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Panel on Home Affairs

Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation

Background brief on preservation of the Queen's Pier

Purpose

This paper gives a summary of views expressed by the public and relevant professional bodies on proposals for the preservation of the Queen's Pier (the Pier) and discussions held by relevant Panels.

Background

2. There are places, buildings, sites or structures within Hong Kong which warrant preservation by different strategies by reason of their historical, archaeological or palaeontological value. The Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) is a statutory body tasked to advise the Antiquities Authority on matters relating to antiquities and monuments. Historical buildings are graded primarily on the basis of their heritage values. In assessing the heritage value of historic buildings, AAB has regard to a number of factors including historical interest, architectural merit, rarity, group value, social value, collective memory and authenticity.

3. At its meeting on 9 May 2007, AAB decided to accord Grade I historical building status to the Pier. According to the internal guidelines of AAB, a Grade I historical building is a "building of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible". However, the grading system is an internal mechanism of AAB, and has no statutory status.

4. The Central Reclamation Phase III (CRIII) contract was awarded in February 2003 and scheduled for completion in mid 2009. The CRIII is to provide land for transport infrastructure including the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Road P2 network, the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel (AR EOT) and the North Hong Kong Island Line (NIL). It will also provide land for a waterfront promenade. The existing waterfront facilities including, inter alia, the Pier are affected by the reclamation. Under the work contract, the relocation of the marine operation of the Pier to the new Pier No. 9 and the demolition of the Pier were originally scheduled for February 2007. It is the Administration's plan to retain the "preservable" components of the Pier for

relocation to the Central Waterfront in future. The most suitable site for relocation will be identified, with the participation of professional bodies and the general public, under the Central Reclamation Urban Design Study (the Study) being undertaken by the Planning Department. Stage 1 Public Engagement of the Study will last from 3 May to 30 June 2007. The press release dated 3 May 2007 on the Study issued by the Administration is in **Appendix I** for members' reference.

Discussions held by the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (the PLW Panel) on proposals for preserving the Pier

5. At its meeting on 23 January 2007, the PLW Panel discussed with deputations and the Administration on proposals to relocate the Pier. Deputations including the Hong Kong People's Council for Sustainable Development, the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA), the Community Cultural Concern, the Hong Kong Federation of Students and Designing Hong Kong Harbour District expressed support for in-situ preservation of the Pier. HKIA proposed that a possible option which would allow reclamation works to continue to proceed without demolishing the Pier was to construct a U-shaped retaining wall around the Pier. A preliminary drawing under this option was attached to HKIA's submission submitted for the meeting. HKIA considered that reclamation works could be carried out outside the retaining wall while public discussion on how to preserve the Pier continued. The Administration undertook to consider the feasibility of the option. The Conservancy Association (CA) considered that the Pier should be reinstated in-situ, if in-situ preservation was infeasible. The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) held the view that due regard should be given to public sentiments towards heritage conservation, and that the Administration should strike a right balance in its consideration of the cost implications for heritage conservation and public sentiments in this regard.

6. The Administration stated that in evaluating different options for preserving the Pier, the prime consideration was whether the options were technically feasible. In response to the suggestion of making changes to the alignment of Road P2 in order to preserve the Pier in-situ, the Administration explained that this would have to go through the statutory planning process because the current alignment was already specified in the relevant approved outline zoning plan. Any changes to the alignment of Road P2 would affect the land use of the affected areas.

7. Members in general considered that as there was no immediate need to construct Road P2, there should be enough time for further discussion on the technical aspects of preserving the Pier. The PLW Panel concluded that the Administration should discuss with the professional bodies on the arrangements for preserving the Pier.

8. The Administration subsequently held four meetings with four professional bodies, namely, the Association of Engineering Professionals in

Society Ltd. (AES), CA, HKIA, and HKIE (the representative of HKIE did not attend the fourth meeting due to other commitments). The outcome of these meetings was reported to the PLW Panel at its meetings on 27 March and 23 April 2007.

