

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation**

**Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street Project
Core Elements Preservation Scheme of the Wan Chai Market**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to inform Members of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA)'s proposed core elements preservation scheme of the Wan Chai Market (the Market) within the Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street Project.

BACKGROUND

The Market

2. The architectural style of the Market building is 'Streamline Moderne', a style emerged in the late Art Deco period. The major character defining elements of this period are the curvilinear façade treatment with deep canopies and plain external wall finishes. The style reflects a change in the approach to architectural design in the early 20th century.

3. The Market building has been accorded a Grade III historical building status by the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) since 1990. It forms part of the Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street redevelopment project undertaken by the now-defunct Land Development Corporation (the then LDC). The URA, successor to the LDC, took over the implementation of the project in 2001. The project comprises three separate redevelopment sites, namely Sites A, B and C as shown in Annex I.

4. The Development Scheme Plan for this project was submitted by the then LDC to the Town Planning Board (TPB) in May 1995 and was approved by the then Governor-in-Council in September 1996, with the intention that the Market be demolished and the site redeveloped.

5. In 1996, a joint venture development agreement was entered into by the then LDC with Messrs. Dollars Union Limited (a subsidiary of Chinese Estates Holdings Limited, hereinafter referred to as "the Developer") for implementation under a single Land Grant covering Sites A, B and C.

6. The Market (Site C) was originally approved to be redeveloped as an office tower by the TPB in 1999. Subsequently, in September 2004, an amended Master Layout Plan (MLP) was approved to provide instead for a

residential tower. Land premium has been paid to the Government as a result of the change in land use.

7. The redevelopment of Site A and Site B has now been completed, with the residential units being sold to private purchasers. The new market constructed at Site A has also been handed over to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in early 2007 for the relocation of on-street hawkers at Tai Yuen Street (South) and Cross Street (East) and the hawkers in the existing Market.

8. The original planning requirement to set back Site C for road widening purpose at the junction of the Wan Chai Road and the Queen's Road East is no longer required because of reduced traffic flow passing through the Tai Yuen Street, the Cross Street into the Wan Chai Road and the Queen's Road East as a result of the Chief Executive's 2007-08 Policy Address initiative to retain in-situ on-street hawkers at Tai Yuen Street (South) and Cross Street (East). This provides a favourable condition for the preservation of the façade of the Market building.

Previous Discussion

9. The discussion on preservation of the Market building has started since 1990. In 1990, the AAB accorded the Market building a Grade III historical building status. In 1991, the AAB agreed that the Market was not of great historical value and that efforts should be made to salvage useful material and fabric of the building before demolition. In response to some public concerns on the preservation of the Market in 2000, the AAB agreed that efforts should be made to preserve the façade, if whole preservation was not possible. Subsequently, in response to a letter from the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Chairman of the AAB wrote to the Developer in September 2004 appealing for the preservation of the Market building in whatever way possible.

10. On 11 July 2007, we briefed Members via panel paper CB(2)2417/06-07(01) of the URA's contractual obligations in taking forward the Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street redevelopment project, covering the Market building. Members noted the constraint and passed a motion, urging the Government and the URA to "make every endeavour to renegotiate with the Developer in order to achieve the objective of in-situ preservation". In January 2008, we informed Members via panel paper no. CB(2) 700/07-08(01) of the progress of various heritage related initiatives in Old Wan Chai area, including URA's discussion with the Developer in reaching an in-principle agreement to consider the feasibility of taking a "core elements preservation" approach to preserve the Market building.

CORE ELEMENTS PRESERVATION SCHEME

11. In response to the public and Members' aspirations over preservation of the Market building, particularly in light of a new heritage conservation policy announced by the Administration in October 2007, URA has reviewed some preservation options together with the Developer for the Market building within the following framework –

- (a) legal power and duty as well as contractual obligations of all parties concerned;
- (b) technical and structural feasibility of any suggested alternatives;
- (c) financial implications and cost-benefits for all parties concerned; and
- (d) URA's obligations to exercise due care and diligence in handling its finances under the URA Ordinance and the Urban Renewal Strategy.

