



香港建築師學會
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

**HKIA COMMENTS ON
URBAN DESIGN STUDY FOR THE NEW CENTRAL HARBOURFRONT
STAGE 1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENTS**

1. INTRODUCTION

HKIA welcomes that public consultation for the urban design of New Central Harbourfront are being held to solicit opinions from the public. We support the vision **“To create a world class waterfront which is vibrant, attractive, accessible & symbolic of Hong Kong”**.

The Central Harbourfront is the most important part of the Victoria Harbour that deserves a careful and sensitive urban design. The new waterfront should be “people-oriented” with due respect to the existing context including historical and cultural. Any proposed new developments shall be compatible to human scale. Pedestrian connectivity to the hinterland should be enhanced. Infrastructure and Transport Network shall only support our New Central Harbourfront, but not dominate and overwhelm it.

The current OZP of Central District (Extension) does not adequately address the above salient considerations. The initiative of this Urban Design Study is therefore vital to enable our future New Central Harbourfront to achieve these visions.

2. PRINCIPLE AND GENERAL COMMENT ON URBAN DESIGN IN HONG KONG

HKIA reiterates that urban design study, which is the physical planning, shall be an important integral part of the planning process. Urban design study will enable the future of Hong Kong to become a world class city.

We strongly recommend the government and the legislators to consider the future Hong Kong planning process as follows:





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3. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

HKIA is pleased to provide our specific comments for the New Central Harbourfront urban design study as follows:

3.1 Respecting Cultural Heritage

The Central Harbourfront and its surrounding vicinity possesses rich and valuable cultural heritage. These include the Legislative Council Building, Statue Square Corridor (extending from Government Hill, Hong Kong Bank, to the waterfront), and the City Hall – Edinburgh Square – Queen’s Pier complex – the now demolished Star Ferry Pier. These building clusters, the urban space and the skyline formed the built heritage of Hong Kong. The new waterfront must be designed to integrate with these heritages.

3.2 Queen’s Pier

The HKIA maintains our position that the Queen’s Pier should be preserved in-situ. Water elements, such as a lagoon, should be incorporated to integrate with the Queen’s Pier structure to preserve its reminiscence.

3.3 People-Oriented Design

We noted that the proposed planning parameter for developments at Site 1 (Piers #4 to #6 and Site 2 (in front of IFC) is unreasonably tall. The configuration of Site 1, the plot ratio, and the proposed building height appear somewhat arbitrary from an urban design perspective. We consider that the existing building mass and urban space in front of IFC now is satisfactory. Future building developments, if any, should not be taller than the podium of the IFC Complex.

Land packaging, particularly for Site 3 (Groundscraper) and Site 4 (Low rise Commercial) shall be re-considered. Site 3 is over 5 ha which is huge as a development package. Urban design control must be imposed in order to prevent the development from becoming a massive building which is entirely out of scale with the harbourfront environment. The building density (Plot Ratio), the site coverage, the building height and the future built form shall be determined after a careful massing study with visual and ventilation corridor.

The configuration of Site 4 is equally important to reconsider as it is directly in front of the City Hall – Edinburgh Square – Queen’s Pier complex. This low rise nature commercial development should not obstruct the visual linkage between Edinburgh Place – the City Hall and the waterfront.

3.4 Pedestrian Connectivity

The connection of Statue Square and the new Star Ferry Pier by a large podium is not acceptable in terms of visual connectivity to the foreshore. At grade and / or A below grade pedestrian connection shall be considered. Below grade pedestrian connection outside the City Hall low-block can be easily provided along the submerged box culvert.

3.5 Waterfront Promenade

We noted and acknowledged the need to provide the PLA Pier along the waterfront promenade (Site 7). This is both a design constraint and a design opportunity to the continuity and to maintain vibrancy of the waterfront. The PLA Pier should be free from barriers and open for public enjoyment when not in use. The connection between the current PLA Headquarters the PLA Piers should not dissect the promenade.

3.6 Minimizing Land Use for Infrastructure

The Harbourfront should be for the maximum enjoyment of the people of Hong Kong, visitors and tourists. Land use for infrastructure and transport should be kept to the minimum. The proposed Road P2 would weaken the connectivity to the hinterland. The land-take of Road P2 appears too wide and over-design. The cul-de-sac between Site 3 and Site 4 appears unnecessary and should be eliminated to enhance pedestrian linkage.

To create a world class waterfront, the Government should also consider both the hardware and software at the same time. The HKIA will continue to provide its comments during the next stage of public engagement of this Urban Design Study.