9. According to the Administration, the following four proposals for preserving the Pier had been identified and examined carefully by the Administration and the four professional bodies -

- Proposal (a) : In-situ preservation by shifting the alignments of the planned infrastructures which were in conflict with the Pier.
- Proposal (b) : In-situ preservation by filling the void underneath the Pier by sand/grouting; constructing the underground AR EOT and drainage culvert by underpinning and tunnelling method; and constructing a temporary road to buy time for completing the statutory procedures for the amendment scheme of Road P2.
- Proposal (c) : In-situ reinstatement by rolling the superstructure (roof and columns) away for construction of the underground infrastructure and rolling it back upon completion of the construction; and shifting Road P2 away from the Pier.
- Proposal (d) : Preservation of the above-ground structure of the Pier as far as practicable and storing it for reassembling in close proximity to its original location or at other appropriate location.

The Administration informed the PLW Panel that the professional bodies attending the fourth meeting agreed unanimously that it was technically infeasible to preserve the Pier in-situ. A summary of the views expressed by the four professional bodies on the four proposals was attached to the Administration's information paper [LC Paper No. CB(1)1184/06-07(04)] submitted to the PLW Panel for its meeting on 27 March 2007.

10. At the PLW Panel meeting on 23 April 2007, the Administration reported to members the final views of the four professional bodies on the four proposals as follows -

- Proposals (a) and (b) : The four professional bodies considered unanimously that these two proposals were technically infeasible.
- Proposal (c) : CA considered that this proposal might be feasible as there were successful examples in other places, and the additional time and costs could be worth spending. HKIE, however, considered that the risk of this Proposal was extremely high and that the Government should seriously weigh this highly risky proposal against the significant additional time and costs involved. AES also considered that this proposal would involve high risk and advised against such a highly risky engineering proposal.

- Proposal (d) : CA and HKIA did not object to this proposal and agreed that the Pier could be relocated so as to allow the reclamation works to continue. Both bodies requested that the Pier should be reinstated in-situ in future. CA further suggested appointing a Government architect who had proven experience in building preservation to take the lead in this job. HKIE and AES categorically stated that they had considered the feasibility of the four proposals and accepted Proposal (d). HKIE suggested reinstating the Pier at a suitable waterfront location in the new Central harbourfront.

11. Members may wish to note that Professor Hon Patrick LAU pointed out at the PLW Panel meeting on 23 April 2007 that the Administration had distorted HKIA's views in claiming that HKIA did not object to Proposal (d). He clarified that in-situ preservation was the premise upheld by HKIA.

12. The Administration also reported to the PLW Panel the views expressed by the Institute of Planners (HKIP) which had met with the Administration on the preservation of the Pier. HKIP hoped that the Pier could be preserved in-situ. However, if this was technically infeasible, it would accept Proposal (d) and suggested that consultation on the location of and the setting for the Pier should be carried out under the Study. The Designing Hong Kong Harbour District queried the reason for the proposed dual two-lane Road P2 to be wider than that of the existing dual three-lane Connaught Road. It considered that, technically, the Pier could be preserved in-situ. The Administration explained to the PLW Panel that the realignment of Road P2 would result in a serious delay to the completion date of the road and would have major cost implications on the CRIII project.

13. Some members pursued the possibility of changing the alignment of Road P2 so as to preserve the Pier in-situ. The Administration explained that the alignment of Road P2 was irrelevant to Proposals (a) and (b) because, even if the alignment of Road P2 could be changed, these two proposals would still be impractical due to various constraints. As for Proposal (c), the effect of the alignment of Road P2 was minimal because the main considerations were technical and safety issues involved in rolling, given the large size of the Pier and its weight. Hon CHAN Yuen-han was not supportive of Proposal (d) as she considered that dismantling and reassembling the Pier would destroy the very essence of the heritage and overall setting of the entire heritage site. She supported adopting Proposal (a) and pointed out that some engineering professionals also considered that Proposal (a) was technically feasible. Hon CHOY So-yuk considered that due regard should be given to the historical value of the integrated complex comprising the Pier, City Hall and Edinburgh Place. She expressed support for in-situ preservation of the Pier.

