

can still charge you premium. So it is not too different between lease modifications and consent, except the consent is much quicker.

6. Land exchange - It is simple, you surrender your piece of land and it become government land and I can re-grant it to you. The reason why you need to do this process is because sometimes you assemble your land in different lots and you need to surrender to me so that I re-grant it to you as a whole lot, so that you can develop it as a single development lot. However, sometimes we change your lot boundaries as a result, because sometimes you want me to give you some government land nearby or adjoining to form a piece of coherent land to develop. The re-grant is a new grant with new terms and conditions, normally for 50 years, except for the special purpose use.

Just now I heard the honorable secretary talk about the **revitalization of industrial buildings**. The revitalization has taken effect from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2013. It is a 3 years scheme, administered by the Lands Department as the landlord, and we are implementing it through 2 ways. One is through lease modifications on the land exchange for the redevelopment of an industrial lot in a non-industrial zone. Or if you just don't want to knock it down, you keep the building frame, provided the building is older than 15 years and is situated in the industrial zone, commercial zone, or zone for 'other specified uses', you can come to us and I will give you a waiver. A waiver means that within the life time of the building you can keep it, you can revitalize, keep it but change the use of the building from the industrial use to non-industrial use. Normally a waiver is waiver fees chargeable but this time the government is waiving the waiver as a special waiver which only lasts until the life time of the building.

After the building is knocked down, you may apply for the redevelopment of the lot concerned for non-industrial uses up to or less than the maximum permissible development intensity permitted under the

relevant statutory town plan or the Buildings Ordinance ("BO").

For architects involved in building development, you normally go through **three processes**, you have to process your **building plan**, your **landscape proposal** and you may help the client to get the **Certificate of Compliance (CC)**.

Now building plans - The Buildings Department (BD) shares through the central processing system the building plans with us and the Planning Department. The BD looks at the Building Ordinance, the Planning Department looks at the Town Planning Ordinance, we look at the Lease and try to give the AP response within 10 weeks. So when there is Master Layout Plan requirement, then it will only be processed after the approval and the conditional acceptance of the Master Layout Plan. We check the height, the GFA, the site coverage and for the complex case, we refer to the BC III, chaired by our Deputy Director Mr. Graham Ho. Now the AP can also attend the BC III.

We always have to consult the Lease, to see what the lease says. But I would give you some **general guides**. Normally the height of the building is counted from the lowest formation level (including stilts) to the highest point (main roof) of the building. Number of stories again is counted from the lowest formation level. All floors including basement and carparking floors, are floors accountable.

Unless exempted under the lease, all components of a building, including projections and underground structures are GFA/SC accountable. For utilities platforms, curtains walls and non-fabricated walls which are GFA exempted by BA, we are prepared to follow them normally. Staircases, lift shafts and lobbies exclusively serving GFA non-accountable areas such as carparking floor and/or mechanical floors, will be exempted for GFA (but not SC) if their design and disposition are acceptable. For recreation facilities. Unless specifically exempted under the Lease, clubhouse are GFA and SC counted .

Now, landscaping proposal is something architects are concerned about, we normally rely on the preservation clause to say that if you want to tamper with trees, you need get our approval first. It's good that we now got a team of trees experts. But of course you can do self certification by getting your own registered landscaping architects to certify the completion of the tree works and with a report given to the DLO, the DLO would accept it.

Now, application for CC is not too difficult, we have issued a practice note (PN 8/2000), a 'Checklist for Issue of CC'. Normally we check whether the positive covenants had been met before we issue the Certificate of Compliance. Another thing is you make sure that you don't encroach the government lands, we normally confirm the issue of CC or provide reasons for rejection in 10 weeks.

Think I have briefly covered all the aspects that you might be interested about land supply for private development. Thank you.

Advice to Young Architects

Live Simply
Love Generously
Care Deeply
Speak Kindly



Courtesy visit to Lands Department on 16 Dec 2010 by HKIA Mr. Franky Choi and Mr. Franklin Yu

Planning for the Future

Interview with Mr. Jimmy Leung, JP Director of Planning, HKSAR Government

Interviewer: Mr. Franky Choi, Mr. Franklin Yu

Date : 16 November 2010

Venue : Planning Department

Interviewee: Mr. Jimmy Leung, JP

Interviewer : Mr. Franky Choi [HKIA Journal Editor-in-Chief]

Mr. Franklin Yu [HKIA Board of External Affairs Deputy Chair]

■ L = Jimmy Leung

■ H = HKIA



Vision

H: When you took over this department, what was your expectation and vision for the future?

L: I took up my post since end June 2010. Major decisions on the vision and future directions of the department have been decided collectively to ensure continuity even with changes in personnel. First and foremost, our task is to continue to provide good planning services to the community. In the context of post-war Hong Kong, we had to cope with rapid population growth. Our priority then was to create land for housing and industrial uses to meet the basic needs of society. But in recent years, we are talking more about quality of life as well as sustainability. We play our part in contributing to protecting the environment, conserving the natural and heritage resources, providing good public spaces while making sure land is available to meet Hong Kong's socio-economic needs.

H: Could you share with us an insight into the strategic planning and core values contained in the Hong Kong 2030 Plan?

L: HK2030 Study is a strategic study for the whole of Hong Kong. We started off the study around the turn of the century. It was really an articulation of the vision that the Commission on Strategic Development formulated in the year 2000. The vision is to develop Hong Kong as Asia's world city and a major city in China. We have identified 3 directions in the HK2030 Study - enhancing economic competitiveness, providing a quality living environment, as well as strengthening links with the mainland. Under these directions,

we have recommended specific themes and measures to help realise the vision.

Mainland and the World

H: In searching for a new planning focus for the future of Hong Kong, how much discussion was there between the Planning Department and China government?

