

**Heritage Impact Assessment in Respect of  
the Proposed International Culinary College in Pokfulam**

**BACKGROUND**

Vocational Training Council (VTC) plans to establish a world class International Culinary College (ICC) in Pokfulam for the provision of high quality and professional culinary training programmes on international cuisine.

2. The ICC is proposed to be located at a site next to the existing VTC Pokfulam Complex (VTC Complex) at 145 Pok Fu Lam Road (the Site). Although the Site is currently vacant, there are a number of historic buildings in its immediate surroundings including:

- The Béthanie (a Grade 1 historic building)<sup>1</sup>;
- Old Dairy Farm Senior Staff Quarters (a Grade 1 historic building);
- Old Dairy Farm Cowshed (a Grade 2 historic building); and
- Old Dairy Farm Main Office Building (a Grade 2 historic building).

Please refer to Figure 1 for the site plan showing the location of the ICC and the four historic buildings.

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)**

3. In accordance with Development Bureau Technical Circular (Works) No. 06/2009 and the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO)'s Guidance Note to HIA Submission, an HIA is to be carried out to examine the impact of the proposed development on the historic buildings concerned and to devise mitigation measures.

4. The HIA in respect of the proposed ICC has been conducted with the following key stages:

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<sup>1</sup> AAB reaffirmed its recommendation to declare the Béthanie as a monument at its meeting on 17 December 2012. AMO is proceeding with the declaration procedures as required under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53).

**A. Understanding of cultural significance of the Site and nearby heritage resources**

5. The Site, being the original location of poultry batteries and paddock of the Old Dairy Farm, has undergone drastic changes since late 1980s due to the construction of temporary housing that altered the land formation and created distinct strata at the Site. The ramp leading from the paddock to the cowsheds is the only remaining structure that is directly related to operation of the Old Dairy Farm. The historical trace of the Old Dairy Farm's facilities has been eroded to a large extent and therefore, from a micro perspective, the heritage significance of the Site itself is low.

6. Being the central point of the three graded historic buildings of the Old Dairy Farm, i.e. the Senior Staff Quarters, the Cowsheds and the Main Office Building, the Site has a close relationship with these surrounding buildings. The overall setting, the three historic buildings, the ramp, the retaining wall and the Site together formed the last cluster of the Old Dairy Farm's facilities in Pokfulam. The story of the Old Dairy Farm will be materialized through proper interpretative means.

7. It is also believed that the Old Dairy Farm and Pokfulam Village were once inter-dependent in many ways and thus the Old Dairy Farm was socially important to the district and was still remembered by those who worked in or lived around the Old Dairy Farm.

8. The Site, being the central plot of land, incorporeally plays a role to connect the three buildings of the Old Dairy Farm, which still exist today. As the last remaining historic cluster of the Old Dairy Farm, the Site and the surrounding three buildings serve as the main resources to understand the development of the Old Dairy Farm and also its relationship with the surrounding landscape and people. The cultural significance of the Site rests much on its surrounding heritage resources, which altogether evoke contextual significance.

9. The significance of the Site and the surrounding historic buildings has been taken into account at early planning stage of the ICC project.

**B. Understanding of the development constraints, requirements and concerns**

10. The Site is selected for the proposed ICC to achieve synergy and collaboration with the adjacent VTC Complex. In this regard, a basement tunnel connecting the proposed ICC and the existing VTC Complex can be designed to share facilities between the new and existing blocks. This can also reduce the building bulk of the new ICC building.

11. As the proposed ICC will be designed to provide facilities to meet international standard of culinary training, there is a minimum requirement of kitchens, demo areas, training rooms etc. In order to put in the required area and facilities within the Site, a series of options and feasibility have been explored including the feasibility of adopting basement floors and smaller massing.

12. Discussions and meetings with the Southern District Council, relevant local concern group and other stakeholders have been carried out to understand their concerns.

**C. Identification of impacts and proposal on mitigation measures**

13. As the proposed ICC is situated among the historic building cluster, it is anticipated that the proposed ICC will create visual and contextual impact to the historic buildings.

14. To reduce such impacts, the HIA has been conducted to advise on the mitigation measures in two main ways:

- (1) Design studies and refinement to reduce impact; and
- (2) Enhancement of the whole landscape through heritage spine and interpretation.

