

## Angry councillors demand market site facilities

By Enoch Wong

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URBAN Council members say the government must provide urban facilities on the site of Central Market or they will reject its proposal to relocate the market to Hollywood Road.

At a working group meeting yesterday, councillors said that the government should pay attention to the welfare of residents instead of focusing on the site's commercial value.

The government plans to relocate the market to a site presently occupied by police staff headquarters in Hollywood Road. The present market site is expected to raise more than \$4.7 billion if developed commercially.

But the value of the site would be significantly reduced if it were used for urban facilities, said managing director of Centaline Property Agency Limited Shih Wing-ching.

"If (the government) reserves half of the space for building urban facilities, such as parks, its estimated price would certainly be cut by half," Mr Shih said.

Ng Wing-fai, a member of the Urban Council's working group on the relocation of Central Market and redevelopment of the site, accused the government of being "money-oriented" by selling the site.

Chairman of the working group, Kam Nai-wai, said the issue could have been resolved if the government had promised to build urban facilities on the site.

"If not, we will not accept the plan. It's the government's responsibility to tackle the problem," Mr Ng said.

Senior town planner of the Planning Department, Joseph Jerry, said the market needed to be relocated because it was "inharmonious with surrounding commercial buildings".

While admitting the department had not considered building urban facilities on the site, Mr Jerry said he "welcomes the council members' suggestion".

The working group members will raise the issue at the council's general meeting on 3 September.