L: There have been frequent exchanges between Hong Kong and various provinces, municipalities and cities in the Mainland. In conducting the HK 2030 Study, we had consulted our neighbouring cities more than once. There is much we can learn from one another.

To sidetrack a bit, you may be interested to know that in the ranking surveys conducted by the Globalisation and World City Research Network, Hong Kong is consistently placed as the 3rd financial and service centre in the world. It is not quite to the level of New York and London yet but is at the top of the 2nd tier, ahead of Tokyo, Singapore and other cities in US and Europe. The study predicts that if Hong Kong goes on to develop like it is now, it would probably be the 3rd largest financial and service centre in the world. This will be a huge opportunity for us riding on the rapid development of China's economy, but at the same time it's also a challenge. The challenge is not just in terms of providing Grade A offices, excellent infrastructure, friendly business environment, low tax regime, rule of law, multi-national corporations (MNCs) also look for the quality of life that a city has to offer to their staff. In other words, cultural facilities, parks and gardens, the availability of international schools and environmental quality and cosmopolitan lifestyle are all important

elements. Detailed planning of the West Kowloon Cultural District is underway. Upon completion, this will further enhance Hong Kong's art and cultural activities which will be an added attraction to MNCs to set up their regional headquarters in Hong Kong. Planning Department will play our part to make Hong Kong a truly world city.

H: How much of the competition and cooperation among Chinese cities includes Hong Kong?

L: There is always competition not just with mainland cities but other cities in the region. On the other hand, there is cooperation especially with the cities in the Pearl River Delta. Hong Kong is so small physically. We need to leverage on our neighbouring cities. Through market forces, industries in Hong Kong have moved to the PRD cities in the last 30 years. At the same time Hong Kong has been transformed to a service economy. Take research and development of high technology industries as another example, this can be done in the Science Park of Hong Kong, but it will be more cost-effective to have production in the Pearl River Delta cities. Surely there will be ample opportunities for cooperation on many areas ranging from infrastructure to tourism with other cities in the region.

H: In terms of land use planning, how much core cross-border project collaboration is there with Shenzhen's government?

L: At the moment, we are conducting a study with Shenzhen on the Lok Ma Chau Loop. Towards the end of this year, we shall embark on a public engagement exercise on the initial concept plan of the Loop simultaneously in Hong Kong and

Shenzhen. We intend to develop the area for higher education, complemented by research and development of high-tech industries as well as cultural and creative industries.

The Hong Kong Context

H: What are the principles guiding the formulation of height limits imposed in the Outline Zoning Plans?

L: We look at a number of factors, for instance, on the Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, the ridgeline of the mountain backdrop is a visual quality that we wish to preserve such that views of about 20% of the ridgeline at major vantage points can be maintained. In a compact city like Hong Kong, good air ventilation ensures a comfortable wind environment at street level. That is why we also conduct air ventilation study to identify breezeway and wind corridors for incorporation into outline zoning plans.

Urban design is another major consideration. We don't want to see buildings going higher and higher and blocking the view of one another. A stepped height profile is the starting point. We also respect what has already been built, so there won't be the sort of a uniform height band. There will be variations in building height. Other factors like development rights of individual lots and local character of a district are also considerations that are taken into account when imposing height limits in the Outline Zoning Plans.

Planning Intervention

H: There are very many stakeholders involved in the planning process. Apart from the Planning Department acting on behalf of the Government, there are different organizations: NGOs, pressure groups and even political parties. Some even have budgets to hire firms to prepare planning studies for them. Consequently the Planning Department does not only verbal or written comments, it also receives detailed plans to consider. How does the Planning Department take into account all the different stakeholders' views?

L: It all depends on which context you are talking about. For a planning study, the engagement process is conducted on an administrative basis. We are open-minded and always welcome views from the public, business community, NGOs and green groups. Indeed, some submissions we received contained detailed reports which had been compiled professionally.

In terms of plan-making and processing of planning applications, there are prescribed

procedures under the Town Planning Ordinance that we have to follow. Again this is a very transparent process. All the views received will be submitted to the Town Planning Board for consideration.

Planning is basically a kind of public policy formulation. Our role is to balance different interests of the community, while professionally recommends what is best for the decision makers. There is always tradeoff in the process and we do recognise that we cannot please everybody.

H: With reference to the undeveloped land in the North Lantau Area close to the new boundary control point at the Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai Bridge, how will these lands be developed to maximize their potential in terms of their special geographical location?

L: Under the broad framework of the Hong Kong 2030 Study, we have identified a number of new development areas (NDAs). The Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and the Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling are what we call the 3-in-1 NDA. We are in the final stage of the planning and engineering study. Upon completion of the study, we would start implementing the proposals. We are going to start a planning and engineering study on the Hung Shui Kiu NDA, which is situated in the north-west New Territories. We shall also commence a study on the remaining area of the Tung Chung New Town next year. In determining the land uses for the area, the Study will no doubt examine the opportunities offered by the HK-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

We have just completed a planning study on the Frontier Closed Area or FCA for short. What we are proposing in that study is to maintain a green area between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. But we would allow some developments along the major transport corridors linking the two cities. We call these "development corridors". On the eastern side of the FCA where it's basically mountains and government land, we propose to extend the country park into that area, which will link up with the Wutongshan National Park in Shenzhen. On the western side of the FCA, we recommend preservation of wetland at the Deep Bay Area. There is of course the proposed development at the Lok Ma Chau Loop that I have mentioned earlier, for higher education, R&D, cultural and creative industry uses. Our view is that up to the year 2030, we should have sufficient land to broadly meet our needs. As we don't wish to see urban sprawl, we would like to concentrate future developments in a few areas and preserve the rest as far as possible. However, if our long-term needs cannot be met, we will have

to open up new development areas in an orderly and sustainable manner.

Enhancement of Collaboration

H: How can our institute be more supportive to your department?

