

Islands District Council
IDC Paper 74/2008

Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront
Stage 2 Public Engagement

Introduction

1. This paper briefs Members on:
 - (a) the refined urban design framework and different design concepts for the key sites in the new Central harbourfront proposed in the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront (the Study);
 - (b) the proposed reduction of development intensities for several key sites as proposed in the Study;
 - (c) the proposed design concepts at different locations for re-assembling Queen's Pier (QP) and reconstructing the old Star Ferry (SF) Clock Tower; and
 - (d) the Stage 2 Public Engagement of the Study.

Background

2. In late March 2007, the Planning Department commissioned the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront (the Study) at

the request of the Town Planning Board (TPB). The Study aims to refine the existing urban design framework for the new Central harbourfront and to prepare planning/design briefs for the key sites.

3. In the Stage 1 Public Engagement launched in May last year, we have sought public views on the urban design objectives, issues and sustainable design assessment framework; key urban design considerations for the key sites; and possible design ideas for re-assembling QP and reconstructing the old SF Clock Tower. Public views received up to September 2007 and other public submissions have been compiled and analyzed in the Report on Stage 1 Public Engagement (**Attachment I**).
4. For the Stage 2 Public Engagement launched on 11 April 2008, we have refined the existing urban design framework for the new Central harbourfront and prepared different design concepts for the key sites and for the re-assembly of QP and reconstruction of the old SF Clock Tower. Details of the proposals are set out in the Consultation Digest (**Attachment II**). The various design concepts are not exhaustive. Other ideas from the public are welcome. During the whole process of the Study, Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC) Task Group on Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront has been consulted. Briefings will be arranged for the 18 District Councils and relevant advisory bodies.
5. The study area was covered by the approved Central District (Extension) and Central District Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs). The eight key sites (**Page 3 of Attachment II**) are:

- (a) Site 1: Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) site adjoining Central Piers No. 4 to 6 (1.89 ha)
- (b) Site 2: Commercial site north of International Finance Centre (IFC) II (0.41 ha)
- (c) Site 3: CDA site north of Statue Square (5.23 ha)
- (d) Site 4: Waterfront Related Commercial and Leisure Uses site north of City Hall (1.7 ha/1.22 ha)
- (e) Site 5: Government, Institution or Community site north of CITIC Tower (1.16 ha)
- (f) Site 6: Waterfront Related Commercial and Leisure Uses site near HKCEC Extension (1.89 ha)
- (g) Site 7: Waterfront Promenade (7.8 ha)
- (h) Site 8: Waterfront Related Commercial and Leisure Uses site near Central Piers No. 9 and 10 (0.22 ha)

Public Views collected at the Stage 1 Public Engagement

6. According to the public views collected in the Stage 1 Public Engagement, there were general public aspirations for a vibrant harbourfront, lower development intensity in harmony with the harbourfront setting, good connectivity, greening and sustainable design, and respect of the cultural heritage. For the re-assembly of QP and reconstruction of the old SF Clock Tower, there were diverse views. Some preferred the original locations. Some supported the waterfront locations and reviving the pier function of QP. Other suggestions including no re-assembly or reconstruction have also been received.

7. Based on the public views collected in the Stage 1 Public Engagement and other public submissions (including the “International Planning and Urban Design Competition on the Central Waterfront of Hong Kong” organized by Designing Hong Kong in mid-2007), we have developed different design concepts for the key sites. We have also taken into account:

- the TPB’s Vision Statement for Victoria Harbour;
- HEC’s Harbour Planning Principles and Guidelines;
- the Urban Design Guidelines in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines;
- findings of other relevant studies; and
- design constraints, in particular the existing and committed developments and infrastructure facilities in the study area.

