Title of talk

“Policies and examples of some representative projects for the preservation and revitalization of historical buildings in Hong Kong”

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City University of Hong Kong
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Victoria Harbour before WWII

Victoria Harbour in mid 1960s

Historic view of Hong Kong
Harbourfront in Central, before WWII

Blake Pier (1963-1993)

Harbourfront in Central, mid 1960s
Coastline along the Victoria Harbour advancing seaward from 1950s to 2000 by reclamation
Harbourfront in Central, early 2000s
Harbourfront in Central, late 2000s

Harbourfront is still changing, view in 2005
Harbourfront is still changing, view in 2008

Harbourfront is still changing, view in 2010
Harbourfront is still changing, view in 2011

Hong Kong’s past glory
Hong Kong’s past cityscape, folklore and daily living

What kind of historical buildings can be found in Hong Kong?
Various types of historical buildings in Hong Kong

- Tradition row houses,
  Residential

Buildings with strong colonial influence
Buildings in western style as part of the community facilities

Buildings in western style of non-residential nature
Buildings in western style – previous military facilities

Original Murray Building in Garden Road, Central, 1970s

Murray Building being re-erected in Stanley in 2002.
Churches

The famous Man Mo Temple and the Queen Goddess Temple
Temples

Temple in Sai Pin Wai, Yuen Long
Schools and universities

Architectural Style with American and Neo-classical Influences
Private houses with interesting Chinese and Western mix
Private houses belong to “Big Families”

Traditional Chinese houses
Who is responsible to take care of these heritages?

Except for those belonged to the government, there was no specific government body to take care and monitor historic buildings or properties with heritage values before the 1990s. As a result, countless number of valuable assets were removed for the sake of development.

At present, the government body responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of matters related to the conservation of historical and heritage sites and buildings in Hong Kong is the Heritage’s Office, which was set up in mid-2008 under the Development Bureau.

The role of the Office is to provide dedicated support to Secretary for Development in implementing the policy on heritage conservation and keeping it under constant review, taking forward a series of new initiatives as announced in the Chief Executive's Policy Address in 2007, as well as serving as a focal point of contact, both locally and overseas.
General policy adopted:
To protect, conserve and revitalize as appropriate historical and heritage sites and buildings through relevant and sustainable approaches for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. In implementing this policy, due regard should be given to development needs in the public interest, respect for private property rights, budgetary considerations, cross-sector collaboration and active engagement of stakeholders and the general public.
What has been done in the area:

1. Identify and shortlist buildings with heritage and historic value

2. Preservation and re-use of buildings with special significance under close coordination/collaboration with appropriate bodies or authorities. (e.g. Urban Renewal Authority)

3. Revitalize specially identified cases using partnership scheme

Identify and shortlisting buildings with heritage and historic value

The Antiquities Advisory Board under the Antiquities and Monuments Office of Leisure and Cultural Services Department has conducted an territory-wide survey from 1996-2000 on historical buildings in Hong Kong built before 1950. Some 8800 buildings were recorded.

A more detail survey was conducted and **1444 buildings with higher heritage value were being short-listed** in 2002-2004.

An expert panel comprising historians, architects, planners and engineers has been formed since 2005 to undertake an in-depth assessment of the heritage value of these buildings. A detail report was prepared in 2009.
The selected buildings are graded into 3 categories according to their heritage value and other assessment criteria.

**Grade I** – buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible.

**Grade II** – buildings of special merit, efforts should be made to selectively preserve.

**Grade III** – buildings of some merit, preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable.
Classification of historical buildings that reflect a specific historical theme

1. Prestigious clans or families communities in rural area
2. Maritime defence before British arrival
3. Reflect establishment of colonial rule and maintenance of social stability, law and order.
4. Economic activities in the colonial period
5. Social development of the colony
6. Medical development and social health
7. Education and related reform in the colonial period
8. Hong Kong and Mainland China during the revolutionary movements
9. Military and guerilla activities during Japanese invasion and occupation
10. Hong Kong in post-war years
Classification according to architectural styles
1. Traditional Chinese
2. Victorian/Regency/Edwardian
3. Revival, various period
4. Neo-classical periods
5. Romanesque
6. Art Nuevo
7. Art Deco
8. Bauhaus
9. Colonial, various styles
10. Others…..

Classification according to building uses/functions
1. Ancestral hall
2. Chinese Temple / Churches / religious buildings / cemetery
3. Walled village
4. Village houses
5. Residence
6. Shop houses / commercial building
7. Military facilities, Chinese and Western
8. Law court / Judiciary building
9. Police station / Fire station / Prison
10. Institutional / educational facilities / schools
11. Medical / sanitary facilities
12. Transportation facilities
13. Lighthouse / marine / water works ….
14. Entertainment facilities
15. Streetscape
16. Others…..
Preservation and re-use of buildings with special significance under close coordination/collaboration with appropriate bodies or authorities.