12. With the Developer's agreement in-principle, a core elements preservation scheme has been developed with the residential tower being constructed over the existing Market. Subject to detailed structural investigation, major character defining elements of the Market building will be preserved, including the major façade, the main entrance, the curved canopy and fins, and part of the front portion of the structural form (Annex II refers). The preserved portions of the Market building will be mainly used for commercial purpose as in the approved scheme.

13. The design of the new residential tower on top of the Market building will take into account the original architectural style of the Market. Some of the design features that will be seen and expressed in the overall architectural composition of the new building include –

- (a) formal symmetry in building configuration;
- (b) smooth façade surface with little ornamentation;
- (c) sturdy-looking round corners;
- (d) emphasis on horizontal compositions;
- (e) a simple white and pale-grey colour palette to mimic the Streamline Moderne Style prevailing at the early 20th Century; and
- (f) deep and yet thin-looking overhangs or eyebrow ledges over window openings.

Due to the need to keep the existing building envelope of the Market building, a smaller number of car parking spaces will be provided.

14. There are successful local and overseas examples which adopt a similar conservation approach. The development of the Western Community Centre integrated with the Former Old Mental Hospital façade in High Street, Sai Ying Pun and the addition of the new block at the rear of the Peninsula Hotel, Tsim Sha Tsui are local examples of this mode of conservation. Overseas examples

include the Hearst Tower in New York, Potico Scots Church Redevelopment in Sydney, Banco Nacional Ultramarino in Macau, 1 Sansome Street and 456 Montgomery Street in San Francisco, which are all developments above the conserved portions of historical buildings. The proposed conservation approach for the Market building does not contravene the principles of major charters under the International Council on Monuments and Sites such as the Burra Charter and the Venice Charter.