The Refined Urban Design Framework

8. The overall design vision is to create a **vibrant, green and accessible** new Central Harbourfront.
9. The urban design objectives are:
- to project a distinctive identity for the Central Business District (CBD) and the harbourfront
 - to create an attractive harbourfront with high quality development in a luxuriant landscape setting

- to create a vibrant harbourfront with a mix of uses and diverse activities
 - to improve accessibility to the harbourfront
 - to promote sustainable design and greening
 - to create a harmonious visual and physical relationship with the ridgeline, harbour setting and CBD
 - to respect the cultural and historical context of Central
10. The refined urban design framework provides a coherent and legible structure of uses, building forms, open space and connectivity. It is built upon a waterfront promenade and four principal design corridors (i.e. Statue Square Corridor, Civic Corridor, Pierside Corridor, and Arts and Cultural Precinct), each of which with distinctive character precincts, landmarks, anchoring public spaces, etc.
11. The urban design emphases are:
- (a) **Diversity and vibrancy:** design corridors, precincts, nodal attractions and anchoring spaces as well as a mix of commercial, retail, recreational, arts, cultural and tourism uses in different locations are proposed to enhance the vitality of the harbourfront.
 - (b) **Development intensity in harmony with the harbourfront:** in response to community aspirations for lowering development intensity, reducing massing and more open spaces at the new harbourfront, the development intensity of five key sites has been reduced and a controlled massing approach is adopted (details are in paragraphs 24 and 25 below).

- (c) **Responding to the natural context and existing urban fabric:** lower development intensity and appropriate building massing are proposed to protect the ridgeline, harbour view and waterfront setting. Varying building heights descending towards the harbour and with emphasis on low and medium rise buildings will complement the existing skyline. Key view corridors are defined to enhance visual connectivity to the new harbourfront.
- (d) **Ease of access and pedestrian connectivity:** the new harbourfront is easily accessible by a multi-modal transport system and a comprehensive multi-level (underground, at-grade and elevated) pedestrian network. A reserve for an environmentally friendly transport system is proposed at the waterfront promenade to enhance east-west connection.
- (e) **Respecting cultural heritage:** buildings/structures and sites of historic interest or cultural values are respected. The historical context and setting for the heritage assets are maintained. QP will be re-assembled and the old SF Clock Tower will be reconstructed.
- (f) **Promoting environmentally friendly design and greening:** environmentally friendly design features such as green roofs and green facades and a comprehensive greening network are proposed to enhance the environmental quality in terms of air ventilation, microclimate and energy conservation. According to the air ventilation assessment (AVA) including the wind tunnel test, the refined urban design framework provides unobstructed

harbour frontage and large portion of open space which allow wind penetrations. The alternative design concepts for the key sites subject to AVA (i.e. Sites 1 to 4) will have similar ventilation performance and not adversely affecting the pedestrian wind environment.

Design Concepts for the Key Sites

12. Alternative design concepts have been developed for the key sites. The design concepts listed below are not exhaustive, and other ideas from the public are welcome. “Mix and match” of the alternative design concepts is possible. Two illustrative Master Layout Plans are prepared for presentation purpose to reflect how various design concepts for the key sites can possibly be put together. The combinations are not exhaustive.

Site	Design Concept A	Design Concept B
Sites 1 and 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Hotel and Office’ • Additional Floor for Retail and Dining at Central Piers No. 4 to 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Office and Office’ • Additional Floor for Retail and Dining at Central Piers No. 4 to 6
Site 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Landscape Deck, More At-grade Open Space • Retail and Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger Landscaped Deck • Retail and Office

Site	Design Concept A	Design Concept B
Site 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original Site Area • Include Old SF Clock Tower • Waterfront-related Commercial and Retail Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Site Area (due to re-assembled QP and realignment of Road P2) • Not include Old SF Clock Tower • Waterfront-related Commercial and Retail Development
Site 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and Culture-related Uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and Culture-related Uses
Site 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront-related Commercial and Leisure Uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront-related Commercial and Leisure Uses
Site 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront Promenade: ‘Urban Park’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront Promenade: ‘Urban Green’
Site 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecourt for the Re-assembled QP and Central Piers No. 9 and 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance and Viewing Deck for Central Piers No. 9 and 10

