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Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

**Background brief on
Planning arrangements for the Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier in Central**

Purpose

This paper provides a summary of past discussions within the Legislative Council on the reprovisioning arrangements for the Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier in Central and the recent development regarding the treatment of the old piers upon reprovisioning.

Discussions on the reprovisioning of the Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier in Central from 1999 to 2002

2. Before September 2006, discussions relating to the reprovisioning arrangements for the Star Ferry Pier and the Queen's Pier in Central took place during the discussions on the Central Reclamation Phase III (CRIII) project, the reclamation works of which were expected to affect a range of existing waterfront facilities including the piers.

3. On 10 June 1999, the Administration consulted the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (PLW Panel) on the "Draft Vision Statement for the Victoria Harbour and Central Reclamation Phase III". The implications of the CRIII project on the Star Ferry Piers and Queen's Pier was not mentioned in the discussion paper provided by the Administration. Discussion at that meeting mainly focused on the scale of reclamation, the proposed road network, and the approach for the planning of the developments on the new reclamation area.

4. On 12 April 2000, the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) considered the funding proposal for the consultants' fees and site investigation of CRIII at an estimated cost of \$35.7 million in money-of-the-day prices. It was mentioned in the relevant paper that the scope of the project comprised, among others, the

reprovisioning of piers and public landing steps, and that one of the objections raised on the amended draft Outline Zoning Plan covering the CRIII during the public inspection period was concerned with the proposed relocation of the Star Ferry Pier. The Town Planning Board (TPB) recognized the historical significance and importance of the Star Ferry icon as one of the landmarks and major tourist attractions in the territory and agreed that its identity should be recreated in the new Central waterfront. The exact location and design would be subject to further investigation.

5. At the PWSC meeting, Hon CHAN Yuen-han expressed concurrence on the historical significance and importance of the Star Ferry Pier, and enquired about the relocation plan for the pier. The Administration's advice at that time was that it was discussing the relocation plan with the "Star" Ferry Company, Limited (SFCL). The intention was to reprovision the Star Ferry Pier to the existing Pier 7 and to part of a new Pier 8 to be built on the western side of CRIII. The clock tower would be reprovisioned and the piers would be decorated so that they would resemble the then existing piers as much as possible. The details would be worked out in the detailed design for CRIII. Towards the close of the discussion, Hon CHAN Yuen-han considered that the information given in the discussion paper was too broad-brush and issues of public concern, such as relocation of the Star Ferry Pier, had not been adequately accounted for.

6. On 1 March 2002, the Administration consulted the PLW Panel on the proposal to implement the CRIII project. It was mentioned in the paper provided by the Administration that --

- (a) the project included refurbishment of the existing Ferry Pier No. 7 and construction of a new Ferry Pier No. 8 and associated structures for reprovisioning of the affected Star Ferry Pier, and construction of two public piers and associated facilities for reprovisioning of the affected Queen's Pier and other affected public landing steps; and
- (b) the Administration had carefully reviewed the location and design of the new Star Ferry Piers in coordination with the "Star" Ferry Company, Limited, and adopted a historical heritage approach for the general layout and design of the external appearance of the new piers. TPB approved the proposal on 4 January 2002.

7. At the above PLW Panel meeting, the importance of the Star Ferry Pier as a landmark of Hong Kong Island was stressed. According to the then advice of the Administration, it had reached a consensus with SFCL that the design for the new pier would preserve the special characteristics of the original pier, such as the clock

tower, and a memorial plaque would be installed at the original location of Queen's Pier.

8. On 5 June 2002, PWSC considered the proposal to implement the CRIII project at an estimated cost of \$3,561.5 million in money-of-the-day prices. At the meeting, the Administration advised that the existing Pier 7, upon refurbishment and in conjunction with the new Pier 8, would form a winged structure, just like the then existing Star Ferry Pier, for reprovisioning of the Star Ferry Pier. Hon CHAN Yuen-han stressed that the Administration must fulfill its earlier promise that the design of the reprovisioned Star Ferry Pier would preserve the special characteristics of the then existing Star Ferry Pier, which was a landmark in Hong Kong.

Recent discussions and developments

9. The PLW Panel held a special meeting on 20 September 2006 to discuss two items with one item being "Planning issues relating to the reprovisioning of the Star Ferry Pier in Central including the proposed preservation of the building structure and clock tower of the existing Star Ferry Pier". Six deputations attended the meeting to present views on the subject and SFCL, which did not attend the meeting, provided a written submission. Towards the conclusion of the discussion, the Panel passed the following motion moved by Hon LEONG Kah-kit --

"本委員會促請政府暫緩清拆現有中環天星碼頭及鐘樓計劃，在進行廣泛公眾諮詢後，把現有鐘樓與相關建築融入將來中環新發展規劃藍圖，在「以民為本」的基礎上，保留具集體回憶的歷史痕跡。"

(Translation)

"That the Panel urges the Government to defer its plan to demolish the existing Star Ferry Pier and its clock tower in Central and to incorporate, upon extensive public consultation, the existing clock tower together with the relevant building structures into the future new development plan for the Central District, with a view to preserving, on a people-oriented basis, the historical traces that form part of the collective memory."

