

Media Briefing

New rezoning request for the Central Waterfront

Hong Kong, 29 May 2007 - Designing Hong Kong has applied for twenty-three amendments to be made to the Outline Zoning Plans for the Central Waterfront.

"We consider the changes fundamental. They increase competition, improve vibrancy, create visual corridors, allow better air ventilation, reduce land for surface roads, extend the tram network to the waterfront and enable the Star Ferry Clock Tower and Queen's Pier to be put back in their original location," said Peter Wong.

"The amendments are based on a thorough study of ten schemes proposed for the Central Waterfront over the last five years by many different groups. Given the consensus during a Workshop in November 2006, and during the Community Engagement Forum on May 12 this year, we are confident that the proposals have broad support among many stakeholders," said Paul Zimmerman.

"By making the submission now, the proposed changes can be included as options in the Central Reclamation Urban Design Study which is conducted by the Planning Department. It is critical to review the plans and not just the design, because without future reclamation this is the last chance to get the final harbour-front done right in Central," said Christine Loh.

"We have broken up the two key sites: The groundscraper and the festival market. Not only does this create a better urban environment, it will make Central more diverse. Rather than having two developers control the area, our plan will allow at least five developers to own a part of the Central Waterfront and compete with each in attracting residents, businesses and tourists," said Markus Shaw.

"We acknowledge that the proposals reduce the overall gross floor area and premium income potential, and that the changes will require the Administration to revisit previous assumptions. However, this short term loss will be more than compensated for by the economic benefits of the improved quality of life in the long term," the applicants concluded.

In summary, the proposed amendments are:

1. Reduce maximum height of new buildings between IFC and Piers;
2. Convert the Statue Square Corridor into a park (which will allow the Star Ferry Clock Tower to be returned to its former location);
3. Split the groundscraper into 3 separate buildings;
4. Split the festival marker into 2 buildings;
5. Reduce the width of P2;
6. Re-instate Queen's Pier and Edinburgh Place in their present location;
7. Convert half the PLA barracks to open space;
8. Built a pier for the PLA to free up the harbour-front;
9. Reduce the height and coverage of the sites in front of the APA;
10. Reserve land for a tram along the waterfront.

Designing Hong Kong is an alliance of four individuals, including Ms. Christine Loh, former Legislative Councillor and CEO of the non-profit think-tank Civic Exchange; Mr. Peter H. Y Wong, Chartered Accountant, Chairman of the Business and Professionals Federation of Hong Kong, and member of the Greater Pearl River Delta Business Council and the Executive Committee of the Commission on Strategic Development; Mr. Markus Shaw, Chairman of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong, and member of the Advisory Council on the Environment; and Paul Zimmerman, Executive Director of Jebesen Travel, Convenor of Designing Hong Kong Harbour District and Vice-Chairman of the Coalition on Sustainable Tourism.

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For more information, please contact Natalie Ng at (852) 3180 3663 or natalie.ng@mfjebesen.com