Site	Design Concept A	Design Concept B
QP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the Sea between Central Piers No. 9 and 10 • Revived Pier Function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original Location • Sitting-out Area
Old SF Clock Tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Site 4 along the Visual Corridor for City Hall and Edinburgh Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to Original Location as original location will conflict with drainage culvert and the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel (AREOT)

Sites 1 and 2

13. To meet the public aspirations for giving a facelift and enhancing vibrancy of the ferry pier area and adjoining waterfront, the key design features for the sites are to include an additional floor at Central Piers No. 4 to 6 for retail, dining and other waterfront-related uses as well as a Pier Walk along the waterfront. To enhance connectivity to the ferry piers, an elevated walkway system is proposed at Sites 1 and 2 and the nearby waterfront.
14. To the north of IFC II, alternative design concepts are proposed for office/hotel developments:

Concept A: “Hotel and Office”

- An 18-storey hotel to respond to the demand for hotel development in Central and to add vibrancy with variety in uses in the waterfront
- A 30-storey office tower with a bus terminus on the ground level to meet the high demand for Grade A offices in Central

Concept B: “Office and Office”

- Two office buildings of 16 and 30 storeys (the latter including a bus terminus on the ground level) to meet the high demand for Grade A offices in Central

Site 3

15. To meet the public aspirations for reduced building footprint and building bulk on this large site, the key design features include reduced development intensity and smaller building massing with 4 to 6 separated and interconnected smaller blocks. To enhance accessibility to the waterfront, a green minibus terminus and a coach and taxi drop-off on the ground level, public car parking spaces for reprovisioning Star Ferry Carpark, ancillary car park at basements and underground pedestrian connection to the MTR Central Station are proposed.
16. To ensure visual permeability to the harbour, 4 to 6 office/retail blocks of 8 to 10 storeys featuring cascading design, setbacks, voids, sunken plazas, roof gardens, etc. are proposed in the west. In the east, a

low-rise landscaped deck (12 to 16 mPD in height and with retail below) and at-grade landscaped pedestrian areas with two alternative concepts.

Concept A: Reduced Landscaped Deck

- A series of public open space at ground level
- Extension of Statue Square to the waterfront
- Pedestrian movement through at-grade pedestrian crossings, elevated walkways and subway
- Visual corridor from Des Voeux Road Central to the waterfront
- Building interaction at street level

Concept B: Larger Landscaped Deck

- Public open space primarily on landscaped deck
- Continuous open space extended from Statue Square to the waterfront
- Unimpeded pedestrian movement to the waterfront separated from vehicular traffic
- Visual corridor maintained from the landscaped deck
- Building interaction at both street and deck levels

Site 4

17. The key design features include 1 to 3-storey waterfront-related commercial and leisure development named “Harbour Place” for alfresco dining, café and other leisure and tourism uses to enrich the harbourfront experience. Small and separated blocks are proposed

within the site and a wide view corridor from City Hall to the harbour.

18. Two alternative design concepts are proposed. For Concept A, the old SF Clock Tower together with a Clock Tower Gallery will be included in the site and there will be comparatively smaller and more separated blocks. For Concept B, the old SF Clock Tower is not included in the site. There will be fewer but larger blocks on a smaller site area due to the realigned Road P2 to accommodate the re-assembled QP at the original location.

Sites 5 and 6

19. For Site 5, in response to the public aspirations, three separate blocks of 13 to 17 storeys primarily for arts and cultural facilities are proposed to harmonize with the Tamar development and the waterfront. The key design features also include a wide landscaped deck, footbridges and at-grade crossings connecting the site, CITIC Tower and other adjoining developments with the new harbourfront.
20. For Site 6, the key design features include a Bayside Walk along the harbourfront with boardwalks, public landing steps, a floating market as tourist attractions, and small-scale commercial and leisure uses in the form of a cluster of 1 to 3 storey blocks named “Marine Place” near the harbourfront for alfresco dining, outdoor seating and outdoor performance. There will be an open theatre and outdoor performance area in the vicinity of the proposed HKAPA Extension and proposed Hong Kong Visual Arts Education Centre to strengthen the arts and cultural identity of the area.