(i) Design studies and refinement to reduce impact

15. To strike a balance between the proposed ICC and the heritage

environment, a series of design studies have been conducted from early design stage until the final design stage. Heritage conservation plays an important role in making design decisions during the process. Details are as follows:

- (1) Massing study to manipulate the required area within the Site so as to achieve the least visual impact. Please refer to Figure 2 for details;
- (2) Height analysis to keep the height of the proposed ICC not more than that of the Béthanie and to provide an acceptable and gradual transition to the higher buildings at the VTC Complex. Please refer to Figure 3 for details;
- (3) Set-back Analysis to maintain a buffer zone between the new development and the adjoining Old Dairy Farm Cowshed and Old Dairy Farm Main Office Building to keep a visual corridor and ventilation breath-way;
- (4) Townscape Analysis to manipulate the orientation of the proposed ICC to fit into the existing building fabrics and texture. Please refer to Figure 4 for details;
- (5) Landscape Study to retain mature trees in the Site and enhance the connectivity of the historic buildings; and
- (6) Protection and Monitoring System to be designed to safeguard structural stability of all nearby historic buildings and structures.

16. Several design options and building forms have been considered and the final design concept of the proposed ICC is creation of a “Salt Crystal” – a key element for cuisine all over the world. The appearance will resemble a salt crystal with faceted façades that are oriented in such a way to carefully fill the gap between the Béthanie and the existing VTC Complex. The architectural design approach for the proposed ICC is to maintain a modern and individual character that is distinctive while giving due respect to neighbouring historic buildings.

17. Further to the design refinement and implementation of mitigation

measures, the latest design of the proposed ICC is 6 storeys high with 2 basement floors. Please refer to Figures 5 and 6 on the design of proposed ICC.

(ii) Enhancement of the whole landscape through heritage spine and interpretation

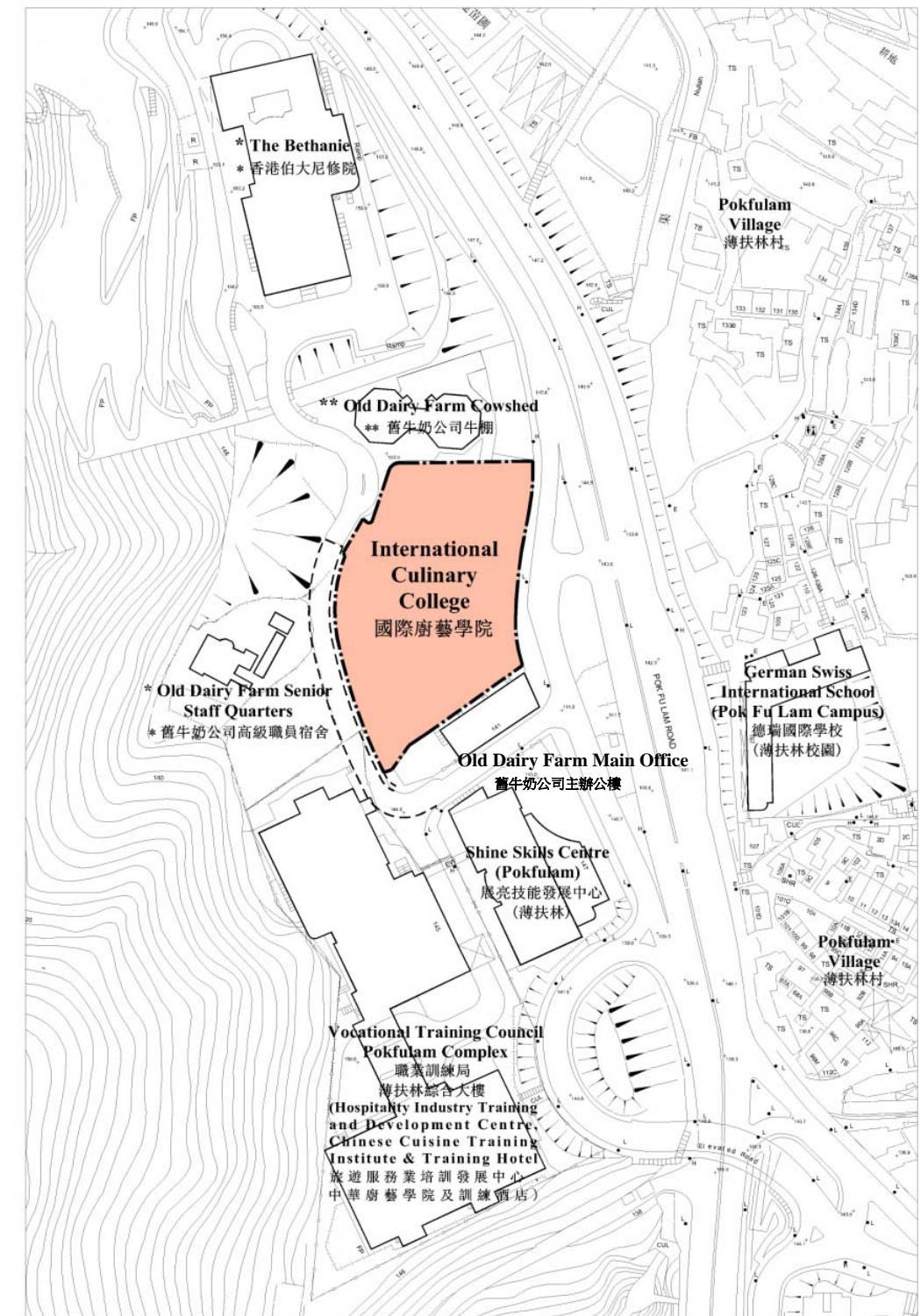
18. The design of the proposed ICC takes the opportunity to re-create the missing link between the identified heritage resources. An experiential heritage spine through these spaces will also be open for public enjoyment. Please refer to Figures 7 and 8 for details of the heritage spine.