L: For any planning studies or any planning policies that we propose, we would welcome professional input from the HKIA. I notice HKIA plays a very pro-active role in putting forth ideas on the measures related to the sustainable built environment. That is a good thing. That is what the community expects of professional institutes by giving professional and impartial views.

Advice to Young Architects

H: Can you share some words with our young architects?

L: The challenge we face in HK with a highly compact built environment is to achieve sustainability and to help mitigate climate change while trying to satisfy our rising community needs. So I hope young architects can stretch their imagination in designing buildings with low or zero-carbon emission in the HK context and designing an individual building in relation to its surroundings as if it is part of an integrated whole, thus helping to create a quality built environment for the residents of Hong Kong.

Interview text edited by Planning Department and HKIA Mr. Franklin Yu, Mr. Franky Choi.



心繫生活每一程

友訪 何恆光先生

港鐵公司物業總監

訪問者: 黃寶龍先生, 蔡錦龍先生, 蔡宏興先生

日期 : 2010年10月30日
 地點 : 港鐵公司中環辦事處
 受訪者: 何恆光先生
 訪問者: 黃寶龍先生 [香港建築師學會前會長]
 蔡錦龍先生 [香港建築師學報主編]
 蔡宏興先生 [香港建築師學會出版及資訊委員會主席]



■ 何=何恆光
 ■ 建=香港建築師學會

港鐵發展路向

建: 港鐵公司對香港發展非常重要貢獻, 請總括現在與未來的發展計畫。

何: 地鐵公司發展可以總括分為3個階段: 70年代政府提出建地鐵, 當時返工, 返學, 搭船, 搭車非常緊迫, 但反對的人表示發展成本貴, 於1975年公司成立, 1979年通車, 舒緩道路上的壓力, 同時有高度效率的運輸系統幫助香港提升GDP。於80年代, 地鐵是“綫跟人走”, 住得人多的地點便建鐵路, 由於工程非常困難, 甚至會影響工程範圍周邊的生意好幾年。地鐵落成後情況便有所不同, 城市以地鐵站伸延方向發展。

在我於91年加入地鐵公司時為第二階段, 地鐵是“人跟綫走”, 主要有機場快綫及東涌綫, 包括香港站, 九龍站, 奧運站, 青衣站, 東涌站等。我們認為應該由地鐵綫帶動發展要求, 帶動人流, 這樣才是成功策略, 並創造新的城市核心地區, 例如國金IFC便帶動Central Business District 移到新海旁地段。這階段亦包括機場快綫及將軍澳綫, 而將軍澳則是同時建樓, 同時建鐵路, 配合整個城市規劃時間表。

到了近期, 我們預算建5條新綫, 包括高鐵, 西港島綫, 南港島綫(東段), 觀塘綫延綫及沙中綫。發展方向為整體鐵路策略以補以前鐵路未到達之處。將來由香港到北京坐高鐵只需10多個小時, 那你會坐飛機還是

高鐵? 中國高鐵水平超過很多世界發達國家的技術水平, 將來香港連接這個高鐵系統, 對香港整體發展很有幫助, 因為打通經脈後, 交通系統的一個小時交通網的經濟圈效應會非常厲害。現在香港的鐵路運輸量為約400萬以上人次, 而本地機車的數量約為50萬輛, 換句話說, 大部分人比較喜歡搭公共交通運輸如港鐵等。

港鐵鐵路及物業發展模式

建: 港鐵公司的鐵路及物業發展模式, 與政府的長遠政策如何配合?

何: 我們合作關係很好, 政府有Railway Development Strategy 2000及Hong Kong 2030 Study等, 以鐵路為城市發展骨幹, 交通便利後樓價便會升, 由於更加方便, 所以更多人願意住得更遠一點, 這樣便會帶動經濟。地鐵發展鐵路與物業的模式Rail and Property Model, 全世界很多城市感到羨慕不已, 我不敢自己讚自己, 我想除日本外, 很難做到真正的上蓋物業與鐵路無縫連接。如果大規模發展的話, 道路、鐵路、商場、住宅、辦公等同步啟動, 可以造成很大的經濟效益。香港政府由開始到現在透過港鐵而獲得的剩餘收入達到2000億港元, 由於我們將公司的財務國際化, 政府不用掏錢來起鐵路。第一個‘win’便是政府擁有各方收益及二百多公里鐵路。發展商則得到第二個‘win’, 在參與物業發展時, 得到項目利潤; 第三個‘win’是市民可收益于更多優質地鐵上蓋

樓宇, 我們同時提供嚴謹物業管理服務, 各方面都有好處。在內地的規劃用地只能作一個發展功能, 而不能如香港一樣將地鐵上蓋作另類用途如住宅等, 如要改變便是全國性, 需要在制度上慢慢改變。

建: 在最近的西鐵綫發展如何?

何: 因為西鐵是政府擁有的, 政府要求建細單位, 我們便按既定要求去做。在將軍澳的經驗, 最初是細單位需求較大, 因為這是兩夫婦搬入時的要求, 因為人口變化同理人係生活上要求, 在有下一代時, 他們便換較大的800-900呎樓, 以滿足家庭的新需求。我們認為市場主導很重要, 因為打通經脈後, 上水及粉嶺已是很方便的地區, 很多國內人士置業。在考慮香港的發展亦要同時留意鄰近發展及需求。在New York上班的人不一定住在Manhattan, 可能是住在鄰近交通方便的New Jersey。

建: 地鐵公司如何管理現有物業?

