



長春社 Since 1968

The Conservancy Association

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Preservation of Star Pier and Queen's Pier

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The Conservancy Association cannot agree with Government that there were no objection to demolishing of the Star Ferry and Queen's piers during their consultation period. The Conservancy Association has expressed its objection dated back to 1996 when Government proposed to construct a temporary road through the Edinburgh Place. In fact, Government has never consulted the public regarding demolition of the two historical piers. The three reasons that Government reiterated for demolition of the two piers are simply unfounded. The Conservancy Association has strongly rebuked these reasons and made a proposal to preserve the 2 piers *in-situ* with minimal impacts on the P2 road, the airport express extended tunnel and the drainage box culvert. We reiterate our arguments for preserving the two piers below:

1. The Historical Value of Star Pier and Queen's Pier

Although both piers were rebuilt after 1950, their historical value are significance. Since the colonial age, the Edinburgh Square in front of the Queen's Pier was used to be the venue for official welcoming parade for all incoming governors. The Royal Family, namely Queen Elizabeth II and Prince of Wales were also welcomed in the same Square. The tradition of official ceremony extends even after the handover and the area has been the venue of Legal Year Ceremony before it was relocated to the New Wing of Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. Besides, Queen's Pier is also a place enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong.

The Star Ferry has been an important transport mode for people in Central Business District to cross the Victoria Harbour since 1958. Thousands of Hongkongers shared the experience of Star Ferry ride. Besides, the clock sounds of Star Pier Clock Tower has long been a part of life of Central and earned the reputation of 'heartbreak of Central'. The Star Pier is also a tourism attraction of Hong Kong and the *National Geographic Traveler* named it as one of the 50 places of a lifetime (*National Geographic Traveler*, Oct 1999).

2. Surmountable Technical Problems of Preserving the Star and Queen's Piers

The Conservancy Association found that with a fine adjustment of the road alignment, the demolition of the main building (including the clock tower) of the Star Pier and the Queen's Pier can be avoided. This fine adjustment only means rotating the road a small angle, probably less than 5 degree at the Man Cheung Street junction. It is a very mild turn and definitely not a sharp turn as said by Government officials..

The proposed route of P2 road would link the Man Cheung Street to the Wan Chai North. The Conservancy Association believes that by better design, the alignment of P2 road could be fine-tuned to avoid the present Star Pier and Queen's Pier main superstructures.

Besides, a good urban design plan can transform the area of Star Pier, Edinburgh Place and Queen's Pier into a vibrant historical corridor linking the harbourfront for the public. What is lacking now is only the political will for a win-win solution.

The Conservancy Association also reckoned that the airport railway tunnel extension is very deep down; it is highly unlikely that the tunnel will affect the main clock tower building of the Star Ferry Pier.

Regarding the drainage box culvert extension, the Conservancy Association believes that the box culvert and be located a few meters to the south to avoid colliding into the main building of the Star Ferry Pier.

3. A late outcry for preservation of Star Pier and Queen's Pier?

Last but not the least, The Conservancy Association would like to point out that, the civil society had advocated for the preservation of Star Pier and Queen's Pier for years. In the case of the Conservancy Association, we had submitted our submission to the Legislative Council Joint Panel on 20th November 2003 for the consultation of Central Phase III/ Wanchai Phase II Reclamations Controversy (CB(1) 403/03-04(03)), which we stressed that 'the Star Ferry Pier and the Queen's Pier accumulate many memories and are heritages of Hong Kong' and we held, and still holds 'a strong view that the existing promenade should be substantially upgraded instead of being replaced.'

The Conservancy Association also repeatedly expressed our concern on the preservation of the monuments in Edinburgh Place since 2000, including our 'Comment on the Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas & Stage II Study on Review of

Metroplan', dated 31 March 2001. And we wrote to several departments, namely Transport Bureau, Highways Department and Antiquities and Monuments Office during June 2000 to April 2001 to express the similar view.

Conclusion

As a champion of sustainable development, The Conservancy Association believes that a win-win situation of development and conservation can be both achieved. In the case of Star Pier and Queen's Pier, a fine adjustment in road alignment and an innovative urban design of the harbourfront, could help preserve a site that is valuable both in collective memories and quality of living.

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