19. The re-connection is both visual and physical. Historic observation points with interpretative facilities will be strategically located to facilitate the public to appreciate the Old Dairy Farm Main Office, Cowshed and Senior Staff Quarters. The public can have a close contact and dialogue with these buildings. They can also walk over the original cow ramp that will be preserved on-site.

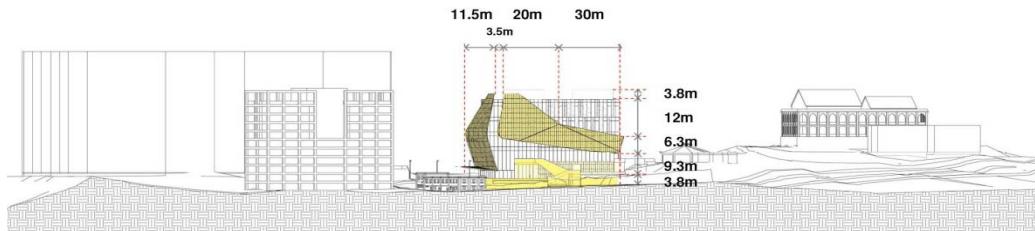
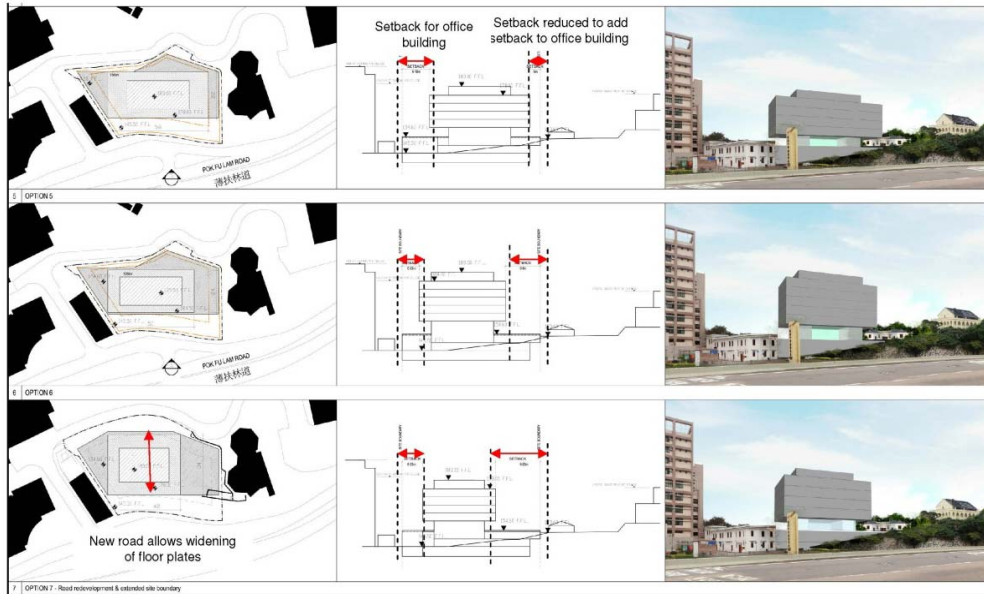
20. Other beneficial impacts of the proposed ICC development include provision of training opportunity to the local community, widening and enhancement of the existing access road leading to the Béthanie and preservation of existing mature trees to maintain the green curtain along Pokfulam Road.

