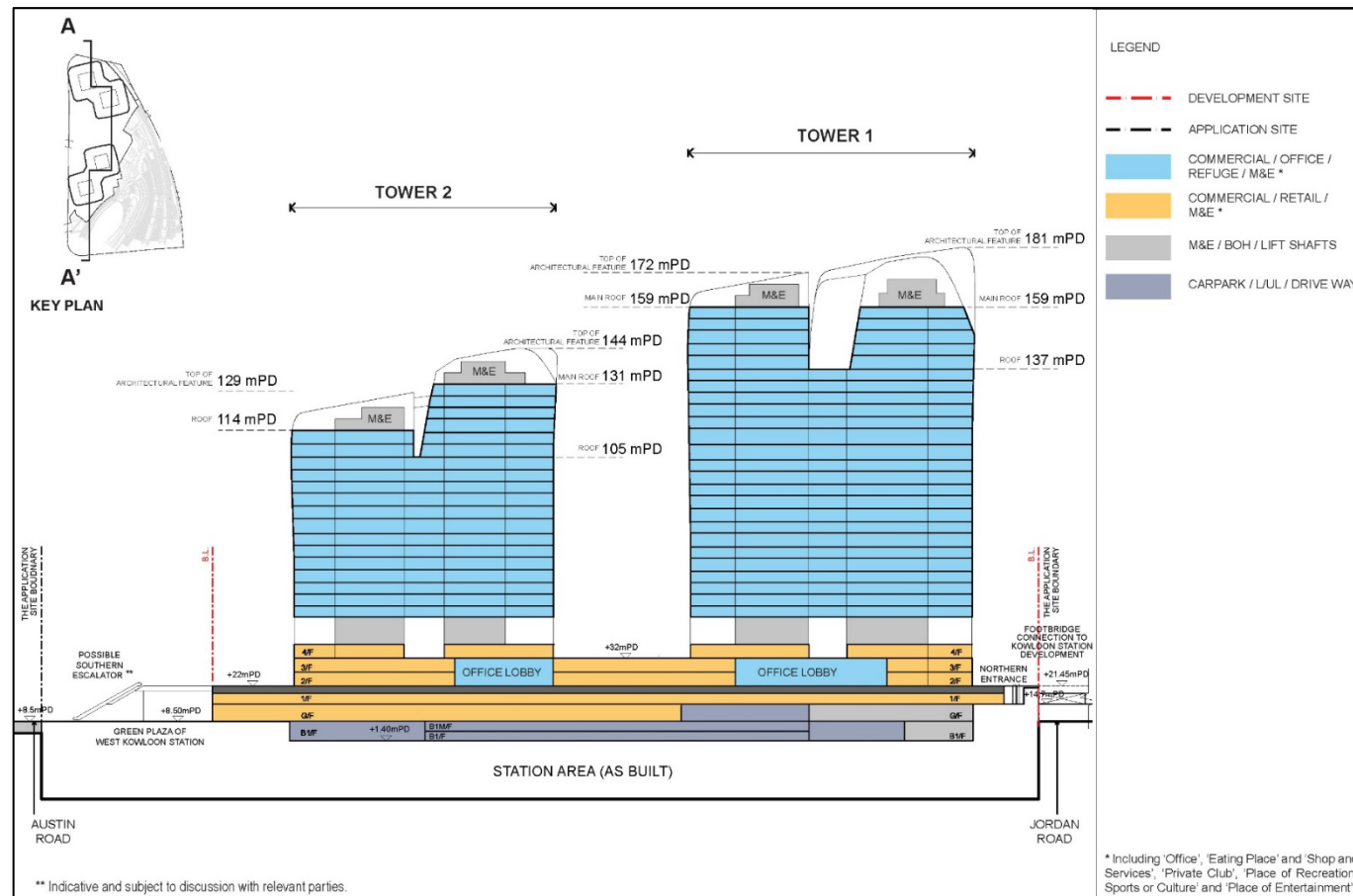


Figure 5: Section A-A

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Figure 6: Possible Facilities and Programming along West Kowloon Parkway

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Figure 7: Walkable and Pleasant Pedestrian Environment *

Remark: * Indicative drawing, subject to detailed design

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Figure 8: 'The Plateau', Approximately 3,400s.m. of Open Space*

