

**Harbour Front Enhancement Committee
Task Group on Urban Design Study
for the New Central Harbourfront**

Minutes of Second Meeting

Date : 31 January 2008
Time : 9:30 a.m.
Venue : Conference Room
15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong

Present

Ir. Dr. Greg Wong (Chairman)	Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Mr. Roger Nissim	Business Environment Council
Professor S.C. Wong	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Dr. Alvin Kwok	Conservancy Association
Mr. Andy Leung	Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Mr. Kim Chan	Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Mr. Charles Nicholas Brooke	
Mr. Jimmy Kwok	
Mr. Samuel Mok	
Mr. Derrick Pang	
Miss Amy Yuen	Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning & Lands) 2, Development Bureau (DEVB)
Ms. Sharon Ho	Principal Assistant Secretary (Transport) 5, Transport and Housing Bureau
Mr. Eric Fung	Chief Engineer/Hong Kong 1, Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr. Jeff Lam	Assistant Director (Headquarters), Lands Department
Miss Ophelia Wong	Deputy Director/District, Planning Department (PlanD)
Mr. Roy Li (Secretary)	Senior Town Planner/Special Duties 2, PlanD

In Attendance

Ms. Lydia Lam	Assistant Secretary (Planning) 3, DEVB
Mr. Raymond Chiu	Assistant Director/Special Duties, PlanD
Ms. Phyllis Li	Chief Town Planner/Special Duties, PlanD

For Item 3

Ms. Phyllis Li	Chief Town Planner/Special Duties, PlanD
Professor Andrew Leung	CityU Professional Services Ltd. (CPS)

For Item 4

Ms. Phyllis Li	Chief Town Planner/Special Duties, PlanD
Ms. Irene Ip	Aedas Ltd. (Aedas)
Mr. Tony Yeung	Aedas
Miss Elaine Lee	Aedas

Absent with Apologies

Dr. Ng Mee-kam	Citizen Envisioning @ Harbour (CE@H)
Mr. Patrick Lau	
Mr. Michael Hui	

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of First Meeting

Action

1.1 **The Secretary** reported that the draft minutes of the first meeting were circulated to Members for comment on 19.12.2007 and no comments/amendments were received. As there were no further comments on the draft minutes, the meeting confirmed the minutes of the first meeting.

All to note

Item 2 Matters Arising

- 2.1 **The Chairman** said that all matters arising from the last meeting had been dealt with. **All to note**

Item 3 Findings of the Stage 1 Public Engagement of the Study (Paper No. 1/2008)

- 3.1 **The Chairman** said that a draft full report on the findings of the Stage 1 Public Engagement was tabled at the meeting for Members' reference. He reminded Members that the draft report was still being finalized and was provided to Members of this Task Group for their own reference at this stage.
- 3.2 **The Chairman** invited the study team to brief members on the Paper. **Ms. Phyllis Li** said that as requested by the Task Group at the last meeting, the study team would report on the findings of the Stage 1 Public Engagement under this agenda item. The study team would brief Members on how these findings would be taken into account in the Study in the next agenda item.
- 3.3 **Professor Andrew Leung** briefed Members on the findings of the Stage 1 Public Engagement as detailed in the Paper with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.
- 3.4 **The Chairman** enquired whether the Stage 2 Public Engagement would still commence in March 2008 as PlanD had advised at the last meeting. **Ms. Phyllis Li** replied that the Stage 2 Public Engagement was still targeted for commencement in March 2008. She added that a working session involving all Task Group Members would be arranged prior to the commencement of the public engagement to consider the preliminary study proposals. However, as the study proposals might be subject to further changes, the working session

would not be open to the public.

- 3.5 Members raised no question on the findings of the Stage 1 Public Engagement. The paper was noted by the Task Group.

Item 4 Design Responses to Public Views
(Paper No. 2/2008)

- 4.1 **The Chairman** invited the study team to brief members on the Paper. **Ms. Phyllis Li** said that the design responses to public views relating to the new Central harbourfront would be based on comments received from various channels, including those previously expressed by stakeholders before the commencement of the Study, those collected in the Stage 1 Public Engagement, and those presented in the winning and other entries of the “International Planning and Urban Design Competition on the Central Waterfront of Hong Kong” organized by Designing Hong Kong (DHK).
- 4.2 **Ms. Irene Ip** briefed Members on the design responses to public views as detailed in the Paper with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.
- 4.3 **Mr. Charles Nicholas Brooke** referred to the comments from Dr. Ng Mee-kam which was tabled at the meeting for Members’ reference (**Annex 1**). He asked whether the issue of reducing the land intake by transport infrastructure had been adequately addressed in the study. He said that the community would like to be assured that the alternatives for re-assembling Queen’s Pier and reconstructing the old Star Ferry Clock Tower would be thoroughly examined, and that the community should be provided with an opportunity to “sign off” the planning parameters at another public forum.
- 4.4 **Ms. Phyllis Li** said that public views on reducing the

