



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

25 July 2007

Our Ref. : BLA/LC-SHC/KSW/cw/0707
Your Ref. : CB2/PS/2/06

Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Chairman
Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation
Panel on Home Affairs
The Legislative Council
c/o Legislative Council Secretariat
3/F Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Hong Kong

By Fax and By Post
Fax No. : 2509 9055

Dear Ms Choy

**Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation under Panel on Home Affairs
Meeting on 26 July 2007**

Thank you for your letter dated 16 July 2007 inviting the Institute to present views on the preservation of the open-air bazaar in Tai Yuen Street and Cross Street in Wanchai at the meeting of Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation on 26 July 2007.

The issue of whether preserving the open-air bazaar in Tai Yuen Street and Cross Street is only one of the many examples demonstrating the complexity of city development in Hong Kong, demanding open debate, social consensus and priority setting. These complexities should be envisaged and carefully handled at early stage by the Government well advance of decision making.

In the case of Tai Yuen Street, the conflict between the need for relieving anticipated traffic problem arising from redevelopment and preservation of local characteristics is a manifestation of the lack of comprehensive planning and deficiency in a 'vision' for the locality. The anticipated traffic problem should be handled at an early town planning stage by controlling the car parking provision, considering the cultural and social value of street markets in Wanchai. It should not be left to be dealt with at the time of completion of the project by simply displacing other existing uses to make way for the increasing road traffic. The current open-air bazaar has become a landmark of Wanchai, which serves both tangible and intangible benefits to the community at large, both local and tourists. Its present scale forms a critical mass for vibrancy and vitality, which the Government should have tried to support with great effort and enhanced management rather than reduce its extent substantially. It is also undesirable to divert traffic flow into the heart of old urban community, which will further worsen the air quality and urban microclimate -- a priority concern of the society nowadays. The society shall seek the way forward to minimize the damage to the Tai Yuen Street and Cross Street open-air bazaar as far as possible.

...../p.2



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Page 2

The case of Wanchai Market nearby also demonstrates the same problem of conflict in the priorities between redevelopment and conservation of buildings of heritage in the locality. The Institute expressed our deepest concern by writing to the Antiquities Advisory Board in May and August 2004 to call for a review of the current Grade III historic building status for Wanchai Market and to urge the Urban Renewal Authority and the private developer to seriously reconsider all development alternatives so that the proposed demolition of Wanchai Market can be averted. The Government certainly can play a pivotal role in balancing the interests of the community.

Yours sincerely

Rita Cheung (Mrs)
Registrar

c.c. Dr Ronald Lu, President
Mr Bernard Hui, Honorary Secretary
Mr K S Wong, Chairman, Board of Local Affairs