

**Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC)
Task Group on Urban Design Study
for the New Central Harbourfront**

Minutes of the Fourth Meeting

Date : 10 December 2008
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Conference Room
15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong

Present

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| 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. Ng Mee-kam | Citizen Envisioning @ Harbour (CE@H) |
| Dr. Alvin Kwok | Conservancy Association |
| Mr. Andy Leung | Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) |
| Mr. Kim Chan | Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP) |
| Mr. Paul Zimmerman | Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited (SPH) |
| Mr. Michael Hui | |
| Mr. Patrick Lau | |
| Miss Amy Yuen | Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning & Lands) 2, Development Bureau (DEVB) |
| Mr. Chan Chung-yuen | Senior Engineer/Housing & Planning, Traffic Engineering (HK) Division, Transport Department (TD) |
| Mr. Eric Fung | Chief Engineer/Hong Kong 1, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) |
| Miss Ophelia Wong | Deputy Director/District, Planning Department (PlanD) |
| Mr. Roy Li (Secretary) | Senior Town Planner/Special Duties 2, PlanD |

In Attendance

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|----------------------|--|
| Ms. Lydia Lam | Assistant Secretary (Planning) 3, DEVB |
| Mr. Stuart McMillan | Senior Estate Surveyor/West, District Lands Office, Hong Kong West & South |
| Ms. Phyllis Li | Assistant Director/Special Duties, PlanD |
| <u>For Item 3</u> | |
| Miss Fiona Lung | Chief Town Planner/Special Duties, PlanD |
| Mr. Kryan Sze | Aedas Ltd. (Aedas) |
| Ms. Irene Ip | Aedas |
| Miss Santafe Poon | Aedas |
| Professor C.M. Tam | CityU Professional Services Ltd. (CPS) |
| Professor Lee Ngok | PolyU Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) |
| Professor Peter Yuen | PPRI |
| Dr. K.K. Yuen | PPRI |

Absent with Apologies

Mr. Nicholas Brooke
Mr. Samuel Mok
Mr. Derrick Pang
Mr. Jimmy Kwok

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the Third Meeting

Action

1.1 **The Secretary** reported that the draft minutes of the third meeting were circulated to Members for comment. Referring to paragraph 3.2(e) of the draft minutes, **Mr. Roger Nissim** recalled his saying that the public transport interchange (PTI) and the tall commercial buildings in Sites 1 and 2 were both contrary to the Harbour Planning Principles (HPPs) and that these HPPs should be used as the new starting point for detailed consideration of land uses in the area. The meeting agreed to amend the draft minutes accordingly.

(Post meeting note: The draft minutes were revised by

adding the following to the last sentence of paragraph 3.2(e):

“The proposed PTI and tall commercial buildings were both contrary to the Harbour Planning Principles (HPPs) and these HPPs should be used as the new starting point for detailed consideration of land uses in the area.”)

- 1.2 **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** said that as the last meeting was held in April 2008, he could not recall the details of discussion at the meeting, and would not endorse the draft minutes. **The Chairman** reminded the Secretariat to circulate the draft minutes within a reasonable period of time after each meeting.

Secretary

Item 2 Matters Arising

- 2.1 **The Chairman** said that there were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

Item 3 Report on the Findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement of the Study (Paper No. 4/2008)

- 3.1 **The Chairman** invited the study team to brief Members on the Paper. **Miss Fiona Lung** briefly explained the background of the Paper and said that in addition to reporting on the findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement by PPRI, Aedas would also brief Members on the initial proposed design responses.
- 3.2 **Professor Peter Yuen** briefed Members on the findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement of the Study with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.
- 3.3 The key points raised by individual Members were summarized as follows:

Qualitative Data

- (a) **Dr. Ng Mee-kam** enquired about the methodology for identifying the positive views in the qualitative analysis, the accessibility to the raw data for inspection, the meaning of the text units and the nature of the views not captured under positive views. She said that as the data could be subject to different interpretation, the methodology of the analysis could be an issue of concern. The urban design issues would need to be examined in a holistic manner and it might be a wrong approach to analyze qualitative data in a quantifiable manner;
- (b) **Dr. Alvin Kwok** expressed his concern that the qualitative data were presented in a quantified and simplified manner. However, he noted that the Annexes to the Paper had provided more detailed information on the substance of opinions received which Members should take note of. He said that it was important to ensure that PPRI had provided the design consultant, Adeas with all the findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement including the diverse views obtained;
- (c) referring to paragraph 21 of the Paper on the qualitative analysis of the opinion on the proposed refined urban design framework, both **Dr. Ng Mee-kam** and **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** asked whether the 25% with negative views and 41% with other suggestions would imply that about 66% of the relevant text units had called for further improvements to the proposed refined urban design framework;
- (d) **Mr. Andy Leung** asked whether the views in the written submissions and the briefings to the various public and advisory bodies as set out in the

Annexes of the Paper had been included in the qualitative analysis;

Robustness of the Public Opinion Collection Exercise

- (e) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** questioned about the relative significance of the different sources of data and activities employed in the public opinion collection exercise as it might cause different result in the analysis;
- (f) **Mr. Roger Nissim** said that the opinions of the general public seemed to be different from those of the professionals in the Focus Group Workshop (FGW), who had better knowledge of as well as greater concerns on the issues of discussion. He said that there should be different weighting for the various sources of data. **Mr. Andy Leung** asked whether the views of the public bodies were treated in the same way as any member of the public. **Mr. Kim Chan** said that the views of an organization should be given more weight than that of an individual. **Dr. Alvin Kwok** disagreed with the assignment of weightings to the quantitative analysis of opinions of different groups of respondents and said that substantive comments were considered more important;
- (g) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** queried whether the public opinion collection exercise could give a robust result in the findings of public opinions. He was of the view that the opinions on the key concepts could be affected by the information provided to the respondents;

Sustainable and Balanced Approach

- (h) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** referred to paragraph 16 of the Paper and asked whether the general support

was for “a” sustainable and balanced approach or “the” sustainable and balanced approach;

Sites 1 and 2

- (i) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** referred to paragraph 22 of the Paper and highlighted that 53% of the respondents in the FGW disliked both Concepts A and B. He pointed out that there were different response patterns for the different sources of data in the public opinion collection exercise;

Sites 5 and 6

- (j) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** said that as the public was not given a choice and there were no alternative proposals for the two sites, the overwhelming positive responses for the use of Sites 5 and 6 might be misleading; and

Re-assembling Queen’s Pier

- (k) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** opined that the even distribution of opinions amongst those who preferred Concept A, those who preferred Concept B, and those with no preference in the telephone polls showed that the general public were more familiar with the subject and could respond in the telephone polls in a more well-informed manner.

3.4 In response to the comments and questions, **Professor Lee Ngok** and **Professor Peter Yuen** made the following key points:

Qualitative Data

- (a) The qualitative data were based on other comments and suggestions raised in the comment cards and face-to-face interviews other than indicating the

preferences. They were also based on the opinions made in the FGW, Community Engagement Forum (CEF), briefings to the public and advisory bodies and eighteen District Councils, and the written submissions;

- (b) the analysis of the qualitative data was based on a sound and well established methodology. All qualitative data recorded in the public opinion collection exercise for the Stage 2 Public Engagement were analyzed by the research assistants of PPRI. The transcripts were then validated by the supervising staff in a double blind manner to ensure objectivity. Comments and views were transcribed and coded into “text units”, i.e. a sentence or a group of sentences expressing a particular point of opinion. Based on the comments and views received, an analytical framework consisting of themes, categories, and sub-categories was developed. The text units being categorized accordingly were then classified into positive comments, negative comments, and other suggestions where appropriate. The data structure was designed by the principal investigator of PPRI, and the data were inputted into different categories and sub-categories by the research staff. A computer software, NUDIST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) was applied to collate and analyze the data. All the data were stored and could be made available for inspection;