Site 7

21. The key design features meeting the public aspirations include promenade, open space, boardwalk, viewing deck, seating, etc along the waterfront. The PLA berth will be part of the promenade and open for public access when it is not in military use. A reserve has been provided for environmentally friendly transport.
22. There will be extensive harbourside public open space in a luxuriant landscape setting with two alternative design concepts.

Concept A: Urban Park

- A park setting with a greater variety of nodal attractions including ferry plaza, featured piazza, waterfront event plaza, viewing platform, etc., in addition to flat and undulating lawns and other landscape features
- More activity spaces

Concept B: Urban Green

- A more natural form of landscaping to provide a city oasis as an icon of the harbourfront
- More greenery and more passive recreational and leisure uses

Site 8

23. The alternative design concepts for Site 8 will hinge on whether QP will be re-assembled at the waterfront between Central Piers No. 9

and 10 (to be detailed in paragraphs 26 to 33 below). For Concept A, Site 8 will be the forecourt for the re-assembled QP at the waterfront with the pier function of QP revived. For Concept B, QP will not be re-assembled at the waterfront and Site 8 will be developed with a small structure of 1 to 2 storeys as an entrance and viewing deck for Central Piers No. 9 and 10.

Development Intensities

24. As gathered from the Stage 1 Public Engagement and other public views on the development of Central, there are strong public aspirations for lower development intensity, less congested massing, and more open space at the new Central harbourfront. As recommended in the Hong Kong 2030 Study, it is important to ensure a steady supply of land for “Super Grade A Offices” in the CBD to sustain the growth of our financial and business services sector and maintain our position as a choice location for corporate headquarters. There are different land use needs on the new Central harbourfront. In order to strike a balance, the Study proposes reducing a total of 86,235m² GFA, or by 25% of the maximum GFA permissible under the OZPs for five sites.

Site	Original Estimated GFA (m ²) [^] (A)	Current Proposed GFA (m ²) (B)		Difference (m ²) (B - A)
1	92,465 [#]	92,200	34,200	-265
2	(117,240 [@])		58,000	(-25,040 [@])
3	190,000 [#]	157,400		-32,600
4	14,580	7,500		-7,080
6	24,415	2,900 [*]		-21,515
Total	321,460[#] (-346,235[@])	260,000		-61,460 (-86,235[@])

[^] Estimated GFA conveyed to the then Legislative Council Panel on Planning, Lands and Works in June 2007, unless otherwise stated.

[#] Public transport facilities were excluded from GFA calculation in the original estimated GFA.

[@] The estimated GFA for Site 1 and Site 2 was 55,740 m² and 61,500 m² respectively according to the approved OZP.

^{*} GFA is reduced due to reduction of the reclamation extent and site area.

25. Under current practice, the building massing could be significantly increased by GFA concessions including non-accountable GFA, GFA exemption and bonus, etc. In deriving the optimal development intensity for the key sites, the building massing that is desirable to achieve the urban design objectives and the effect of the GFA concessions have been iteratively tested and assessed. Based on the controlled massing approach, the permitted GFA has taken into account GFA concessions for the necessary provision of plant rooms and pipe ducts, amenity and green features, ancillary car parking, as

well as hotel back-of-house and other supporting facilities. However, there would not be any GFA “bonus” or exemption for public passage. Also, public car park and public transport interchange will be accountable in accordance with current policy.