何: 我們一般會隔5年翻新上蓋物業外牆, 商場則是7年便翻新一次, 如荃灣站商場翻新等, 如果不翻新便會給時代淘汰。同時很多標準隨着歲月及潮流改變, 例如以前流行大百貨公司及大酒樓, 現在精品商場及酒樓比較受落。我們需要堅持市場定位, 就算在購買力不是很強的地點, 我們會定高一線, 每個商場擁有獨特個性, 在清潔, 保安, 裝修及引入客戶方面, 我們將格局改變,

吸引力與人流便會同時改變，而上蓋物業也會增值。

建築設計心得

建: 施政報告提出對樓宇可以豁免的限制，對建築及售樓面積有何特別影響？

何: 政府縮窄‘發水’的原意是好的，因為你買樓買一千呎，沒理由只得700呎或者800呎。但港鐵現在面對的困難是：已獲審批總體規劃MLP，並已安排分期發展，現在不是那麼容易改 MLP 及改動部署。我們東鐵及西鐵加起來有30,000個單位，如果全部MLP及圖則重畫要很長的時間。其實只要政府實測實買，以實用面積計算便可以避免‘發水樓’的問題。現在新樓賣得較貴，是因為會所及大堂等設施較好，我認為應以市場提供不同選擇予買家自行決定。而環保設計方面應該是較為彈性，以市場需要而定。

建: 你認為香港設計師如何可以做得更好？

何: 第一，如果政府鼓勵城市設計做得好一點，條例要改變而過於嚴苛；第二，設計師要有創造性。在英國我們去考察Bull Ring，以用家為主導設計主題，有很多藝術品，

很好的行業配對，空間比例恰到好處，非常舒適及人性化，於是我們找這位設計師到香港為我們設計商場。他們的設計顧及人的需要，整個設計流線及空間感層次編排設計得非常好。其實我們去過全世界的重點商場，研究人家成功的地方，並定下設計原則給設計師跟進，及以三維空間研究，而設計師應該連細節都要注意。例如商場走廊通道不可以太寬闊，因為這樣的話便沒有視線接觸，便會感覺不夠親切。我們對廁所也有研究，起初洗完手後由於到處找紙巾，所以水滴遍地。我們創出新點子，在每個洗手盤處同時提供視液，紙巾及廢紙孔，更方便實用及不會弄濕地方，於是日後所有商場便以這方案統一廁所設計。

建: 請你分享一下港鐵的核心價值。

何: 第一是 Excellent Services，我們注重由心出發；第二是 Creation of Values，將無形的價值變為有形；第三是 Mutual Respect，有團隊精神，要大家自發去做；第四是 Enterprising Spirit，時代改變會有新的創造。我們同事在各方面幫公司想新的意念，如環保建築，電池車，可持續能源等等。第五是 Integrity，我們答應的事一定要完成，無論在香港或內地，我們都要堅持誠信。

給年青建築師的忠告

建: 請你給我們年青建築師作個提點。

何: 第一，不要怕辛苦，我當年初出來工作什麼都學，都做，都認。不怕辛苦就會學到好多；第二，當建築師要問自己的專業應如何定位？最緊要以人為本！例如我要求我的同事，眼看到什麼？耳聽到什麼？感覺到什麼？你喜不喜歡這個地方？會不會重遊此地？以這種方法設計，便會有很多心思去做好設計，便會讓人接受，吸引到別人。

建: 謝謝你的分享。

本文章由港鐵公司及香港建築師學會蔡錦龍先生編制



Urban Renewal for a New Hong Kong

Interview with Mr. Barry C Cheung, GBS, JP Chairman of Urban Renewal Authority

Interviewer: Mr. Franky Choi, Ms. Fanny Ang

Date : 06 Oct 2010

Venue : Urban Renewal Authority Headquarters

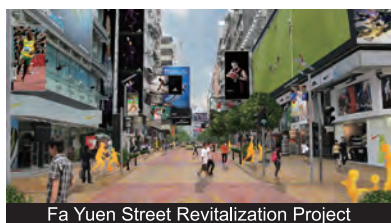
Interviewee : Mr. Barry C Cheung, GBS, JP

Interviewer : Mr. Franky Choi [HKIA Journal Editor-in-Chief]

Ms. Fanny Ang [HKIA Young Architect Award 2010
Honorable Mention]

■ C = Barry Cheung

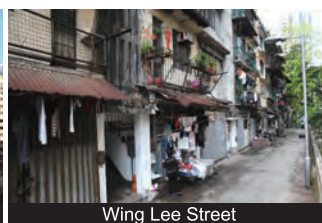
■ H = HKIA



Fa Yuen Street Revitalization Project



Rehabilitated buildings in Tai Kok Tsui



Wing Lee Street



Yu Lok Lane Project

H: Can you tell us how the URA's "4R" policies, namely Redevelopment, Revitalization, Rehabilitation and pReservation can be applied to the ever-changing social expectation for development in Hong Kong?

C: The URA's mission is to address the urban decay problem and to improve the living condition of our people. In Hong Kong, there are roughly 40,000 buildings of which around 4,000 buildings are 50 years old, and at least half of them are in poor or very poor conditions. These buildings were built cheaply and were intended to last no more than 50 years. They are not well maintained and many have been altered. They were designed to house families in small units but the units were subsequently divided into even smaller units which resulted in an over-crowded condition. In the past 10 years this problem has become even more serious. Instead of just dividing each unit with boards, now the units are provided with individual entrances and bathrooms. If remedial action is not taken quickly, the collapse of a building like that on Ma Tau Wai Road will become a regular occurrence. Some of our poorest people in Hong Kong are living in such buildings and our projects help improve the living conditions of these people.

We look at urban renewal with a comprehensive and holistic approach involving redevelopment, rehabilitation, heritage preservation and revitalization. To regenerate old parts of Hong Kong, redevelopment is key because many of the buildings are in extremely poor condition pending proper repair. In order to help people improve their living conditions, we have to have the resources generated by redevelopment. With proper maintenance, these buildings can probably have their life extended by 10-15 years. The URA has very comprehensive programs to help

homeowners to repair their buildings. We have also supported the Government in implementing the "Operation Building Bright" scheme with Hong Kong Housing Society by contributing \$150 million and providing assistance to owners to carry out repair works to buildings.