10. On 11 October 2006, the Administration provided a written response to the above motion, reiterating that the Star Ferry Pier would be affected by the public works projects of the planned Road P2 network, the Airport Railway Hong Kong Station Extended Overrun Tunnel and the extension of an existing drainage box culvert at Man Yiu Street. All these projects had to be commenced according to programme and contracts awarded. Hence, the Star Ferry Pier had to be

demolished as planned. Having regard to the views in the community that the Star Ferry Pier and its clock tower should be preserved to enable collective memory of the "Star Ferry" icon, the Administration would consider, from an urban design point of view, how to incorporate some special features of the existing Star Ferry Pier and its clock tower in the new Central harbourfront under the Central Reclamation Urban Design Study, which was scheduled to commence in early 2007.

11. The subject was discussed again at the PLW Panel meeting on 14 November 2006. The Government maintained that it had strictly followed the statutory procedures in implementing the CRIII project and the associated reprovisioning and development plans. The existing plan had struck a proper balance and had been arrived at after extensive public consultations. Noting from the Administration that demolition of the Star Ferry Pier was inevitable and that the preservation of the clock tower at the existing location would not be feasible, members enquired about the feasibility of various other preservation options. Specifically, individual members suggested that --

- (a) the Government should preserve the clock tower and incorporate it in the new Central harbourfront. At least the appearance and the chimes of the clock should be preserved;
- (b) the Government should endeavour to restore the clock tower, as in the case of the clock tower of the former railway station in Tsimshatsui. Efforts should also be made to enable the clock to continue operation;
- (c) immediate action should be taken to carry out a detailed survey of the architectural and structural features of the clock tower and compile a comprehensive record of these to facilitate the future restoration work; in demolishing the clock tower, efforts should be made to preserve the tower as much in its holistic form as possible, including the arms, letters and face of the clock;
- (d) the Government should consult concerned parties and the relevant District Council in deciding how and where to relocate the clock tower, which was a "collective memory" icon for Hong Kong people;
- (e) the Government should review the legislation related to the preservation of historical sites and buildings in Hong Kong; and
- (f) what the public really wanted was the preservation of the whole Star Ferry Pier and its clock tower at the existing location. The value of the premises was in its holistic form, and parts and pieces of the building would be valueless.

12. Hon CHOY So-yuk asked a written question at the Council meeting on 6 December 2006 on the criteria for classification as historical buildings and whether the Administration would re-consider classifying the Star Ferry Pier in Central as a historical building so that it would be protected by the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53).

13. According to the reply of the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA), construction of the Star Ferry Pier in Central commenced in October 1955 and was completed in March 1957. The pier was opened in December 1957. The Government conducted a built heritage impact assessment for CRIII in 2001. Having assessed the impact of the CRIII project on the Star Ferry Pier, the report recommended to re-provision the Star Ferry Pier at the new Central Ferry Piers. In March 2002, the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) deliberated on the recommendation of the assessment report and had no objection to the re-provisioning arrangement. Against this background, the Administration would not re-consider declaring the Star Ferry Pier as a monument under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance. As the Star Ferry Pier is neither a declared monument nor a graded historical building on the basis of its heritage value, it would not be preserved in-situ.

14. The built heritage impact assessment referred to in SHA's reply was the "Survey Report of Historical Buildings and Structures within the Project Area of the Central Reclamation Phase III" conducted by a heritage consultant commissioned by the Antiquities and Monuments Office in 2001. The Survey Report described the old Star Ferry Pier as a structure of great significance and warned that its destruction would provoke a public outcry and dismay, and recommended that consideration should be given to relocating the clock tower, if not the whole pier building, to a new home suitably in harmony with its surroundings. As regards the Queen's Pier, the Survey Report pointed out that the Pier had not only been used by the public since its construction in 1961, it had also been the landing pier for new Governors after arriving at the former Kai Tak Airport. The Pier together with the Edinburgh Place, to a certain degree, had performed some civic and political functions in the colonial period of post-war Hong Kong. Their demolition for reclamation would scrap forever the concrete link to a brief past of local development. The report is attached to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report on CRIII as an appendix. It was revealed by the media on 12 December 2006 that the relevant hyperlink to the Survey Report on the relevant Government website had been missing.