14. Hon LEE Wing-tat and Dr Hon YEUNG Sum stated that the Democratic Party considered Proposal (d) acceptable if in-situ preservation was adopted. Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki considered that in-situ preservation should be possible since the construction works for Road P2, EOT and the stormwater drainage box culvert had not yet commenced. Hon Alan LEONG held the view that as the construction of relevant infrastructure projects was still uncertain, they should not be used as justifications for ruling out in-situ preservation of the Pier. Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO indicated that he would support in-situ preservation of the Pier if this was technically feasible.

15. Members belonging to the Liberal Party and Hon Abraham SHEK considered that Proposal (d) was a practical option by reassembling the Pier at the new waterfront so as to retain its characteristics.

Discussion held by the Panel on Home Affairs on the preservation of the Pier

16. The Panel on Home Affairs held a special meeting on 1 June 2007 to discuss the decision of the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) not to declare the Pier a statutory monument. SHA was requested to explain in person at the meeting the basis of his decision. For details of the discussion, members may wish to refer to the minutes of the special meeting [LC Paper No. CB(2) 2115/06-07].

Relevant motion moved at a Council meeting

17. At the Council meeting on 2 May 2007, Hon Alan LEONG moved a motion urging the Government to expeditiously implement the most effective proposal for preserving the Pier in-situ, including proper adjustments to the current works projects and designs of future projects to avoid damaging the existing structure of the Pier. The motion was negatived. The Official Records of Proceedings of the relevant Council meeting is available on the LegCo website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk>.

Relevant papers

18. A list of relevant papers and minutes of meetings is in **Appendix II**.

Press Releases

Stage 1 public engagement for the Urban Design Study for new Central Harbourfront

The Planning Department today (May 3) launched the Stage 1 Public Engagement for the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront.

The objectives of the consultancy study are to refine the urban design framework of the Central Harbourfront and to prepare planning/design briefs for key development sites in the area to guide their future design and development. The locations and design ideas for reconstructing the old Star Ferry Clock Tower and reassembling Queen's Pier are also examined.

"Our vision is to create a world-class waterfront which is vibrant, attractive, accessible and symbolic of Hong Kong," a spokesman for the Planning Department said.

"We will work together with the community in the study process and incorporate their views and suggestions through an open, transparent and collaborative public engagement process," he said.

In the Stage 1 Public Engagement, we invite public views on the urban design objectives, urban design issues and sustainable design assessment framework for the new Central Harbourfront. These will provide input to the subsequent phases of the study with a view to building community consensus.

"We also aim to explore with the community the possible alternative concepts for reconstructing the old Star Ferry Clock Tower and reassembling Queen's Pier," the spokesman said.

There are many possibilities in reconstructing the old Star Ferry Clock Tower and reassembling Queen's Pier. To facilitate public discussion, the study consultant has proposed four alternative concepts to illustrate the various ideas. They include reassembling Queen's Pier at the original location; reassembling Queen's Pier near the original location; an axial approach by aligning Queen's Pier, Clock Tower and City Hall Precinct; or a functional approach by integrating the Queen's Pier with Piers 9 and 10. For the Clock Tower, it is proposed to stand as a focal point of the harbourfront along a key pedestrian corridor with convenient access.

"These alternative concepts are not exhaustive. We welcome views and other ideas from the public," the spokesman said.

Details of the proposed urban design objectives and urban design issues relating to the Central Harbourfront and the possible locations and design ideas of the Star Ferry Clock Tower and Queen's Pier are provided in a bilingual pamphlet published today for public information. A web-page on the study has been set up on the Planning Department's website to facilitate dissemination of information to the public and receiving public views.