We recognize buildings with significant value and URA is among the top-ranked organizations in Hong Kong when it comes to carrying out extensive preservation work, something we did even before preservation became fashionable. In 2007, the Chief Executive asked the URA to undertake several key preservation projects and we have already preserved or are planning to preserve 60 pre-war buildings. We are in the middle of spending \$1.6 billion to preserve two rows of shop houses, one on Shanghai Street and the other one on Prince Edward Road West. We have also executed some revitalization works to improve the urban environment. For example, we have managed to create the piazza outside Western Market which is now very busy at weekends with outdoor civic activities. We decorated and covered the ventilation shaft with greenery and paintings, and re-paved the road and pavement with high quality material, to form this public piazza. It is URA's strategy to conduct revitalization work in areas related to its redevelopment projects.

The New Urban Renewal Strategy

H: Please share with us the outcome of the various public and professional consultations on the Urban Renewal Strategy Review.

C: A new Urban Renewal Strategy or URS will be launched next year. We have already carried out a great deal of

consultation on the subject during the implementation process of our projects. For example, for the Central Market, we surveyed 6,000 people and acquired professional opinions from town planning experts like Professor David Lung through an advisory committee. The new URS will push consultation even further by establishing the District Urban Renewal Forum (DURF) which will bring together people like District Council members, professionals and NGOs to discuss how their districts should be renewed. These days, we believe in looking at urban renewal on a district basis rather on a project basis. We aim to get people to offer their input before we decide what is best for their district. At the moment, we have to keep a project confidential by law until it is confirmed and announced. DURF will provide a platform to discuss in advance what should be built in a district. Another feature of the new URS is giving people more choice of compensation. Instead of cash compensation as the only method, the affected residents will be able to choose to move back to the new building after it has been redeveloped. They will simply have to pay the difference between what they would receive based on our compensation formula and the market value of the flat.

Working with Partners

H: The URA has been collaborating with various government and private sector working partners. How can the project teams maintain good working relationships and high levels of synergy with them.?

C: The URA was established by the government to implement its renewal policy, and our mutual relationship is very close. Since the URA is a statutory body, we are permitted to adopt a lot of common market practices and employ



Existing Kwun Tong Old Town



Kwun Tong Town Centre Project



Existing Prince Edward Road West Shophouse



Prince Edward Road West Conservation Project



Existing Shanghai Street Shophouse



Shanghai Street Conservation Project



Central Market as the Central Oasis



URA Exhibition in Central Market

people and consultants to take up tasks that they can perform better than we can. We have engaged a lot of external consultants and professionals including surveyors, architects and legal advisors, to name just a few. We tender our projects to developers who are very skilful and more capable of designing, building and marketing projects than we are. We also work with NGOs or other organizations that provide specific services to enrich our redevelopment content.

Public Interest and URA's Innovation

H: What is the determining factor that persuaded the URA to preserve the remaining buildings at Wing Lee Street? Does the fact that the street has appeared in an international award winning film play a role in this decision?

C: After taking over the project from the Land Development Corporation (LDC), our colleagues learned during various consultations that Wing Lee Street is one of the last remaining terraces in Hong Kong and is informally known as Hong Kong's "Little Paris". In 2008, URA introduced a preservation plan to preserve the main character of the street including the terrace and the low-rises, with three buildings to be fully preserved and the other nine buildings in poor condition to be replaced by new buildings of the same physical mass in order to maintain the ambience of the streetscape. The plot ratio of re-development was subsequently trimmed down from 8 to 4.5 in order to cope with this urban design consideration, even though it was not considered economically viable. During the course of building acquisition, a Hong Kong movie maker approached us and the URA offered site access for film-taking. After this movie had

won an international award, the building owners refused to sell their properties to the URA but said that they would preserve the building by themselves. So we set forth an alternative proposal to the Town Planning Board to exclude Wing Lee Street from our redevelopment project and instead to assign it as a preservation zone. Even though the Wing Lee Street site may not be an URA redevelopment site in the future, the URA took the initiative to offer assistance to tenants and owners. With the introduction of DURF, these kinds of social issues will be settled in advance of any renewal projects.

H: How can you strike a balance between a single lot like the Central Market and renewal projects covering the whole district?

C: District wide renewal includes redevelopment of parts of a district and ultimately of every individual building. For projects like Central Market, the Chief Executive made a decision to improve the quality of living in an urban area by turning it into a place people can enjoy right in the middle of Central. This is our mission at the URA!

Hong Kong Architecture Week

H: What is your advice for the first ever HKIA Hong Kong Architecture Week which is supported by URA?

C: It is a very good idea which should be turned into an international event annually. There are a lot of interesting buildings and designs in Hong Kong and the URA is very happy to support this meaningful event.

Advice to Young Architects

H: Please share your advice to our young architects?

C: I think for young architects their priority should be on developing their professional skills. It is important not to be bounded by unnecessary self-constraints. When you are assigned all the unexciting grant work, don't lose your creativity and don't be molded into part of the machine. They should take every opportunity to do public service since it would be good for them and for Hong Kong. Hong Kong is our home, we should do what we can to make Hong Kong a better place, and certainly architects, young and old, can play a very important part in this.

Interview text edited by URA and HKIA Mr. Franky Choi, Ms. Fanny Ang

Interview with Professor Anthony G.O. Yeh

Head, Department of Urban Planning and Design,
Director, Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning,
Faculty of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong

Interviewer: Mr. Franky Choi, Mr. Ivan Ip

Date : 11 December 2010

Venue : Department of Urban Planning and Design, University of Hong Kong

Interviewee: Professor Anthony Yeh

Interviewer : Mr. Franky Choi [HKIA Journal Editor-in-Chief]

Mr. Ivan Ip [HKIA Journal Deputy Editor-in-Chief]

■ Y = Anthony Yeh

■ H = HKIA

History and Development of the Centre and Department

H: Let us begin by congratulating you on the 30th Anniversary of the Centre. Can you tell us a little about the history of the Department?

