

S. C. W. P.

18 May 1983

A case of swings and roundabouts...

By GARMEN CHAN

The Kowloon City District Board has asked the Urban Council to reconsider its plan for a park on a site adjoining Carpenter Road.

The site is zoned for district open space and was allocated to the Urban Council for development.

But the board has voiced reservations about the plan and suggested that more urgently needed community facilities be incorporated into the project.

The board, in a closed meeting last week, endorsed a package of proposals from a special unofficial working group on the proposed park.

A paper, containing the proposals, will soon be forwarded to the Urban Council and the Town Planning Board, for consideration.

The working group on the use of the site was formed in February following a discussion by the board's environmental improvement committee.

Pending clearance of part of the site, the park is to be developed in two stages.

Stage one, work on which is expected to start next month, includes a rest garden, two children's playgrounds and a Chinese-style pavilion.

Work on stage two, comprising soccer pitches, four basketball-cum-volleyball courts, eight squash courts, a jogging track, fitness centres and ancillary facilities, will begin later this year.

Appreciating that it was too late to prevent work on stage one, members hoped they could bring about changes in time for the second stage.

Although members welcomed the park plan, they felt the Government had not given enough consideration to other local requirements in allocating the entire site for park development.

They held the view that the site was the only sizeable space in the vicinity and should be developed with optimum effort to solve

some of the more acute social and environmental problems in the district.

The unofficials have identified three major problems in the district — illegal parking, on-street hawking and the lack of a permanent indoor venue for cultural performances and exhibitions in the area.

They suggested that it would be desirable to incorporate such facilities into the Carpenter Road park site and, if necessary, re-zone part of the site to house some of them.

But members had noted that since stage one was already being implemented, the cost of abandoning this portion or re-designing it would be prohibitive.

But they felt it might not be too late for consideration in stage two, the design of which has only just been finalised.

Members have also been told that the Urban Council is building a market complex at Hau Wong Road which would provide 840 market stalls for various trades.

But members felt the number of street hawkers and cooked food stalls far exceeded

the proposed provision and that the cost of constructing a centre in the park would be much lower.

They felt an indoor performance venue on the park site could also house indoor sports, facilities for which were lacking in the district.

The working party also suggested a car park be provided in the park in addition to a small one on a site nearby.

Two Urban Councillors, Mr Peter C.K. Chan and Mr Pao Ping-wing, who also sit on the Kowloon City District Board, raised the problem at the council's meeting last week.

In reply, the chairman of the council's Recreation and Select Committee, Mr Kenneth Lo, said work on phase one of the project will begin next month and that the board had not forwarded sufficient reasons for incorporating community facilities into the site.

An Urban Council spokesman said he could not comment until the council received the report from the district board.