"We intend to complete the Stage 1 Public Engagement on June 30. During the period, a Focus Group Workshop mainly for

the participation of professional and academic institutions and a Community Engagement Forum for the general public and relevant stakeholders are scheduled for the afternoons of May 5 and 12 respectively. The Town Planning Board, the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee and the relevant District Councils will also be engaged in the study.

"Public comments received during this period will provide input to our consultant in working towards the refinement of the urban design framework for the Central Harbourfront. A sustainability assessment and air ventilation assessments will be undertaken in the process," the spokesman said.

"On the basis of public views, the study consultant will draw up urban design concepts and guidelines for key development sites, and recommend the locations and design ideas for reconstructing the old Clock Tower and reassembling Queen's Pier for the next stage of public engagement in the later part of the year, while the entire study will last until the end of 2007," he said.

People can visit the Planning Department's website (<http://www.pland.gov.hk>) for more details of the Stage 1 Public Engagement for the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront.

Public views and suggestions are welcome. They can be sent before June 30 by post: Special Duties Section, Planning Department 15/F North Point Government Offices 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong (Ref: Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront); by fax: 2577 3075; or by email: sdpd@pland.gov.hk.

Ends/Thursday, May 3, 2007
Issued at HKT 18:30

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Relevant papers on preservation of the Queen's Pier

Panel / Council meeting	Date of meeting	Minutes/Paper	Paper No.
Panel on Planning, Lands and Works	23.1.2007	Paper entitled "Arrangements relating to the Reconstruction of Old Star Ferry Clock Tower and Relocation of Queen's Pier in Central" provided by the Administration	CB(1)677/06-07(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0123cb1-677-2-e.pdf
		Background brief entitled "Planning arrangements for the Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier in Central" prepared by LegCo Secretariat	CB(1)677/06-07(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0123cb1-677-3-e.pdf
		Submission from the Conservancy Association	CB(1)780/06-07(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0123cb1-780-3-e.pdf
		Submission from Hong Kong Federation of Student (Chinese version only)	CB(1)780/06-07(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/chinese/panels/plw/papers/plw0123cb1-780-4-c.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1185/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl070123.pdf
	27.3.2007	Paper entitled "Proposals for Preservation of Queen's Pier in Central" provided by the Administration	CB(1)1184/06-07(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0327cb1-1184-4-e.pdf

Panel / Council meeting	Date of meeting	Minutes/Paper	Paper No.
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1641/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl070327.pdf
	23.4.2007	Submission from the Conservancy Association	CB(1)1336/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0423cb1-1336-1-e.pdf
		Submission from Hong Kong Federation of Students (Chinese version only)	CB(1)1336/06-07(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/chinese/panels/plw/papers/plw0423cb1-1336-2-c.pdf
		Submission from Designing Hong Kong Harbour District and The Experience Group, Limited	CB(1)1336/06-07(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0423cb1-1336-3-e.pdf
		Submission from the Hong Kong Institute of Planners	CB(1)1336/06-07(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0423cb1-1336-4-e.pdf
		Submission from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers	CB(1)1411/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0423cb1-1411-1-e.pdf
		Submission from Association of Engineering Professionals in Society (Chinese version only)	CB(1)1411/06-07(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/chinese/panels/plw/papers/plw0423cb1-1411-2-c.pdf
		Information paper entitled "Proposals for preservation of Queen's Pier in Central and the way forward" provided by the Administration	CB(1)1411/06-07(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw04

Panel / Council meeting	Date of meeting	Minutes/Paper	Paper No.
			23cb1-1411-3-e.pdf
		Submission from Designing Hong Kong Harbour District and The Experience Group, Limited	CB(1)1253/06-07(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0327cb1-1253-1-e.pdf
Panel on Home Affairs	1.6.2007	Paper entitled "The Queen's Pier" provided by the Administration	CB(2)2026/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0601cb2-2026-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2115/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ha/minutes/ha070601.pdf

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