

**Information Paper
for Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation**

**Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street Project (H9)
and
Nga Tsin Wai Village Project (K1)**

The purpose of this paper is to provide the background and the latest position of the following two Urban Renewal Authority (URA) projects:

- (a) Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street project (H9); and
- (b) Nga Tsin Wai Village project (K1).

WAN CHAI ROAD/TAI YUEN STREET PROJECT (H9)

Background

2. In 2001, the URA took over the Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street project (H9) as an on-going project from its predecessor, the Land Development Corporation (LDC). The LDC had already obtained the necessary planning approvals and entered into a contract with a private developer to redevelop the three sites, namely, Sites A, B and C which together make up the project. A map showing the location of the project and these three sites is at **Appendix 1**.

3. The Wanchai Market, which was constructed in 1937 was rated as a Grade III historical building by the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) in 1990. In 1991, the Historical Buildings and Structures Committee and the AAB considered that the Market was not of great historical significance but that efforts should be made to salvage useful parts of the building before demolition.

4. In 1991, the then Land Development Corporation (LDC) proposed a scheme to redevelop three sites in the Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street area. This scheme included, among other things, the relocation of the existing market to a modern purpose built facility and

the demolition and redevelopment of the existing Wanchai Market site, known as Site C.

5. The Development Scheme Plan (DSP) for this project was submitted by the then LDC to the Town Planning Board (TPB) in December 1994 and was approved by the then Governor-in-Council in September 1996.

6. Between 1995 and 2002, Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) was consulted on the arrangements for reprovisioning the market from Site C to Site A. WCDC was also consulted on the Master Layout Plan (MLP). To date, WCDC raised no objections in either context.

7. In March 1996, the LDC entered into a Development Agreement with Dollar Union Ltd. (the developer) for the purpose of implementing this redevelopment project.

8. In June 2003, the land grant of the project based on the approved MLP was executed.

9. In February 2004, the TPB approved the amendment of the MLP to enable a change of use of Site C from office to residential with the following condition:

“The design of the development on Site C enhancing the collective memories of the community for the Wanchai Market and the submission of photographic record of the redevelopment stage of the Wanchai Market site with sufficient time allowed for Antiquities & Monuments Office to collect the salvaged materials from the Wanchai Market before its demolition to the satisfaction of the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services or of the Town Planning Board.”

The lease modification letter for such a change of use of Site C was executed in September 2006.

10. In response to a letter from the Hong Kong Institute of Architects appealing for the preservation of the Wanchai Market, the AAB met in September 2004 to discuss the matter. The AAB concluded that no Members recommended declaring the Market as a Monument. However, many Members supported the proposal of writing to the developer, appealing to him to consider the community's view in

preserving the Market in whatever way possible. Subsequently, the Chairman of the AAB wrote to the developer accordingly

Present Position

11. The developer has already completed construction of both Sites A and B of the project and has recently launched sales of the flats in the redeveloped sites which are now known as “The Zenith”. Sales brochures have also clearly stated that Site C will be redeveloped into a residential tower.

12. The relevant planning approvals have already been obtained for redevelopment of Wanchai Market into a residential block and the developer has completed the necessary planning procedures. Once the stalls in the Wanchai Market have been relocated, the developer can proceed with redevelopment of Site C in accordance with the approved MLP at a time of its choosing.

13. Legally, URA is obliged to honour the contract which was entered into by the then LDC with the developer in 1996 for redevelopment of Sites A, B and C.

14. URA is not aware of any changes contemplated by the developer to its current redevelopment plan for Site C.

NGA TSIN WAI VILLAGE PROJECT (K1)

Background and Present Position

15. Nga Tsin Wai Village is situated in the Wong Tai Sin District. It is one of the 25 projects announced by the former LDC in 1998 and inherited by the URA along with the obligation to give priority to their implementation. This project is now planned for implementation during 2007/08.

16. In December 1994, the AAB visited the village and thereafter concluded that it was not worth preserving and raised no objection to its redevelopment. Subsequently, in October 1999, the AAB confirmed the earlier decision it had made in 1994, whilst requesting LDC to preserve the most historic houses in-situ.

17. In November 2005, the Wong Tai Sin District Council requested the URA to expedite redevelopment of the village in order to improve the living conditions of the villagers, subject to preservation of three items, namely the Tin Hau Temple, the gate house and the stone tablet on top of the gate house, all of which have been identified by the villagers and the District Council Members. The AAB was subsequently informed of this arrangement in March 2006 and raised no objection to it.

18. Although Nga Tsin Wai Village is the only walled village remaining in the urban area, the village wall that previously characterized it as a walled village has already been demolished along with about two-thirds of the village houses. The remaining structures are very dilapidated and the living conditions for the residents are poor given the lack of proper sanitation facilities and the uncontrolled proliferation of illegal structures.

19. Out of the 127 houses in the village, only 59 remain with 68 having been demolished by the major owner and other parties. Out of 102 original households, only 63 remain with 39 having already moved out. The respective status of the various houses in the village are shown in the map at **Appendix 2**.