impact of transport infrastructure and the consultant's responses were reflected in the Stage 1 Public Engagement Report. She explained that comprehensive studies had previously been undertaken in planning the transport infrastructure in the area which was required to serve the land use needs and transport requirements. The study team was considering reducing or deleting carparking provision for some key sites with a view to lowering the building mass and releasing more ground level space for other uses to enhance the vibrancy of the harbourfront. She said that the preliminary design concept for re-assembling Queen's Pier at the original location to maintain the existing relationship with the Edinburgh Place/City Hall complex was put forward in the Stage 1 Public Engagement. Proposals for the same design concept would also be made in the forthcoming Stage 2 Public Engagement to reflect the views of some sector of the community. There would also be other proposals to reflect public views such as re-assembling the pier at the harbourfront with the pier function revived. As regards the design parameters, the study team would examine the possibility of reducing the development footprint and building mass of some key sites.

- 4.5 In response to the Chairman's and Mr. Brooke's questions on the "signing off" of the design parameters, **Miss Ophelia Wong** said that it would be difficult for the public to conclude on the design parameters without first knowing the proposals. She said that towards the end of the Stage 2 Public Engagement, there would be another forum for consolidation of public views and community consensus building, the so-called "Stage 2.5 public engagement", before the study proposals and recommendations were finalized.
- 4.6 In response to the Chairman's enquiries relating to the planned transport infrastructure in the area, **Ms. Sharon**

Ho said that Road P2 was needed. As previously explained at the concerned Legislative Council Panel meetings, the gazetted alignment and scale of Road P2 were commensurate with its functions and the planning parameters. The speed limit would be 50 km per hour. There would be greening measures and adequate pedestrian crossing facilities including at-grade crossings for public access to the waterfront. She said that the alignment could be adjusted if necessary to suit the final decision of the re-assembly of the Queen's Pier.

4.7 **Mr. Andy Leung** said that the public had expressed different design concepts for re-assembling Queen's Pier and reconstructing the old Star Ferry Clock Tower. He suggested that the study team should provide information on the technical considerations and constraints relating to its proposals and whether the public's ideas were technically feasible. In response, **Miss Ophelia Wong** said that the study team was providing initial design responses to the public views at this meeting, and there would be a separate working session with the Task Group to examine how the public aspirations could be translated into various proposals, taking into account the technical feasibility and constraints. For example, how the pier function could be maintained in the re-assembled pier would be explored.

4.8 **Mr. Roger Nissim** said that he was pleased to see the ways public views were being reflected in the findings of the Stage 1 Public Engagement, i.e., reducing development intensity, building height and building mass at the new Central harbourfront. He said that the International Planning and Urban Design Competition had reconfirmed that there should not be substantial development at the waterfront. He opined that hotel, which was for the exclusive use of its guests, should not be built at the waterfront. He said that offices should

also be excluded. Otherwise, Central would be dead at night. He suggested that the area north of Road P1 should be for low rise, and Sites 1 and 2 should adopt the same building height as Site 6.

4.9 **Ms. Phyllis Li** said that land uses in the study area had been dealt with in the plan-making process for the statutory plans covering the area. Grade A offices would be needed in the Central Business District in view of the limited new supply, low office vacancy rate, and strong demand. She said that the study team would explain the design concepts for the study proposals in the forthcoming working session, and the proposals would be supported by air ventilation assessment and visual appraisal.

4.10 **Mr. Samuel Mok** was concerned that the relevant Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) would be amended as a result of the urban design competition or the study proposals. He would not agree to endless public consultation which would cause delay to development. **Mr. Andy Leung** said that public aspirations should be aligned as to whether amendments to the land use zonings or development parameters on the OZPs could be considered. **Mr. Roger Nissim** opined that amendments to the OZP were inevitable and should not be precluded. In response, **Miss Ophelia Wong** recapitulated that she had explained at the last meeting that the scope of the study was an urban design study instead of reviewing the OZPs. The current study would take into consideration the public views and useful design ideas as identified in the International Planning and Urban Design Competition. She said that the Town Planning Board (TPB) recently considered a s.12A application for amending the OZPs submitted by DHK in January 2008 and noted that many of DHK's proposals could be done within the OZP framework. TPB considered that there was no need to amend the

OZP prior to the completion of the study and the associated public engagement.

- 4.11 **Mr. Jimmy Kwok** said that the study team should list out the engineering and other constraints to facilitate the building of community consensus at an early stage. **Ms. Phyllis Li** said that the community forum for consensus building (i.e. the Stage 2.5 public engagement) would be held after the Stage 2 Public Engagement and the entire study was scheduled for completion within 2008. **Miss Ophelia Wong** supplemented that the Stage 2 Public Engagement would last about two to three months, and the study findings and recommendations would be submitted to the TPB after the Stage 2.5 Public Engagement.
- 4.12 **The Chairman** remarked that the public would wish to use the waterfront as soon as possible. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the CRIII programme, **Mr. Eric Fung** said that the project was scheduled for completion in 2009. He added that the timing for completion of the CWB tunnel structure would depend on the approval of the project.
- 4.13 **The Chairman** said that the Government should consider some quick-win projects for the Central waterfront before the developments, making reference to the success of the pets park at the Wan Chai waterfront, although acknowledging that temporary harbourfront enhancement was outside the terms of reference of the Task Group. **Mr. Andy Leung** added that the relevant bureaux/departments should have a clear implementation programme and temporary uses should be considered. **Miss Amy Yuen** said that the Government would endeavour to utilize valuable land resources in an optimal manner and temporary uses would be considered positively where appropriate.