Re-assembling QP and Reconstructing Old SF Clock Tower

26. In the Stage 1 Public Engagement, there were diverse views on the re-assembly of QP and reconstruction of the old SF Clock Tower. Some preferred the original locations. Some supported the waterfront locations and reviving the pier function of QP. Other suggestions include no re-assembly or reconstruction.

27. Two alternative design concepts are proposed:

Concept A: QP by the Harbour

28. Concept A is proposed to meet the public aspirations for re-assembling QP at the harbourfront, reviving the pier function of QP, and maintaining an axial relationship among City Hall, the old SF Clock Tower and the re-assembled QP.

29. The key features include re-assembling QP between Central Piers No. 9 and 10 with revived pier function. The design of Central Piers No. 9 and 10 will be integrated with that of the re-assembled QP. The old SF Clock Tower will be reconstructed in the western portion of Site 4 and a Clock Tower Gallery included as part of the development to exhibit the salvaged items. The reconstructed Clock Tower will

stand as a focal point with a linear axial relationship with City Hall and the re-assembled QP.

30. The following considerations could be taken into account in considering this design concept:

- (a) QP is re-assembled with the original harbour setting;
- (b) the role of QP as a public pier is maintained;
- (c) the re-assembly works will involve the reconstruction of seawall caissons and ground stabilization works as well as the refurbishment of Central Piers No. 9 and 10;
- (d) the estimated re-assembly and associated costs arising from (c) above are about HK\$220 million;
- (e) the construction works to re-assemble QP are estimated to be completed in late 2012 (assuming the re-assembly location would be determined by end 2008);
- (f) Road P2 will be completed in late 2009 as scheduled; and
- (g) the reconstructed old SF Clock Tower will become the focal point at the new harbourfront and maintain visual connection with the harbour.

Concept B: QP at the Original Location

31. Concept B is proposed to meet the public aspirations for re-assembling QP at its original location, reconstructing the old SF Clock Tower close to its original location (reconstruction at the original location is not possible due to underground infrastructure), and maintaining its relationship with City Hall and Edinburgh Place.

32. The key features include re-assembling QP at its original location as a sitting-out area. A water feature around the re-assembled QP is proposed (shallow water only due to conflict with planned underground infrastructure). The old SF Clock Tower will be reconstructed close to its original location at Site 3 together with a Clock Tower Gallery to exhibit the salvaged items. The landscaped deck would include design to increase the visibility of the Clock Tower.
33. The key considerations are:
- (a) QP will maintain its original location but will lose the harbour setting and pier function;
 - (b) the relationship with City Hall and Edinburgh Place is maintained;
 - (c) the re-assembly works will involve the realignment of Road P2 northwards. The realignment requires gazetting the amendment to Road P2. Advance works of the AREOT are also required before the re-assembly;
 - (d) the estimated re-assembly and associated costs arising from (c) above are about HK\$200 million;
 - (e) the advance works of the AREOT are estimated to be completed in late 2012. The construction works of the re-assembled QP are estimated to be completed in late 2013 (assuming the re-assembly location would be determined by end 2008);
 - (f) there will be delay of completion of Road P2; and
 - (g) the old SF Clock Tower will be constructed close to its original location.

A Balanced and Sustainable Approach

34. A preliminary sustainability assessment has been carried out for the refined urban design framework, which is based on the sustainable design assessment principles derived from the Stage 1 Public Engagement of the Study:
- (a) Diverse uses and activities
 - (b) Respecting the natural context and existing urban fabric
 - (c) Promoting harbourfront enhancement
 - (d) Respecting cultural heritage
 - (e) Ease of pedestrian access to harbourfront
 - (f) Promoting environmentally friendly building design and greening

These principles are consistent with TPB's Vision Statement for Victoria Harbour, HEC's Harbour Planning Principles and Guidelines as well as the Urban Design Guidelines in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines.