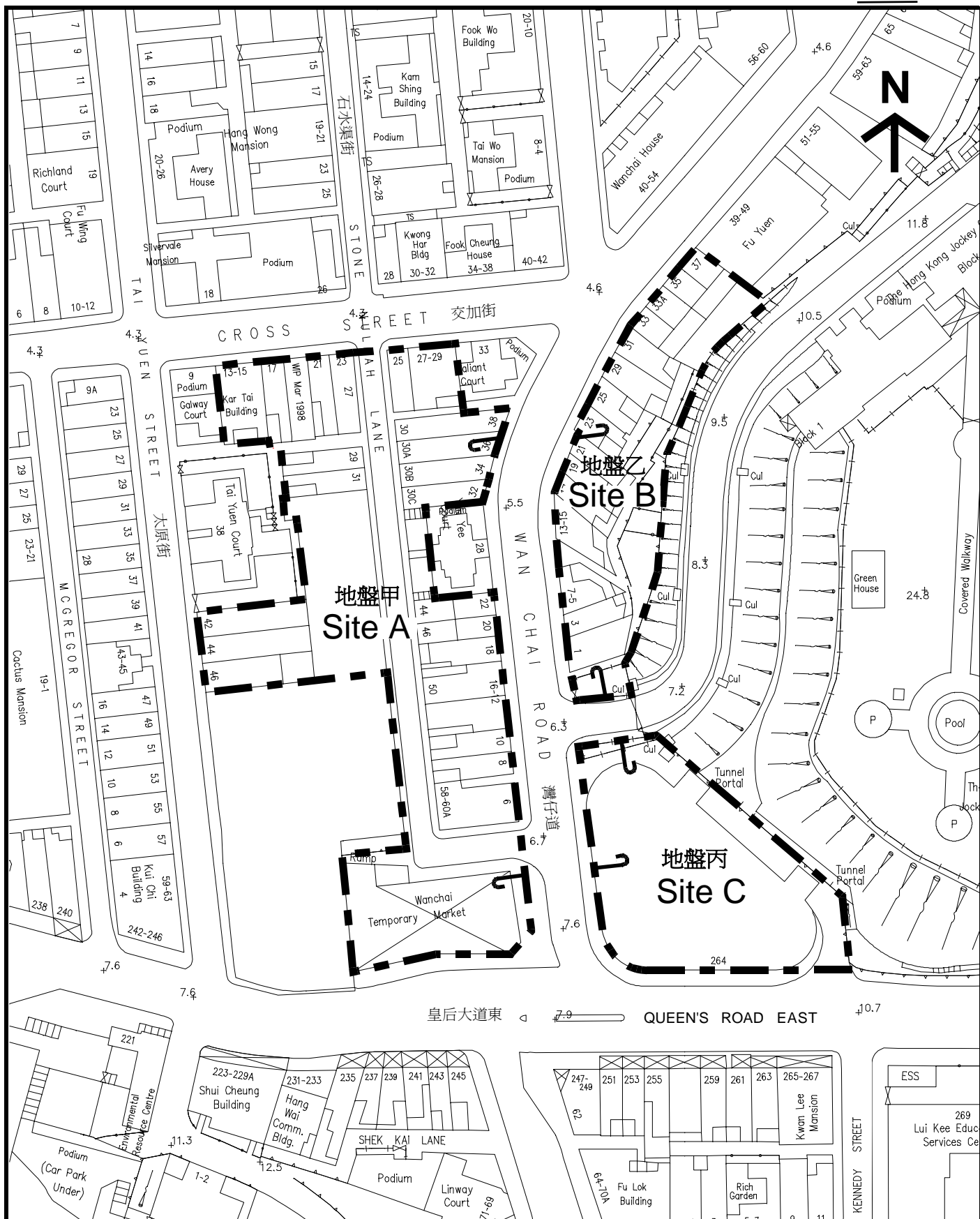
20. URA intends to proceed with the redevelopment while preserving the three identified items and is committed to producing a conservation paramount design that achieves this. However, the great majority of the property interests in the village are now owned by a single land owner while the remaining interests are owned either by villagers or the Government. The major land owner is keen to redevelop the site in order to exercise its existing property rights and thereby realize its investment. Because this owner owns the great majority of the property interests, it is necessary for URA to negotiate an agreed way forward for this redevelopment project with the major owner in order to enable the project to proceed smoothly.

21. Individual owners are anxious for the project to proceed as soon as possible to relieve them from their substandard and deteriorating living conditions. While unable to proceed with acquisition pending agreement being reached on the future redevelopment, URA staff are in regular dialogue with the residents and stand ready to offer practical assistance to the extent that we can ourselves and through our Social Services Team and with help from Government departments.

22. In January 2006, in order to take forward the project, URA engaged a conservation consultant team involving an internationally renowned conservation expert and a local conservation architect to carry out a conservation study and prepare a Conservation Plan. The conservation consultants have recommended that the concept of “Conservation by Design” be adopted to form a mediated solution to balance the conserved elements with new development and a conservation plan to achieve this is being finalized with a view to enabling preservation of not only the three identified items (being the Tin Hau Temple, the gate house and the stone tablet on top of the gate house) but also more of the village environment as well as providing additional open space.

23. In refining its design for this conservation paramount redevelopment project, URA also has to take into account various external factors, including the need to maintain a regional view corridor leading from the Kai Tak Metro Park towards Lion Rock as required under the Kai Tak Outline Zoning Plan. URA will finalize the conservation-cum-development proposal as soon as possible and seek agreement with the major land owner. Meanwhile, URA has continued to maintain close contact with the residents affected.

URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY
July 2007



Legend :

■ ■ ■ Site Boundary 地盤範圍

市區重建局太原街/灣仔道(H9)項目
URA PROJECT H9
TAI YUEN STREET / WAN CHAI ROAD

比例 Scale 1 : 1000

0 50m 米

位置圖
Site Plan

日期 Date: 6 - 7 - 2007