Buildings with special historical significance are sometimes selected through good adaptive re-use in order to give these buildings a new lease of life for the enjoyment of the public. (for properties owned by government)

Examples;

1. Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery (previous Ping Shan Police Station)
2. Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre (previous Whitfield Barracks at Kowloon Park)
3. Some ancestral halls or village houses for rural families
Evaluating and assessing historic buildings through the Heritage Impact Assessment process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Features</th>
<th>Levels of Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/ Floor – Conference Room</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Glazed and paneled entrance door</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Red quarry tiled door</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Coved cornices to ceiling and beams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Wooden windows including ironmongery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Dog-leg staircase with ornamental metal balustrades leading down to 1/F Special Room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/ Floor – Rear Staircase Enclosure; Corridor; Classrooms; Girls’ Toilet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Same items as those for 2/Floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/ Floor – Main Staircase Lobby</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ 1 no. of commemorative plaque to Sir Robert Kotewall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ 1 no. of marble plaque commemorating opening of the new wing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/ Floor – Staff Room (B) (Room 306)</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Wooden windows and doors to front and rear areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Encaustic patterned floor tiles in projecting bay area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Moulded skirtings to above area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Dog-leg timber staircase, ornamental metal balustrades and moulded hardwood handrail</td>
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</table>
Revitalize specially identified cases using partnership scheme

Recent cases
1. Old Tai Po Police Station
2. Lui Seng Chun Building
3. Lai Chi Kok Hospital
4. North Kowloon Magistracy
5. Old Tai O Police Station
6. Mei Ho House
7. Pre-war residence cluster in Wan Chai
8. Former Fan Ling Magistracy

Objectives of the partnership scheme

• To preserve and put historic buildings into good and innovative use.

• To transform historic buildings into unique cultural landmarks.

• To promote active public participation in the conservation of historic buildings.

• To create job opportunities in particular at the district level.
The Scheme started in February 2008. Response from non-profit-making organizations has been overwhelming and a total of 114 applications were received for the seven Batch I historic buildings under the Scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project/Property</th>
<th>Future use</th>
<th>Operating organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Tai O Police Station</td>
<td>Tai O Heritage Hotel</td>
<td>Hong Kong Heritage Conservation Foundation Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fong Yuen Study Hall</td>
<td>Tourism and Chinese Cultural Centre cum Ma Wan Residents Museum</td>
<td>Social Service Department, Yuen Yuen Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lai Chi Kok Hospital</td>
<td>Hong Kong Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>Hong Kong Institution for Promotion of Chinese Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lui Seng Chun</td>
<td>Hong Kong Baptist University Chinese Medicine and Healthcare Centre</td>
<td>Hong Kong Baptist University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kowloon Macau</td>
<td>SCAD Hong Kong Campus</td>
<td>SCAD Foundation (HK) Ltd</td>
</tr>
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**First Batch of Historic Buildings**

As a pilot, we will start off with seven buildings:
1. Old Tai Po Police Station
2. Lui Seng Chun
3. Lai Chi Kok Hospital
4. North Kowloon Magistracy
5. Old Tai O Police Station
6. Fong Yuen Study Hall
7. Mai Ho House

**Enquiries**
We look forward to the active participation of the community.
For enquiries, please contact:
Address: Project Co-ordination & Heritage Conservation section Development Bureau 2135, Murray Building, Central
Email: nhp_enquiry@dpl.gov.hk
Phone: 2846 6239
Fax: 3167 2665

**Introduction to the Historic Buildings**

1. Old Tai Po Police Station
   - Address: No. 11, Wing Tai Kok Lane, Tai Po, N.T.
   - GFA: 1,300 sq. m.
   - Year Built: 1959
   - Grading: Grade II
   - Possible uses**: Youth hostel
   - Holiday camp
   - Educational institute

2. Lui Seng Chun
   - Address: No. 119, Lai Chi Kok Road, Mong Kok, Kowloon
   - GFA: 600 sq. m.
   - Year Built: 1931
   - Grading: Grade I
   - Possible uses**: Chinese medicine shop
   - Social services centre
   - Display centre

3. Lai Chi Kok Hospital
   - Address: No. 801, Castle Peak Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon
   - GFA: 6,500 sq. m.
   - Year Built: 1921-1924
   - Grading: Grade III
   - Possible uses**: Holiday camp
   - Hostel
   - Arts and cultural village
   - Educational institute

4. North Kowloon Magistracy
   - Address: No. 292, Tai Po Road, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon
   - GFA: 7,530 sq. m.
   - Year Built: 1969
   - Grading: Not yet graded
   - Possible uses**: Educational institute
   - Training centre
   - Antiques and art gallery

5. Old Tai O Police Station
   - Address: Shek Tai Po Street, Tai O, Lantau Island
   - GFA: 1,600 sq. m.
   - Year Built: 1902
   - Grading: Grade III
   - Possible uses*: Boutique hotel, Cafe/museum, Ecotourism

6. Fong Yuen Study Hall
   - Address: Tin Loo House, Ma Wan, Tuen Wan
   - GFA: 600 sq. m.
   - Year Built: 1920-1924
   - Grading: Not yet graded
   - Possible uses*: Small library, Study room, Community uses

7. Mai Ho House
   - Address: Block 41, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon
   - GFA: 6,750 sq. m.
   - Year Built: 1954
   - Grading: Grade I
   - Possible use*: Art Centre, Youth hostel
   (Mai Ho House is currently under the Housing Authority)

* Applicants are welcome to come up with other suggestions on the possible uses.
The Mei Ho House case

Address: Block 41, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

GFA: 6,750 sq. m.

