

How much are the Harbour Planning Guidelines and Principles staying alive?

A case study of the CDA(1) site on King Wah Road (Paper No. 19/2008)

Submitted by

A Coalition Against the Proposed Development on King Wah Road

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1 Objectives

By making this presentation to the HEC Subcommittee on Harbour Plan Review, we hope to achieve two objectives:

1. Exercise our rights as the stakeholders by contributing our views on the development plan for the King Wah Road site. In particular, we would like to convey our strong objections to putting another monstrous buildings on our harbourfront.
2. Help the Subcommittee understand how the proponent of the King Wah Road site failed to observe the HPPs and HPGs. Special attentions will be drawn to the issues related to public engagement, land use planning, urban design, and sustainable development.

2 Background

Our coalition consists of residents from, in alphabetic order, Carson Mansion, Fu Lee Loy Mansion, Harbour Heights, Hoi Shing Building, Hoi Tao Building, Kam Tao Building, Merlin Garden, Ngan Tao Building, Victoria Center, and Wah Hoi Mansion. We have been voicing out strong objections to the proposal since early this year. Our objections are based on objective assessment gathered from public document and circumstantial evidence. We have been conveying our views to the Town Planning Board, Planning Department, Transport Department, Environmental Protection Department and have been working with District Council, Legco members, Legco redress system, journalists, and so on.

3 Some facts about the proposed development

1. (Wall building) The proposed development will destroy the existing stepped height profile by completely blocking many lower residence buildings behind it, including Fu Lee Loy, Victor Court, Yuet Ming Building, Ko Fung Court, Sung Fung Court, Nam Fung

Court, and so on. It will also, together with the neighboring new hotel, create another unwelcomed piece of wall on our harbourfront.

2. (Building intensity) The proposed development has already exploited the maximum domestic plot ratio of 8 to the full. A domestic PR of 8 is also more than that in the nearby Oil Street site by 33%! It will therefore inevitably increase the development intensity of our already overly-crowded neighborhood.
3. (Building height) The proposed 138mPD-tall building will clearly stand out among all the residential developments on the waterfront in the North Point district. We strongly resist to making the proposed development as our neighborhood's landmark. For the purpose of comparison, we note that
 - The old North Point Estate site is subject to a maximum building height (BH) of 80mPD, a site coverage of 60%, and a plot ratio of 3-4.
 - On the Oil Street site, the domestic PR limit has been reduced to 6 and the maximum BH limit to 100mPD for the waterfront development.
 - The residential development along the waterfront near Provident Centre and City Garden is subject to an 100mPD limit.
 - The maximum BH on both sides of Electric Road and to the north of King's Road is reduced from 120mPD to 110mPD.
4. (Air ventilation) The proposed development will decrease air ventilation and intake of sea breeze into the area. It is not difficult to understand how the monstrous residential blocks with non-openable windows facing the harbour will impact on the air ventilation in the area. The proponent had in fact agreed to "undertake the air ventilation assessment which would be submitted as part of the MLP submission" for their earlier indicative schemes (item 16(c) of the 333rd MPC meeting minutes).
5. (Pollution) With the windows facing the harbour non-openable (for meeting the Noise Control Ordinance), it is expected from the proposed buildings' direction that persistent artificial temperature cooling will be needed to maintain a comfortable room temperature. The exhaust air discharged from these cooling devices will increase the neighborhood's pollution and temperature, creating unpleasant, and even hazardous, outdoor environment.
6. (Ridgeline protection) The proposed development will almost block the ridgelines. Although the North Point area is outside the view fans for ridgeline protection indicated in the HKPSG, it does not mean that the proponent can evade his responsibility of taking the ridgeline protection into the planning consideration. Both the ridgelines and the harbour are the properties of the people. The proponent must therefore learn to respect these public assets.
7. (Vibrancy) There is no evidence to support that the proposed development will increase the vibrancy of our harbourfront and community. Quite the contrary, there are legitimate concerns that the proposed development will bring further traffic congestion to the area, thus making it more difficult to access to the harbourfront. Moreover, the proposed

development will take away the much needed open space which is essential for creating a vibrant environment in this harbourfront segment.