Y: In the late 1970s, the University of Hong Kong invited Prof. Sir Peter Hall, a world renowned scholar in urban studies and planning in the UK, to prepare a report on whether Hong Kong would require programmes in urban studies and urban planning. At that time, Hong Kong was having its active new town programme, and many civil servants were sent overseas to undertake training in this field, which was both expensive and not fully relevant to the situation in Hong Kong. There were many voices at that time saying that Hong Kong needed to train its own planners and carry out its own research on local urban issues which were often neglected by researchers in the West.

Therefore, following Sir Peter Hall's report in 1977, our centre (Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning) was established in 1980, with Professor Reginald Y.W. Kwok as the founding director. Initially, there were a total of six departments involved in the setting up of the centre, namely the Department of Architecture, Department of Economics, Department of Geography and Geology, Department of Law, Department of Sociology, and Department of Political Sciences. Each of them had different claims in urban studies and planning. Because of this, it was set up as an independent multidisciplinary academic unit to be responsible both for teaching and research. This was a very rare set up in our university which was often compartmentalized into departments and faculties. It was probably one of the first few multidisciplinary centres that did not belong to any faculty or department at that time. The only one that I could think of was the Centre of Asian Studies. But the Centre of Asian Studies was mainly responsible for research and our centre was involved in both teaching and research.

In the 1980s, with many people beginning to focus on environmental issues, it had become more obvious that environmental management would become an important

issue for planning. So in 1991, our centre was changed to the Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management (CUPEM).

Then, in July 2008, following the restructuring of the university to put independent centres under faculties, it was restructured with the Department of Urban Planning and Design (DUPAD) established in the Faculty of Architecture to continue the teaching of urban planning and related areas in housing management and transport. CUSUP was re-established to continue interdisciplinary research in urban studies and planning. The Master of Urban Design programme which was taught in the Department of Architecture was moved to DUPAD to facilitate the synergy between urban planning and urban design.

H: What are your plans for the Department in terms of future development?

Y: We have made a lot of progress in the past 30 years. For our urban planning programme, we have developed from having only four full-time graduates in the first cohort to having 25 graduates every year. It is professionally recognised by the Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) International also accredits students specialising transport planning. The professional stream of the Master of Housing Management programme is recognised by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and the Hong Kong Institute of Housing (HKIH). The MA in Transport Policy and Planning (MATPP), jointly offered with the Department of Geography and Department of Civil Engineering, is recognized by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT).

Today, our programme is attracting many more students from the Mainland and Asia, with a number of them studying on scholarships offered by the Asian Development Bank, so students from different cultures and backgrounds can exchange their knowledge. In the early days, we did not have any PhD students, but nowadays we are admitting many more PhD students. Some of our PhD graduates have become world renowned scholars teaching in the UK and the Mainland.

For our urban planning and urban design programmes, we used to offer a mixed

mode with both full-time and part-time studies, but the problem was that many full-time students were having classes together with the part-time students in the evenings, so they had nothing to do during the daytime. The original idea of offering a part-time mode was to better serve the needs of Hong Kong. However, the needs of part-time training are declining and full-time students were complaining that they have to take classes in the evening in order to accommodate a handful of part-time students. In order to improve the quality of teaching, we are now closing down our part-time programmes in urban planning and urban design. For housing management which has been mainly running on a part-time mode, we are hoping to diversify and offer a full-time stream which will have separate classes from the part-time stream. I think the trend for the future is to enhance students' learning interest, and this would be more effective for full-time students since they have more time for their studies. Furthermore, full-time programme is easier to attract and admit non-local students. We hope that instead of serving only the education sector in Hong Kong, we can become the education hub of the whole of China, or even become a regional or international hub. In terms of world ranking, HKU has on average been in the top 20, so there should be no reason why we cannot attract high quality international students. Our teaching and research are well recognized in the region and internationally. A lot of our research work is published in top international journals with very high impact factors. In terms of teaching we have received recognition from the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), so basically there is no difference from studying in the UK. I feel certain that the next decade will be the start of the Asia Century. In fact, the 1990s had already been predicted to be the Pacific Century, but the Asia Century is definitely arriving soon. So we must position ourselves to be ready for this.

For urban design, we used to have a development stream and a design stream. As it is very difficult to train urban designer in one year, the urban design programme is now being restructured to mainly concentrate in urban design. Furthermore, we have also made it a prerequisite that students joining our urban design programme must have design background,

and they must show their portfolios at the interview. We are seeing some good results in the restructuring of the urban design programme. One of our urban design students has won an award in an open design competition. To meet the changing needs of urban development and planning, we have introduced more urban design elements in our urban planning programme so that there can be more synergy between urban planning and urban design.

I think the trend of urban planning is changing over the whole world, and not only in Hong Kong. In the West, in early 20th century, the city beautification movement was mainly focused on urban design and was therefore not very functional, without considering the economic and social dimensions of the city. Then in the 1950s and 60s, with rapid economic development, the focus was shifted to questioning the purpose of urban planning, and urban policy and strategic planning had become more important than physical planning. And now, in the 21st century, after the economy has developed and expansion has slowed down, the focus has shifted to urban revitalisation, place making and place marketing, and hence urban design has become more important again in urban planning. Of course, this does not mean that urban design is the same as urban planning. Urban planning needs to consider many other factors, such as social, economic, political, financial, environmental, and transport, in order for a city to function. Our training in urban planning now has more design content, and our students in urban planning would also do some joint studios with students in urban design. Because of the difference in urban planning focus, urban planning in the Mainland is often urban design oriented. To prepare our students to work in Mainland projects, we have strengthened our urban design components in our urban planning programme.