## **CONCLUSION**

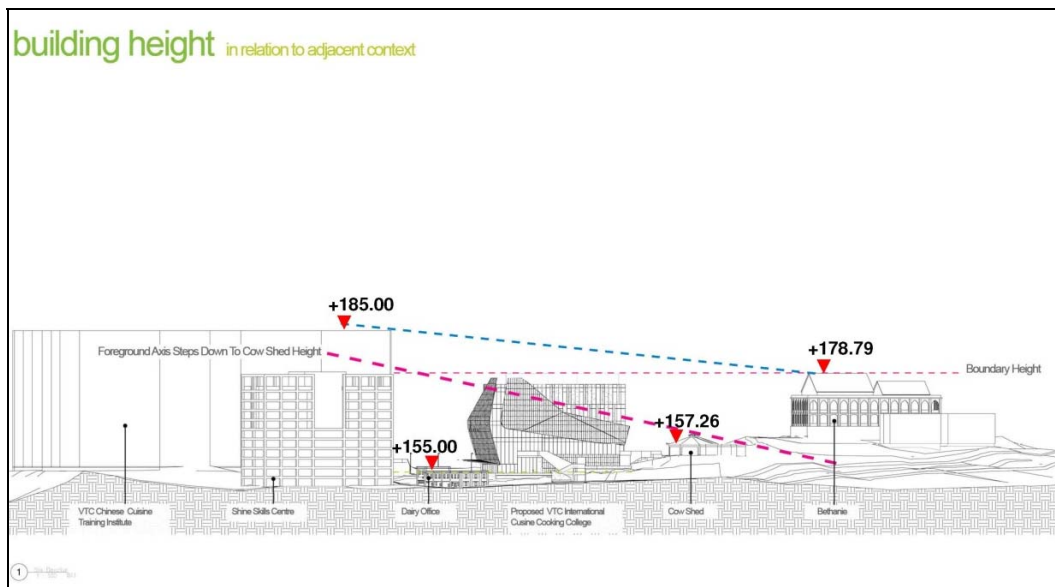
21. The HIA has concluded with the observation that the proposal will meet the objectives of mitigating the possible impacts of the proposed ICC development to the surrounding historic buildings.



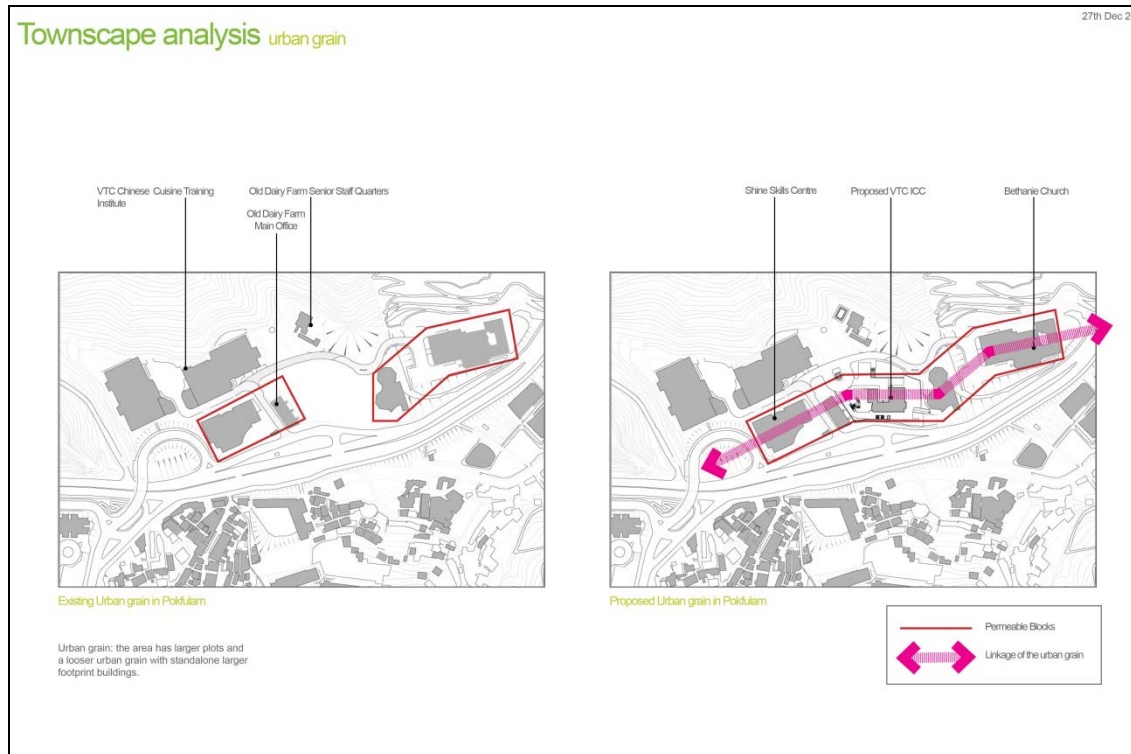
**Figure 1 Location Plan of the Proposed ICC**