- (c) while the powerpoint presented at the meeting attempted to highlight the findings in a manageable manner for consideration, more details of the different views recorded in the qualitative analysis would be included in the full report which was currently under preparation. The design consultant was fully aware of the diverse views

received in the public opinion collection exercise for certain topics and some respondent groups had views different from the general public;

- (d) the 41% with other suggestions as stated in paragraph 21 of the Paper contained other suggestions including further scope of improvement to the refined urban design framework and it did not imply that a total of 66% was not supporting the refined urban design framework;
- (e) the views in the written submissions as well as those recorded in the briefings to the various public and advisory bodies and eighteen District Councils had been included in the qualitative data analysis and captured in the Paper;

Robustness of the Public Opinion Collection Exercise

- (f) the public opinion collection exercise was designed to tap the opinions of different groups. For example, the comment cards would likely be responded by interested individuals who had visited the public or roving exhibitions; the face-to-face interviews were targeted for visitors of the exhibitions, and they were conducted on a randomized basis and the comments provided were in greater detail; the telephone polls were targeted for the general public; and the FGW were mainly attended by interested professionals and the CEF by interested stakeholders of all relevant sectors;
- (g) public opinions from different sources were analyzed and entered into the data base without giving any weighting. The methodology based on grounded theory was a well-established approach in social research;

- (h) the public opinion collection exercise was robust in view of the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, which had struck a balance between those respondents with knowledge of the Study and those drawn from randomized samples. The channels of data collection were also diversified to represent the opinions of the general public;
- (i) the great majority of the comment cards received was collected from the exhibition venues and the respondents were therefore familiar with or had knowledge of the key concepts. The respondents of the face-to-face interviews, FGW, CEF and briefings to public and advisory bodies and eighteen District Councils were briefed on the key concepts. The opinions were given with the provision of relevant information.

Sustainable and Balanced Approach

- (j) the general support was for “a” sustainable and balanced approach in designing the new Central harbourfront to foster sustainability;

Sites 1 and 2

- (k) the response patterns for different data sources reflected mainly the views of different respondents. For example, the FGW mainly reflected the views of the professionals who were interested in the study issues, while the comment cards, face-to-face interviews, telephone polls and CEF mainly reflected the views of the general public;

Sites 5 and 6

- (l) notwithstanding that there were no alternative design concepts for the sites, the respondents also

had the choice of saying that they disliked the proposed design concepts or had no comment. The data reflected that there was clear support for the proposed development; and

Re-assembling Queen's Pier

(m) the telephone poll was an attempt to capture the opinion of the general public. It did not contain questions which could not be answered by the general public. The public should be able to give their views relating to Queen's Pier since the issue had already been widely covered by the media.

3.5 In response to Dr. Kwok's remarks in paragraph 3.3(b) above, **Miss Santafe Poon** said that Aedas had participated in and was fully involved in the various public engagement activities and had been provided with copies of the written submissions once they were received by PlanD. **Miss Fiona Lung** said that Aedas had taken into consideration the substantive comments and suggestions received from various sources in further improving the design. She said that a summary of the written submissions and the Administration's responses was under preparation and would be included in the full report on the Stage 2 Public Engagement.

3.6 **Mr. Kryan Sze** then briefed Members on the proposed design responses with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

3.7 The key points raised by individual Members were summarized as follows:

(a) **Dr. Alvin Kwok** said that before the study consultant went into the detailed design stage, it would be appropriate to have a so-called "Stage 2.25" public engagement so that those who had made the written submissions with detailed

proposals could be invited to a forum to present their proposals. He said that such a forum could facilitate consensus building and should be organized as early as possible to avoid abortive work on the detailed design. He added that an interactive process in which the participants could collectively evaluate the proposals presented at the forum would be more useful as compared to a forum whereby the study consultants would merely present the study findings and recommendations;

