



Views on Urban Renewal Strategy from HKILA

1.0 General suggestions

- Urban renewal and regeneration are critical for those dilapidated and old district of a city. It offers opportunity to rejuvenate the city, reconfigure the urban fabric and redistribute the resources in order to achieve a better and sustainable living environment.
- The current URA **4Rs** approach (**R**edevelopment, **pR**eservation, **R**evitalization and **R**ehabilitation) on urban renewal lacks a holistic district-based effort to tight-up various 4R initiatives reducing the effect of urban regeneration.
- Public Open Space (POS) plays an important role for community interaction and public activities in a hyper-dense urban area. The urban renewal strategy should set forward principles, priorities, and statutory requirements to reconstruct the POS system for Hong Kong's urban renewal..
- Greening gives refreshment to the city physically and psychologically. A holistic and innovative urban planning and design should be explored and adopted. Due to congest urban environment, innovative forms of greening initiatives, such as multi-levels greening, sky and roof top garden, and vertical greening should be explored and implemented.

2.0 Specific suggestions on 4Rs Approach

2.1 Redevelopment

- The effect of redevelopment project should fully consider the impacts on physical, cultural, sociological, and cultural heritage of community.
- Quality public open space reflecting the characteristics of each district should be provided, including its location and interface with surrounding should be reviewed and design sensitively.
- Various greening and planting initiatives, such as development set-back, greening coverage, multi-levels greening, roof greening should be explored

and incorporated in the development agreement to the developer.

- Specialist field officer with horticultural training should be engaged during the construction stage to ensure quality workmanship and sustainable plant growth.
- The impact by the proposed development on a wider landscape viewpoint should be considered. Incompatible building cluster and walled-buildings should be prohibited. Review on the air-ventilation, sun-light penetration at pedestrian level should be well evaluated.

2.2 pReservation

- Efforts on preservation should be extended to the associated open space and nearby valuable landscape features e.g. old-trees, streetscape.
- The character-defining feature of the landscape elements of a district should be preserved to enhance the sense of place and its uniqueness.
- The approach of adaptive reuse should be expanded to the public open space. New commercial initiatives could be injected to improve the vibrancy and authenticity of the area.

2.3 Revitalization

- Current revitalization efforts focus only the streetscape improvement works only. This effect could be enhanced by integrating the surrounding POS to form a new POS network.
- Holistic revitalization planning should be formulated and coordinated with relevant district council, government departments and local communities in advance.

2.4 Rehabilitation

- Current rehabilitation works concentrated on upgrading the building services, utilities and building facade. Better result could be achieved by incorporating revitalization in the associated streetscape and nearby public open space.
- Sponsorship to owners for roof greening and living wall design provision could be introduced. This measures will promotes energy saving, improves visual quality and reduce 'heat island effect' in the urban area.

3.0 Conclusions

- A statutory greening policy should be formulated by government for the holistic urban design and planning. Giving clear directions and requirements to both public and private developments / sector strategy for urban planning and renewal provisions, fulfilling public expectations.
- Urban renewal should not be confined to locally affected buildings, it should include their nearby open spaces with valuable features, and taking opportunity to regenerate the heritage of the affected community.
- Statutory requirements of development set-back, greening provision at street level, greening coverage, environmental improvement initiatives, and public open space provision should be incorporated and translated into the development agreements.
- Consultation and co-ordination from various government departments with all stake-holders should be strengthened to minimize conflicting requirements. An appealing mechanism should also be implemented to mitigate conflicts and address public aspirations.

Evans Iu,
Vice President, The HKILA

15 April 2009