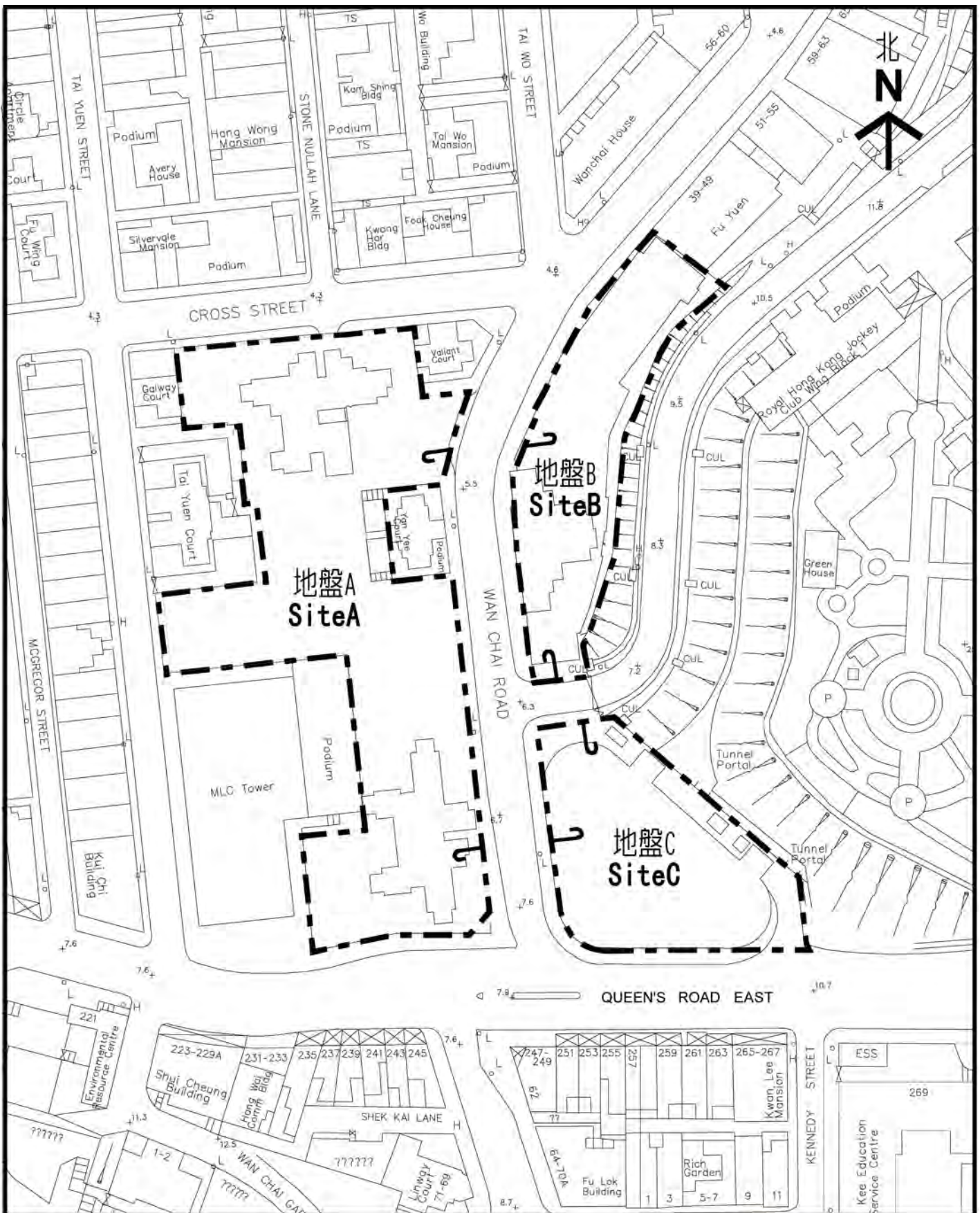
15. The proposed core elements preservation scheme has successfully upheld the contractual obligations of the concerned parties and has achieved a fine balance between heritage conservation and development. We believe it represents a win-win situation. It is a good example of blending the new with the old while giving due regard to the historic and architectural value of the Market building. The partially preserved Market building will contribute to the 'cluster' effect of historic buildings within the Old Wan Chai area and will play an important part in the Government's and URA's holistic approach to revitalize and develop the old Wan Chai area.

LATEST POSITION

16. The AAB discussed the core elements preservation scheme of the Market building on 16 April 2008. The scheme was also presented to the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) members on 17 April 2008 during a briefing. Both AAB and WCDC members welcome the efforts made by the Government, URA and the Developer and generally agree that the core elements preservation scheme has struck a fine balance between heritage conservation and development.

17. URA submitted on 25 April 2008 a revised MLP (at Annex III) to the TPB for approval. Public comments on the draft MLP are now being invited as part of the statutory planning procedures under the Town Planning Ordinance.

**Development Bureau/Urban Renewal Authority
May 2008**



圖例:

Legend:

- 地盤範圍
- Site Boundary

市建局灣仔道/太源街H9項目

URA Wan Chai Road / Tai Yuen Street Project H9



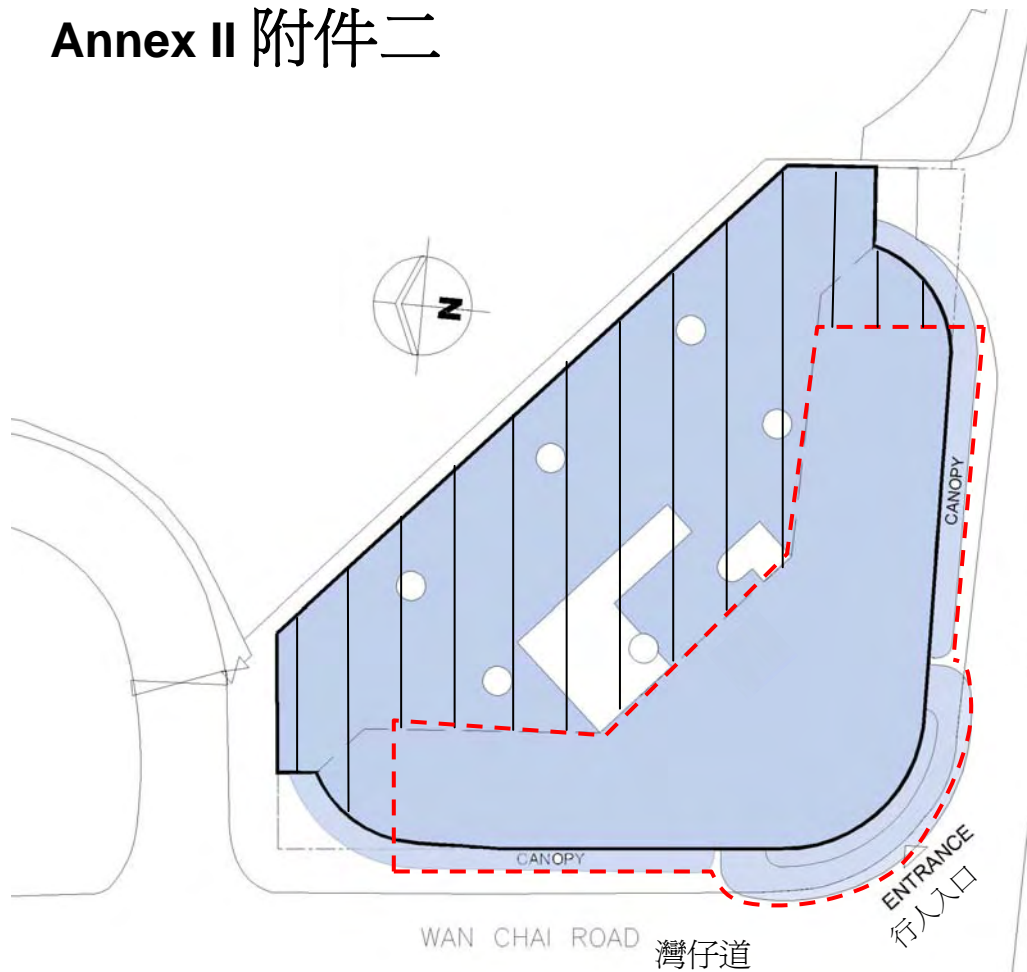
Annex I 附件一

Scale 1 : 1000

Date: 29 - 4 - 2008

Annex II 附件二

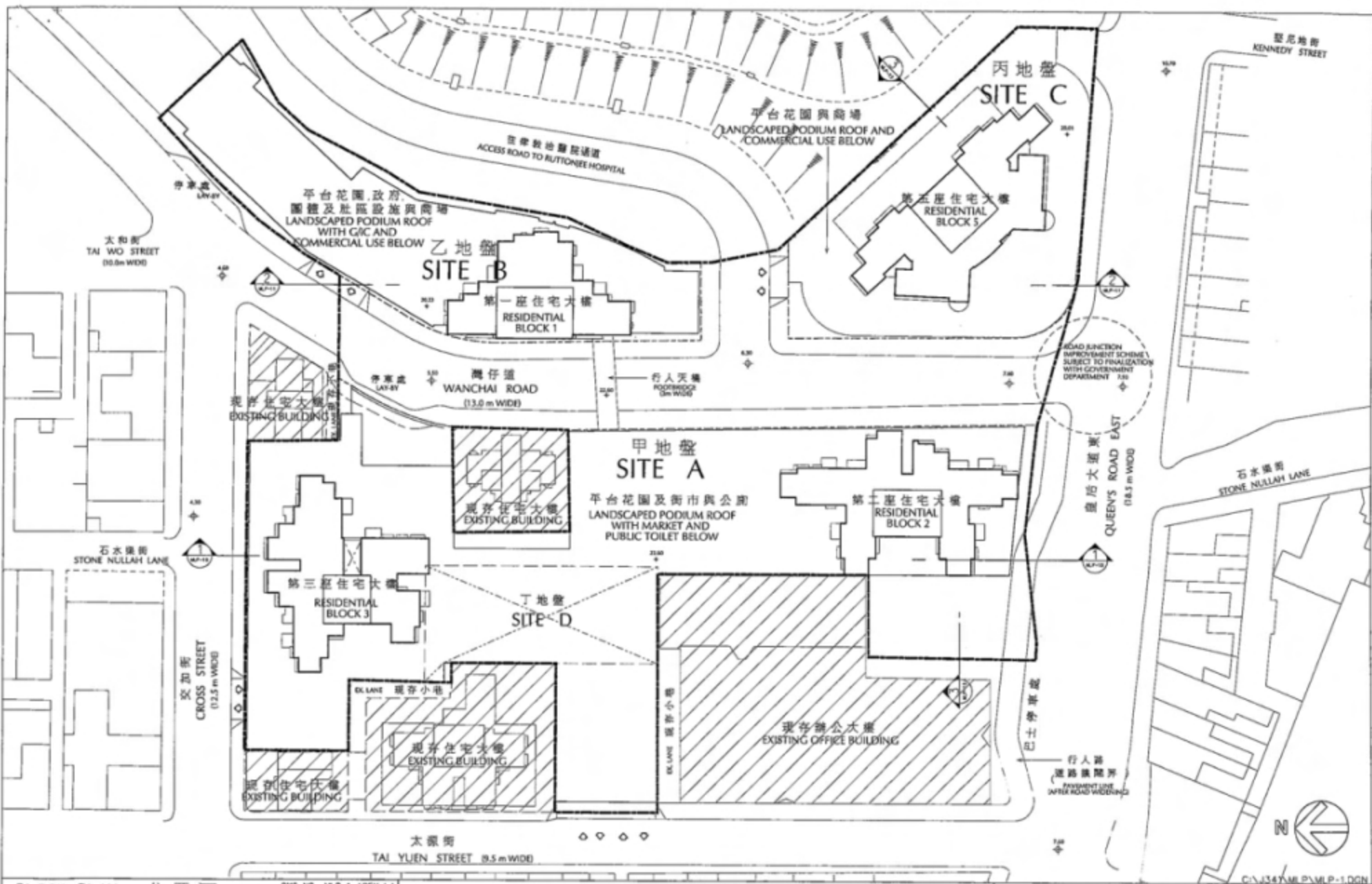
“Core Elements Preservation” Scheme of the Wan Chai Market 灣仔街市大樓：“主體保育”



-  Redevelopment portion
重建部分
-  Core elements preservation scheme of the
Wan Chai Market
灣仔街市'主體保育'部分



Annex III 附件三



BLOCK PLAN 位置圖

DWG NO. MLP-1 (REV.1)
SCALE 1 : 500

LEGEND:

- CDL BOUNDARY 綜合發展計劃範圍
- SITE BOUNDARY 地段界線
- COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL & G/C BUILDINGS, ALL BLOCKINGS & BUILDING STRUCTURES SUBJECT TO DETAILED BUILDING DESIGN. 商業、住宅、政府、康樂及社區設施所有樓宇及結構均須按照詳細之建築設計

MASTER LAYOUT PLAN FOR URA SCHEME AT
WANCHAI ROAD/TAI YUEN STREET (I.L.8953) WAN CHAI, HONG KONG
市區重建局於灣仔道 / 太源街總綱發展藍圖
PLAN NO. H9/MLP4A

I hereby certify, as required under S. 44(3) of the Town Planning Ordinance, that this Master Layout Plan was approved by the Town Planning Board on 11/11/2011.

Signed _____
Chairman,
Town Planning Board 渠務規劃委員會主席