- (b) **Mr. Andy Leung** and **Dr. Ng Mee Kam** said that they both agreed with Dr. Kwok's suggestion above, and that similar informal discussion forum whereby the relevant government departments were represented to clarify technical issues had been organized in the Kai Tak Planning Study. They considered that such kind of forum would serve to provide a platform for explaining the technical issues in greater detail and help building consensus;
- (c) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** said that the TGUDS should take the lead in organizing a forum at which individuals or groups with different proposals would meet and have an open debate. The forum should examine the controversial issues pertaining to the Study. He said that the design responses as shown in the powerpoint gave the impression that the Government had taken a position on some controversial issues, such as not changing the distribution of the gross floor area, and not re-assembling Queen's Pier at its original location, etc. Such position was contradictory to those public views expressed in a recent forum organized by the Central and Western District Council (C&WDC);
- (d) **Mr. Roger Nissim** said that it was premature to

firm up the design proposals at this stage and the consultants should provide more choices on the design concepts for the key sites, particularly for Sites 1 and 2 since some respondents disliked both concepts proposed in the Stage 2 Public Engagement.

- 3.8 Referring to the C&WDC forum mentioned by Mr. Zimmerman, **Miss Amy Yuen** noted that different proposals for the new Central harbourfront were presented by non-governmental parties at the forum, but there were no specific conclusive views.
- 3.9 In response to the comments and questions raised in paragraph 3.7 above, **Miss Fiona Lung** said that a concluding forum was tentatively scheduled for January 2009 with a view to inviting all those who had provided opinions for the Stage 2 Public Engagement to attend. It would provide the opportunity for the study team to report on the findings of Stage 2 Public Engagement and the initial design responses arising from the public engagement exercise. She said that the format of the forum was yet to be firmed up.
- 3.10 **Miss Ophelia Wong** said that public opinions, which had been collected through different channels, should be and would be, duly respected. The public opinions had shown a difference in opinions on some aspects between the professionals and the general public. Regarding Dr. Kwok's suggestion for organizing a "Stage 2.25 forum" for those who had made written submissions, she said that it might not be desirable to single out the written submissions among the various sources of public opinions for further discussion. She suggested that alternatively, a paper could be prepared to provide more details on the written submissions and the technical constraints identified by the Administration, for consideration by Members. Members could then further discuss the technical issues and design

constraints associated with the alternative proposals put forward by the public. She added that the study team had worked diligently in resolving some of the design issues with the relevant government departments over the past few months, and Members' views on the initial proposed design responses would be helpful.

3.11 **The Chairman** then invited Members to take the opportunity to comment on the initial proposed design proposals at this meeting.

3.12 **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** said that he was not ready to advise on the proposed design proposals before engaging in a process whereby other alternative proposals had been carefully scrutinized. He agreed that in order to facilitate Members' understanding on the written submissions and the Administration's responses, the TGUDS could first hold an informal meeting to examine in greater detail the written submissions received during the Stage 2 Public Engagement before commenting on the initial design responses put forward by the study consultants. In response, **the Chairman** suggested and Members agreed that the TGUDS would hold an informal meeting in January 2009 before TGUDS formulated its views on the way forward. **Ms Phyllis Li** said that a paper would be provided to consolidate the common issues raised in the written submissions to facilitate discussion in the forthcoming informal meeting.

All to Note

3.13 **Dr. Ng Mee Kam** said that she was interested in reading through the original copies of the public submissions before commenting on the initial design proposals. In response, **Miss Ophelia Wong** said that the original copies of the written submissions could be made available for Members' information and reference. (Post-meeting note: copies of the written submissions had been uploaded to the study webpage in PlanD's website after the meeting.)

All to Note

3.14 **Mr. Roger Nissim** said that the powerpoint on the Proposed Design Responses should be made available to facilitate Members' comments. He said that he preferred not to comment on the proposed design responses until examining the materials in greater detail. (Post-meeting note: the powerpoint presentation had been uploaded to the TGUDS's webpage in HEC's website after the meeting.)

All to Note

3.15 The Chairman said that the concluding forum for the Stage 2 Public Engagement could be arranged after the informal meeting of the TGUDS. He suggested that any interested TGUDS Members could assist in organizing the forum with the Government. **Miss Ophelia Wong** said that TGUDS Members would be welcomed to help organize the forum.

Item 4 Any Other Business

4.1 There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 4:55 pm.

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

December 2008