Year Built: 1954

Previous use: Resettlement housing for low income citizen (1955 - 2000)

Grading: Grade I

Proposed uses: • Art Centre
• Youth hostel

Partnership: After submission from Non-Profit making organization, the Hong Kong Youth Hostel Association successfully got the project for operation as a city youth hostel.

The case of Mei Ho House

Convert for use as a youth hostel in 2011

The house condition in 2000 (with occupancy)

The house condition in 2008 (vacated)
This kind of resettlement houses had been home for more than 100,000 families during the 1960s.
This kind of resettlement houses had been home for more than 100,000 families during the 1960s.

Existing ground floor plan

Foot-print of central block – 10.55 m. x 5.28 m.
Ground floor plan serving as a youth hostel in the new scheme

Elevation of the youth hostel in the new scheme
Typical floor plan showing the layout of the hostel

Detail layout of dormitory
Revitalization project cases under other scheme – as part of the redevelopment plan entrusted to the Urban Renewal Authority

Woo Chun Pawn Shop in Wanchai, Hong Kong
Before the redevelopment as seen in 2003

Woo Chun Pawn Shop and its vicinity
after the redevelopment as seen in 2010
The old and present look of the Woo Chun Pawn Shop

Woo Chun Pawn Shop being preserved and served as a restaurant after the redevelopment
The interior of the restaurant –
Some queries raised – the getting of gentlization under the name of revitalization

Another pre-war building being preserved at the side street
Woo Chun Pawn Shop redevelopment

48-storey residential building replacing the previous 1950s buildings
The public space on the roof terrace of Woo Chun Pawn Shop

Revitalization project case under other scheme – another redevelopment in Yaumati, with an old pump house structure being preserved
Revitalization project cases under other scheme – under selected tenders by private developer

Previous Marine Police Headquarters, converted into a retail centre and heritage hotel
Formation of site as seen in mid 2005

Previous Marine Police Headquarters, converted into a retail centre and heritage hotel
Formation of site as seen in December 2007

Formation of site as seen in late 2008
Revitalization of the former Marine Police Headquarters project at its completion stage in May 2009.
Coffee shops and restaurants inside the heritage hotel
Restaurant inside the heritage hotel

The new public terrace garden
Other factors/cases showing the constraint and insufficiency under situation of Hong Kong to preserve historical buildings and other heritage properties

1. The adoption of Laissez-faire policy that the government does not intervene the market (property) as much as possible.

2. Land price is so huge that redeveloping any high-quality building is extremely motivating. Even the government made the same mistake before.

3. There is no governing regulation that can easily bar the property owner or developer not to knot-down a property for redevelopment.

4. Government is difficult to make a perfectly balanced policy between preserving properties with high heritage value. Even if there is policy or guideline so established, developer can easily find loops to maximize their profit due to huge profit behind. Everything is perfectly legal and legitimate.

5. Being listed or categorized as declared monument is a very sensitive issue for private property owners. Many are quite reluctant to be included in this list.
Declared Monuments

Hong Kong has many historical monuments which need proper preservation. According to the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, the Antiquities Authority may, after consulting the Antiquities Advisory Board and with the approval of the Chief Executive as well as the publication of the notice in government gazette, legally declare a place to be protected. The Antiquities Authority is then empowered to prevent alterations, or to impose conditions upon any proposed alterations as he thinks fit, in order to protect the monument. Up to now, there are a total of 94 declared monuments.

Some loss glory of Hong Kong that still existed in mid 1970s.

- The Hong Kong Club building
- The Old Central Post Office
- Previous Lane Crawford Building
An unlisted historical building – the Holy Spirit Seminary in Aberdeen

A case from a narrow escape – The King Yin Lei Mansion
An elegant pre-war building in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong – exist no more, being demolished in 2005

Hoping that the above presentation can provide audience with a better picture of what has been done in Hong Kong, as well as the limitations, when implementing preservation and revitalization projects for buildings with heritage value.

Thank you.
If further information regarding the similar topics, please visit the following websites for references

1. personal homepage of Raymond Wong at City University of Hong Kong using this links:
   http://personal.cityu.edu.hk/~bswmwong/contents/studies_city.html
   http://personal.cityu.edu.hk/~bswmwong/pl.html
   http://personal.cityu.edu.hk/~bswmwong/

2. Web-page of Heritage Office, Hong Kong Government