15. The Administration issued a press release in the evening of 12 December 2006 stating that AAB in a meeting on the same day had reviewed the discussion paper and minutes regarding the demolition plan of the Star Ferry Pier in 2002 which recorded that AAB did not raise any objection to the demolition of the Pier. The Board asked the Government to preserve the significant relics of the

clock tower and the Queen's Pier and consider reconstructing them in the new harbourfront. The Administration also explained that the missing link to the survey report was due to technical problems with the hyperlink system. The Environmental Protection Department had taken follow-up action to improve the hyperlink system.

16. On 12 December 2006, the demolition works of the old Star Ferry Pier commenced. Some citizens staged a demonstration at the pier site protesting against the demolition of the pier building and the clock tower.

17. At the Council meeting on 13 December 2006, with the permission of the President of LegCo, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung moved a motion to adjourn the Council for the purpose of debating the issue of "Demolition of the clock tower at the Star Ferry Pier". Eighteen Members spoke at the motion debate and the SHPL made a response. All the 18 Members called on the Administration to stop the demolition works and to preserve the old Star Ferry Pier as much as possible. SHPL responded that it was not feasible to preserve the pier building and the clock tower at the present location, nor was it feasible to retain the parts of the pier building and the clock tower and then relocate them in their holistic form somewhere in the future Central harbourfront or in another place.

18. On 14 December 2006, the PLW Panel held a special meeting to further discuss the subject matter with the Administration. Individual Members expressed the following views-

- (a) the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier and its clock tower should be suspended until after the technical issues related to various preservation options had been sorted out with experts at the next Panel meeting scheduled for 18 December 2006;
- (b) the Government might have deliberately withheld the Survey Report from public scrutiny; in the papers submitted to the PLW Panel, Finance Committee and the Public Works Subcommittee, the Administration had not mentioned about the findings and recommendations of the Survey Report;
- (c) the Government's consultation mechanism was ineffective as it could not reflect timely the public's opinions; although the Government had conducted consultations with relevant parties on the CRIII project and the associated reprovisioning plans during 1999 to 2002, the Government should take into consideration the strong public aspirations for preservation of heritage, in particular built heritage, in recent years;

- (d) the Government should revise its land development policy, by giving priority attention to preservation of built heritage;
- (e) a statutory body vested with the authority to compensate the affected parties should be set up to co-ordinate the work on preservation of built heritage; and
- (f) a public design competition should be organized for designing the new Central harbourfront promenade.

19. The Panel held another special meeting to discuss the subject matter on 18 December 2006 with the attendance of ten deputations. Some deputations expressed the view that the technical problems in preserving the pier building and its clock tower at the present location were not insurmountable. A deputation also emphasized that it had raised objection in 1999 when consultation for the relevant draft outline zoning plan was conducted and it had pointed out that the whole series of building structures of high heritage significance including Edinburgh Place, Queen's Pier, City Hall and Star Ferry Pier should be preserved. Some deputations opined that there should be heritage planning and a presumption for conservation of heritage was needed, and there was an urgent need to conduct a survey to identify heritage so as to draw up a heritage watch list. The "Star" Ferry Company, Limited provided a written submission stating that in view of the public's strong sentiment towards the old clock, the company was willing to donate the clock to the public permanently and therefore had delivered the faces of the clock and the parts of it to the Hong Kong Museum of History.

20. At the above PLW Panel meeting, the Administration informed members that the clock tower had been disposed of at the public fill reception facilities and mixed with other materials. The faces and the mechanical parts of the old clock had been preserved for possible use in future. Unlike Murray Building which was a stone structure, the old Star Ferry Pier was merely a concrete structure. The Administration had used three-dimensional laser scanning to record the dimensions of the old Star Ferry Pier. The Queen's Pier would be demolished as planned but the plaque of the Queen's Pier would be preserved.

21. Mr Neil Brennan WRIGHT of the clockmaker's company, Thwaites & Reed, attended the PLW Panel meeting on 18 December 2006. The company has been maintaining the Great Clock of Westminster Palace for 30 years. Having inspected some parts of the clock taken down from the old Star Ferry Pier and stored at the Hong Kong Museum of History, he informed Members that the clock, made by famous clockmaker Dent in the 1950s, was a high quality three-legged electro-mechanical gravity clock, with a cast-iron frame, bronze wheels and high quality stainless steel spindles. It would not be a problem to restore it for future

use. The clock was unique and valuable and it was made specifically for the Star Ferry Pier building. It was the second one of its kind that he had seen in the past eight years. The clock could be re-erected in many forms, such as in a new clock tower or as a museum piece. According to media reports, Mr WRIGHT had inspected the five striking clocks retained by SFCL after the PLW Panel meeting. He commented that "the clock is 99.9 per cent complete and is a high quality clock. It can work perfectly well if restored properly, and it can continue to run for (another) 200 or 300 years,".

