

\$400m tag for Wan Chai site

SEVERAL major private sector developers have indicated to the Government they are interested in buying land now occupied by the Wan Chai police station.

The *Sunday Standard* has learnt that such developers are willing to pay up to \$400 million for the site on Gloucester Road.

One developer, who wished to remain anonymous, said his company had plans to turn the site into an ultra-modern shopping, office and hotel complex.

"But this will take at least five to eight years to materialise. We will have to formalise our proposals to the Government to buy the land, if possible under a land deal or by tender," he said.

Developers seem particularly attracted by the site's wide frontage facing the Wan Chai waterfront and other major developments taking place in the area.

The Wan Chai Police Station — which houses the District and Divisional Command including officers' quarters located across Jaffe Road at the back of the

building — is one of Hongkong's oldest police stations.

District Commander for Wan Chai, Chief Superintendent, Lau To-ye said he did not know of any plans to redevelop or relocate the station.

However he said the exterior of the present station had changed little since it was built in 1935. In that time only an additional site on Jaffe Road has been acquired to be used as officers' quarters.

The station is often referred to as the No 2 police station in Hongkong with the first being the equally old Central Police Station in Hollywood Road.

When the Wan Chai station was first built it met the requirements of a fast developing residential-commercial town and was one of the first projects to be built on reclaimed land.

At that time, the station stood just several yards away from the water-front.

Today, the shoreline has moved outwards into Victoria

Harbour by almost several hundred metres with high-rise office complexes blocking the station's sea view.

This is evident in a photograph taken of the station in 1950 (courtesy of the Royal HK Police Force) where even Victoria Peak in the background could be seen clearly.

Today, multi-storey residential and commercial buildings have dwarfed the police station.

However, as CSP Lau added the Wan Chai command still played an important police role in the district.

Its uniformed force of 65 supported by about 13 civilian staff are responsible for one of the most highly-developed shopping centres in the territory — Causeway Bay.

The Wan Chai District also covers the Hongkong Stadium and the Happy Valley race course. The station is also responsible for the guard duties for Police Headquarters in Arsenal Street.