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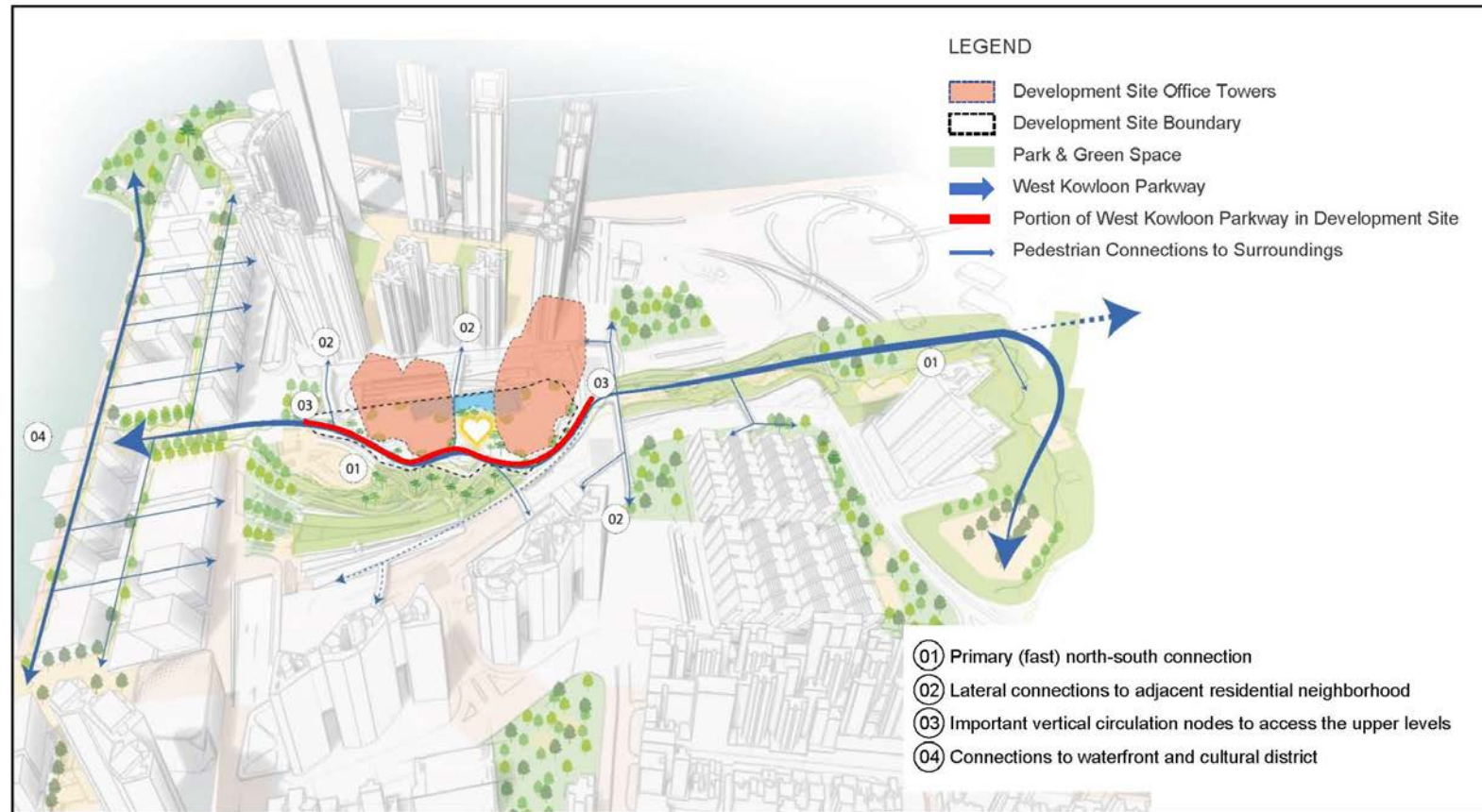


Figure 9: Pedestrian Connectivity of West Kowloon Parkway through Application Site

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Figure 10: ‘The Harbour Lookout’ – Iconic Viewing Platform Feature at the Southern Entrance*

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Figure 11: Distinctive and Iconic Architectural Form of Towers *

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