As for housing management, I think it would become very important for the Mainland, since there are so many housing projects in every city that need to be properly managed. Therefore, I hope that we can develop more in our training of high level housing managers. It would be difficult to do so at undergraduate level since we do not yet have funding from the UGC, and hence we are developing this at the master degree level.

We are developing a bachelor degree in urban studies, because we hope that more students can be exposed to urban studies and urban planning related disciplines at undergraduate stage. To study urban planning in two years is actually quite hard, because it needs quite a lot of background understanding, so we hope we can have an undergraduate urban studies programme to be funded by UGC. The advantage of this is that students who are not yet decided on a specific discipline can consider whether to pursue housing management, transport, urban planning or urban design of the department at the master degree level. The students' graphic skills would also be better with more time for training. In fact, since we also have other disciplines within our Faculty, students may even decide to progress to other master degrees, such as in conservation, real estates, landscape architecture, or even architecture. So in a

sense it would be like a kind of general education to prepare students for various professional outlets. This will be our future development.

The Position of Hong Kong in Urban Planning and Design

- H: In terms of urban planning and design, which aspects would you say we should develop or investigate more in Hong Kong in order to contribute to the mainland or to the world?
- Y: Back in 1978 when the Mainland was starting to open up, Hong Kong acted as a kind of bridge to facilitate the transfer of knowledge. We had organised some seminars in the Mainland, such as the first Seminar on Urban Planning Education in 1983 at Zhongshan University, when we invited 80 representatives from the top planning schools in China including Tsinghua, Peking, Tongji and Nanjing to participate, in order to share with them the trends in the West. We are still holding this seminar once every ten years, each time with a different theme, and it is interesting to see how the themes are changing along with the development of China during those periods. In 1983, the focus was on introducing the trends in the West; then in 1993, it was about economic reform, to look at how cities in China should develop under economic reform and growth. In 2004, the focus was shifted to issues relating to the globalisation of Chinese cities, and in 2013, we are hoping to look at how an urban planning strategy with Chinese character may be developed, as well as on low carbon city planning. As can be seen, the changes in theme every ten years can reflect the development of China at that period of time.

We are also exploring other ways of cooperation with the Mainland, such as organising student exchanges, since after all we are involved in education and research. For education, students in Hong Kong can go to the Mainland to learn how to do urban design in Chinese cities, while their students can also come to Hong Kong to see how urban planning operates under a different socio-economic-political environment with different emphasis, particularly in public participation and engagement. In terms of research, we are doing quite a lot with the Mainland, such as the use of GIS to monitor land use by means of radar satellite. We are also doing some joint research on transport GIS with Wuhan University, and on housing and land policies with the Peking University-Lincoln Institute Center for Urban Development and Land Policy which is a joint research centre between Peking University and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Boston.

I think there are a few areas where Hong Kong can contribute to the Mainland or the world in urban design or planning. The first is high-density development and management. Hong Kong has done very well in transit-oriented development (TOD), through development above MTR stations, while in the Mainland there is not yet a lot of development in this direction.

Another area is urban management and policy. There is a lot of urban design going on in the Mainland, but not so much in terms of policy. As the Mainland is now developing very rapidly economically, they are facing a lot of similar issues which Hong Kong has

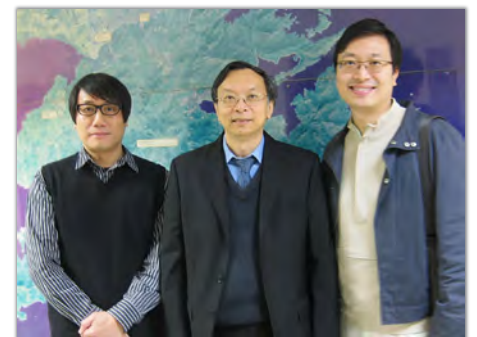
faced before when it was developing back in the 1970s and 80s. In the 1980's when our GPD per capita suddenly increased from less than US\$1,000 per capita in the 1970s to US\$3,000, people were buying cars, houses and stocks, with a major increase in the number of cars and house and stock prices. History is repeating itself in the Mainland, with a 20 years or so time lag. There are many cars in the Mainland, but how should they be managed? There are transport demand management methods like taxation or road pricing, or the need for first registration tax to buy a vehicle. On the one hand, we can have supply management in building more and wider roads, but this cannot solve the problem since demand is unlimited. Therefore, we also need to have demand management. In terms of transit-oriented development and transport policy we are successful, and our experience in these areas can contribute to Mainland cities.

Of course there are things which we would not serve very well as a model, such as the wall effect caused by high-rise buildings. In terms of waterfront development we are also behind the Mainland, where they have been doing it in Pudong and along the Pearl River for more than fifteen years. We are also behind in mega-event development and city competitiveness. You can see that cities in the Mainland are becoming more and more beautiful because they know how to develop and package their cities, whereas we are not very good at packaging. They understand city competitiveness better because they have started late and can absorb the essence of what has been done before in Hong Kong and the West and do it even better. So I think it really is a mutual process, and we can both learn the best practice from each other.

Advice to Young Architects and Planners

- H: Can you give some words of advice to young architects and planners?
- Y: I am not an architect so I will focus on planners only. I think to be a good planner you must have passion, and you must have visions. If you look at the founding fathers of urban planning, such as Ebenezer Howard and his garden city movement, you can see that they had vision and passion. Whether you are young or not, it is most important to have passion in your profession. Another important point is to be innovative, and not to simply be a follower, since you are planning for the future. In the end I would say that it is important for a planner to have vision, and to be innovative and creative.