35. The preliminary sustainability assessment indicates that the refined urban design framework would bring a range of benefits particularly in the economic, social, cultural and mobility aspects, such as generating more employment opportunities, accommodating leisure, cultural and government facilities, creating a significant landscaped area and quality waterfront at the heart of the city, cultivating a sense

of place, meeting the need for essential strategic transport infrastructure, and facilitating ease of movement. Implications on the environmental and natural resources aspects would be kept to the minimum with the incorporation of environmental mitigation measures as recommended in the approved Environmental Impact Assessment. Further sustainability assessment will be conducted after the Stage 2 Public Engagement in drawing up the recommendations, taking into account comments received in the public engagement.

Stage 2 Public Engagement

36. The Stage 2 Public Engagement was launched on 11 April 2008. It will last for three months. To facilitate the public to have a better understanding and visual appreciation of the design proposals, a public exhibition will be the focus of the public engagement events, which is first held at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre and then at the Queensway Government Offices with physical models, virtual interactive 3D models and other illustrative materials. It will be supplemented by roving exhibitions. Focus group workshop and community engagement forum will also be held to facilitate public discussion. Details of the public and roving exhibitions as well as the workshop and forum are at the **Appendix**.
37. In parallel, briefings will be/have been made to the TPB, HEC and its TGUDS, the relevant Legislative Council Panels, 18 District Councils, the Antiquities Advisory Board, and other relevant advisory bodies and professional institutes.

38. Public views will be collected through different channels in a systematic and representative manner, including the use of comment cards, interview questionnaires, and telephone interviews.
39. A concluding forum is planned towards the end of the Stage 2 Public Engagement to consolidate public views and to facilitate consensus building before drawing up the final recommendations and proposals.

Advice Sought

40. Members are invited to consider and comment on the study proposals for the Stage 2 Public Engagement.

Attachment I Stage 1 Public Engagement: Summary Report
(English version)

Attachment II Stage 2 Public Engagement: Consultation Digest
(English version)

Appendix Schedule of Key Public Engagement Activities

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
MAY 2008

Schedule of Key Public Engagement Activities

Public Exhibitions

Period: 12.4.2008 to 25.5.2008
Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, Kowloon Park, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Period: 27.5.2008 to 10.7.2008
D/F, High Block, Queensway Government Offices, Admiralty, Hong Kong

Roving Exhibitions

Period: 15.4.2008 to 19.4.2008
HSBC Main Building, Ground Plaza, 1 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong

Period: 20.4.2008 to 25.4.2008
IFC One, 1 Harbour View Street, Central, Hong Kong

Period: 6.5.2008 to 14.5.2008
Exhibition Hall, City Hall Low Block, 5 Edinburgh Place, Central, Hong Kong

Period: 2.6.2008 to 6.6.2008
Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Exhibition Gallery,
4/F Administration Building, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Period: 14.6.2008 to 22.6.2008
Sha Tin Town Hall, 1 Yuen Wo Road, Shatin, New Territories

Focus Group Workshop

Date: 26 April 2008
Time: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Venue: Permanent Exhibition Gallery, 1/F Hong Kong Heritage Discovery
Centre, Kowloon Park, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Community Engagement Forum

Date: 24 May 2008
Time: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Venue: Permanent Exhibition Gallery, 1/F Hong Kong Heritage Discovery
Centre, Kowloon Park, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

(Translation)

Islands District Council
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Motion concerning “The New Central Harbourfront Project”

Chairman of the Islands District Council informs the Council that at the meeting to be held on 16 June 2008, he will move the following motion:

“ The Islands District Council supports the construction of a New Central Harbourfront that is easily accessible. As an extension of the commercial centre, its lower development intensity and green environment will enable members of the public to enjoy the scenic beauty and quality facilities provided thereat and thus creating a harbour amenity belonging to all. The Islands District Council also hopes that the Queen’s Pier will be relocated at the side of the Central Harbour.”

The motion has been seconded by Islands District Councillor, Mr. Lee Chi-fung.

Islands District Council Secretariat

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Date: 30 May 2008