**Figure 2 Massing Study of the Proposed ICC**



**Figure 3 Height Analysis of the Proposed ICC**



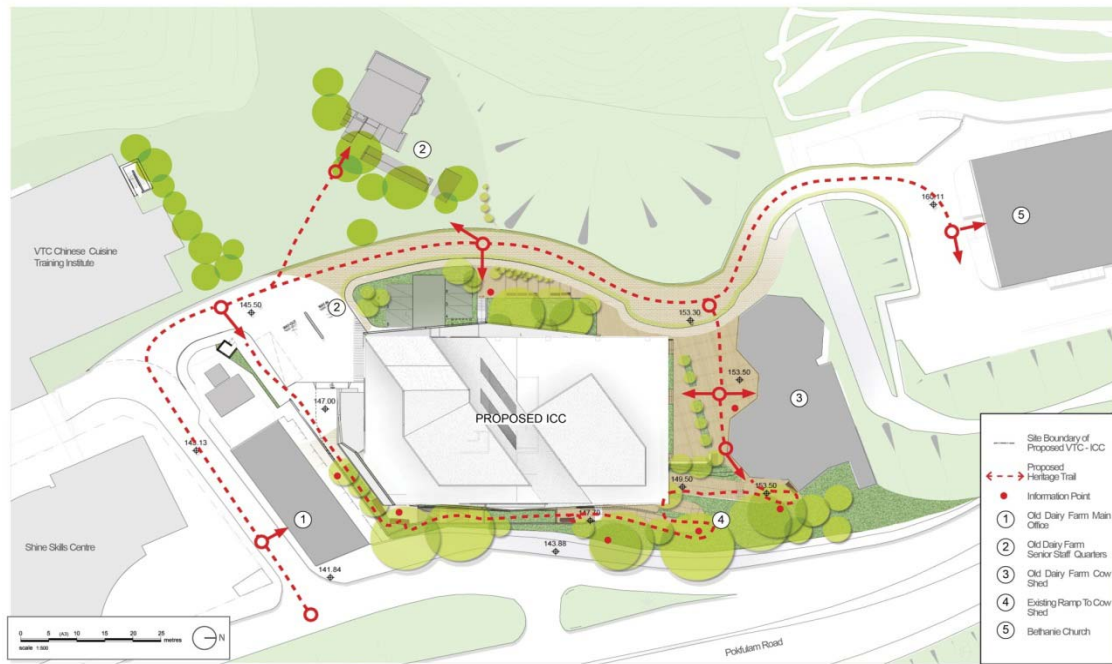
**Figure 4 Townscape Analysis of the Proposed ICC**



Figure 5 Architectural Design of the Proposed ICC



Figure 6 View of the Main Entrance of the Proposed ICC



**Figure 7 The Proposed Heritage Spine that Reconnects the Heritage Resources in the Proximity of the Proposed ICC**



**Figure 8 Illustration Showing the Proposed Heritage Spine**