- 4.14 **Dr. Alvin Kwok** said that the findings of the Stage 1 Public Engagement showed that the public had called for a return of the harbour to the people with no more massive commercial development. He asked whether there might be conflicts in the blanket application of the major design responses for all the key sites and suggested that different themes could be adopted for different parts of the Central harbourfront, similar to that proposed for the Wan Chai Development Phase II. In response, **Ms. Irene Ip** said that the design responses would be used as a basis for the study proposals in a flexible and balanced manner, and the specific context of the key sites would be given due consideration. **Ms. Phyllis Li** supplemented that there would be proposals for the overall urban design framework, landscape strategy, pedestrian network, etc., as well as character precincts for individual area, and various relevant considerations would be taken into account in making the proposals.
- 4.15 **Mr. Kim Chan** asked about the timing of the working session. He suggested that information on the office demand and supply situation could be provided for public information. He remarked that as a common planning practice, there should be land reserved for development in the long term. **Miss Ophelia Wong** replied that the study proposals would be presented at the forthcoming working session, which would be scheduled for late February 2008 as far as possible. She said that information on the office demand and supply situation was available in the Hong Kong 2030 Report. She concurred with Mr. Chan that land should be reserved for long-term purpose.
- 4.16 **Mr. Samuel Mok** said that the public should be informed in case the Stage 2 Public Engagement would be the final stage for collecting public views in order to

avoid arising further public comments after the engagement exercise. In response, **Miss Ophelia Wong** advised that there would be a Stage 2.5 Public Engagement for consensus building following the Stage 2 Public Engagement. The Stage 3 of the study would be for briefing the public on the study recommendations.

4.17 **Mr. Charles Nicholas Brooke** said that it was essential for the Transport and Housing Bureau and Transport Department to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to transport planning. **Ms. Sharon Ho** replied that such consideration would be incorporated in the study where appropriate.

4.18 **The Chairman** asked Members to note that the study team would brief Members on the design proposals at the forthcoming separate working session.

All to note

Item 5 Any Other Business

5.1 There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:15 am.

**HEC Task Group on Urban Design Study
for the New Central Harbourfront
April 2008**

30 January 2008

Dear Roy,

The following are some of the issues raised by CE@H members:

1. **Public forum on finalizing the planning parameters:** is it possible to have a forum to exercise collective wisdom to finalize the planning parameters? This was done before with reference to the Kai Tak project.
2. **Conservation of the historical context and heritage of Central waterfront:** some members feel that this issue is NOT given due attention, for example:

On Queen's Pier, the report by CityU states in para. 14 that there was support for both insitu re-assembly and relocation:

“There were diverse public views on the future location and design ideas for re-assembling Queen's Pier. On one hand, there was support for re-assembling Queen's Pier at the original location (i.e. Concept A1) with a view to maintaining the integrated cultural and architectural relations between the pier, the City Hall precinct and Edinburgh Place. On the other hand, there was also support for locating the re-assembled Queen's Pier at the new Central waterfront...”

However, the PlanD/Aedas report on "design response" only mention this option in passing:

“There were diverse public views on the arrangements for re-assembling QP and reconstructing the old SF Clock Tower. Some preferred locating them at their original locations, while some suggested other locations or no re-assembling or reconstruction at all. There was support for re-assembling QP at a waterfront location and with the pier function revived.”

The cityU report establishes the following as a principle: “to respect the cultural and historical context of the Central District”

The Aedas/PlanD paper only says, in para 2.2.9: “The public has shown concerns on the preservation arrangements of the old Star Ferry Clock Tower and Queen's Pier.”

There is no mention/no appreciation of QPEPCH, i.e. Queen's Pier/Edinburgh Place/City Hall as a complex full of historical significance and meaning.

3. **Missing items or issues that worth exploring at this stage:**
 - Harbour planning principle No. 8 - Reduce land take for infrastructure - is missing from the objectives
 - Transport services - what do we plan for? what should we plan for? Where is NIL? where is the tram? water taxis? what else...
 - What are the linkages/connections between different modes of transport in Central - are these convenient? can they be improved? After all, Central - from the central MTR to the Ferry Piers, and from

Exchange Square to City Hall is HK's largest transport interchange - can we improve this? If so, what impact does that have on our planning?

- Review of the distribution of (ground level) land consumed by transport infrastructure is missing (where to put the PTI? why have a bus terminus when a bus stop can do? can we reduce the width of P2 without changing capacity? ...)
- Redistributing open space and commercial/other uses to create smaller, more friendly piazzas/public spaces
- Option of moving PLA berth out as a pier

With best wishes,
Mee Kam