Interview text edited by Professor A Yeh and HKIA Mr. Ivan Ip, Mr. Franky Choi



Transformation of Urban Fabric in Hong Kong

Interview with Prof. Weijen Wang

Hing-wah Chau

Date : 8 August 2010

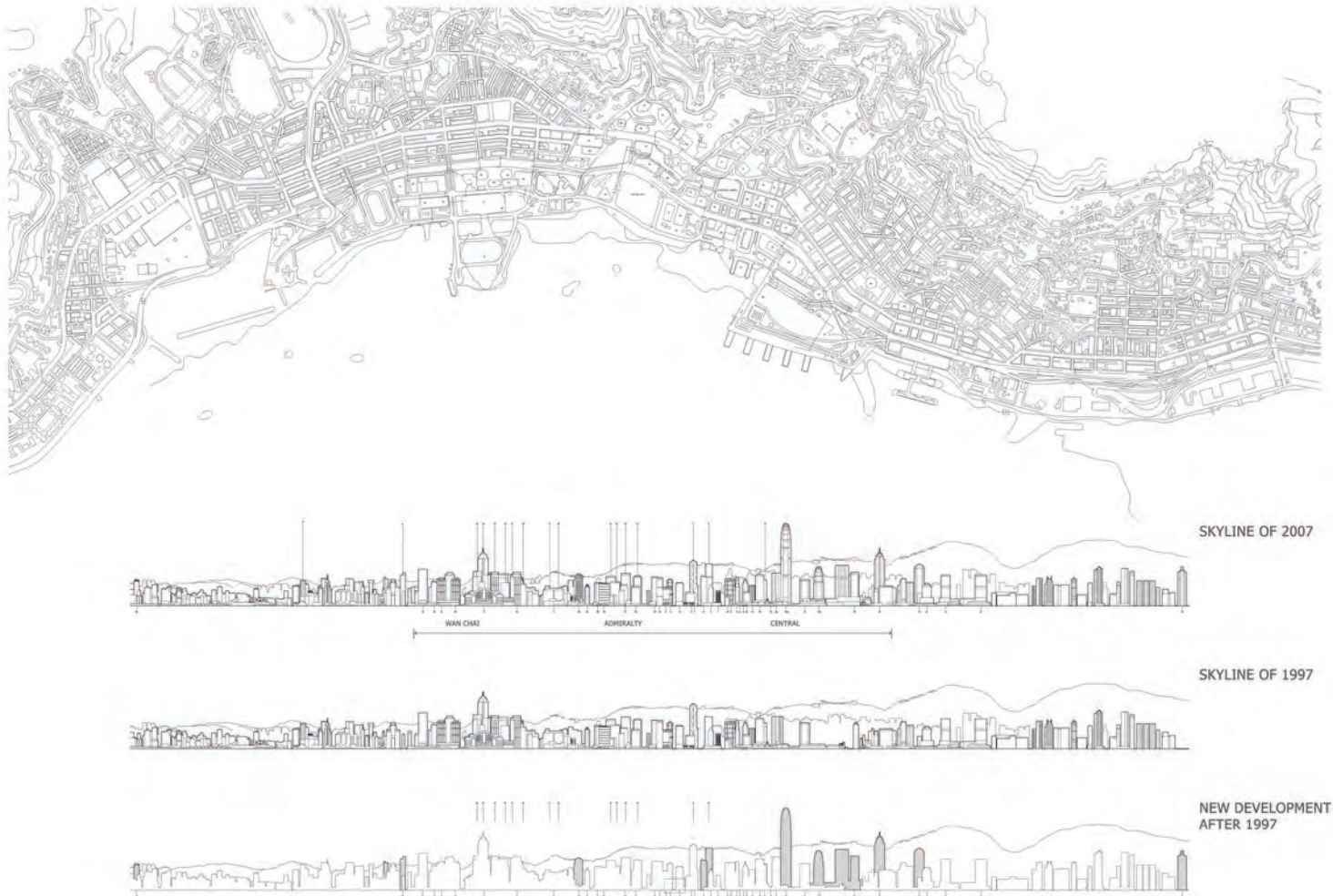
Venue : 117 High Street, Hong Kong

Interviewee: Prof. Weijen Wang [Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong]

Interviewer : Mr. Hing-wah Chau [HKIA Journal Editor]

■ W = Weijen Wang
■ H = Hing-wah Chau

▼ Skyline and Shoreline of Hong Kong



Urban Spaces and Urban Fabric

H: In the Hong Kong–Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/ Architecture 2007 and the 2008 Venice Architecture Biennale, you exhibited a series of design research studies under the theme “Urban Courtyardism”. Please elaborate on the relationship between “Urban Courtyardism” and the urban fabric in Hong Kong.

W: These exhibitions are to demonstrate ways of transforming courtyard typology for contemporary urban conditions. They are the continuation of my series of studies on courtyard typology, including some built projects like post-earthquake schools in Taiwan, community colleges for Lingnan in Tuen Mun and Polytechnic in Hon Ham. By interlocking and offsetting modular blocks

for establishing a three-dimensional system of multi-leveled courtyard spaces, they illustrate how new types of open courtyard can be shaped on upper levels and be used as public spaces. They also create a new form of in-between climatic zone that facilitates natural lighting and ventilation. The research on Urban Courtyardism tries to extend these ideas from architecture to the city, and anchors it to typical mid-rise and high-rise urban blocks in Hong Kong. It becomes a very relevant study now as our city is suffering the loss of urban porosity and community public spaces caused by many over-sized enclave developments like those in West Kowloon.

A city is a complicated organism, and “Urban Courtyardism” is an attempt to look into new formal possibilities of development model, a

model that allows high-density communities to have a system of urban spaces three-dimensionally. It is a way to test how new forms of urban fabric can be established by adopting courtyards as public spaces and make them into an inter-connected network of infrastructural systems of division, access and open spaces. It is also a way to test how we can reuse a particular type of cultural form in the contemporary city, creating new public accessible urban spaces with particular character which can be connected together as unique urban experience, like lane, terrace and patio in Hong Kong’s old tenement blocks.

H: Is it really a challenge to provide sky lobbies and courtyards in residential projects in Hong Kong?