22. On 23 December 2006, the Chief Executive delivered a statement to the Hong Kong public at a radio programme 《香港家書》 of Radio Television Hong Kong. He explained the Government's position stating that the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier could not be stopped as it was part of the CRIII project, which undergone all the statutory requirements and appropriate consultation processes and now more than half of the works had been completed. It would not be possible to halt the project at this stage without regard to the legal requirements and consequences. He promised that the Government would reassemble the clock of the old Star Ferry Pier and re-erect it on a new clock tower to be constructed at a suitable location. As regards the Queen's Pier, the Government would work with experts to preserve its components as far as possible so that it could be reconstructed at a suitable site. He also said that he had already asked the Home Affairs Bureau, which carried out a public consultation on heritage policy two years ago, to bring out a discussion on this policy again. He also pledged that the Government would fully consider the public's collective memory and demands in future.

23. A chronology of the relevant events and the relevant documents are set out in the **Appendix**.

Appendix

Chronology of events

Time	Event	References
10 June 1999	The PLW Panel was consulted on the Draft Vision Statement for the Victoria Harbour and Central Reclamation Phase III on 10 June 1999.	<p>Discussion Paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr98-99/english/panels/plw/papers/pl1006_4.htm</p> <p>Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr98-99/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl100699.pdf</p>
29 March 2000	The Administration provided an information note on the "Central reclamation phase III - consultants' fees and site investigation" for circulation to members of PLW Panel.	Information paper
12 April 2000	PWSC endorsed the proposal for upgrading of part of 343CL - Central reclamation phase III - consultants' fees and site investigation.	<p>Paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr99-00/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p00-1e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr99-00/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw120400.pdf</p>
1 March 2002	PLW Panel discussed the proposal to implement Central Reclamation Phase III including the refurbishment of the existing Ferry Pier No. 7	<p>Paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0301-cb1-1134-3e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>

Time	Event	References
	and construction of a new Ferry Pier No. 8 and associated structures for reprovisioning of the affected "Star" Ferry Piers.	http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl020301.pdf
5 June 2002	PWSC endorsed the proposal for 343CL - Central reclamation phase III - engineering works.	Paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p02-41e.pdf Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw020605.pdf
20 September 2006	PLW Panel discussed "Planning issues relating to the reprovisioning of the Star Ferry Pier in Central including the proposed preservation of the building structure and clock tower of the existing Star Ferry Pier" with deputations and the Administration, and a motion was passed at the meeting.	Paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-2208-2e.pdf Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl060920.pdf
11 October 2006	The Administration provided a written response on the motion passed at the PLW Panel meeting on 20 September 2006.	Paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-46-1-e.pdf
14 November 2006	PLW Panel further discussed "Planning issues relating to the reprovisioning of the Star	Relevant papers for the meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/agenda/plag1114.htm

Time	Event	References
	Ferry Pier in Central including the proposed preservation of the building structure and clock tower of the existing Star Ferry Pier".	
6 December 2006	Hon CHOY So-yuk asked a written question on classifying historical buildings at the Council meeting.	The Administration's press release on the reply of the Secretary for Home Affairs http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200612/06/P200612060159.htm
12 December 2006	The Administration issued a press release in the evening of 12 December 2006 entitled "AAB reaffirms no objection raised to Star Ferry Pier demolition plan in 2002".	The Administration's press release http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1214cb1-511-3-e.pdf
13 December 2006	With the permission of the President, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung moved a motion under Rule 16(1) to debate the demolition of the clock tower at the Star Ferry Pier.	The Administration's press release on the response of the Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200612/13/P200612130316.htm
14 December 2006	PLW Panel held a special meeting to further discuss the subject matter with the Administration and a motion was passed at the meeting. At a Member's request, the Administration subsequently provided a	Relevant papers for the meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/agenda/plag1214.htm Terms of the motion passed http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1214cb1-534-1-e.pdf

Time	Event	References
	summary of the relevant paper and a summary of the discussion at the meeting of the Antiquities Advisory Board on 13 March 2002 at which the ways to handle the impact of the harbour reclamation at Central and Wan Chai on historical buildings were discussed.	Follow-up paper on the AAB meeting on 13 March 2002 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1214cb1-575-1-e.pdf
18 December 2006	The Panel held another special meeting to discuss the subject matter with deputations and the Administration.	Relevant papers for the meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/agenda/plag1218.htm
23 December 2006	The Chief Executive delivered a speech at the radio programme 《香港家書》 of Radio Television Hong Kong.	The Administration's press release on the speech http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200612/23/P200612220271.htm