

Translation

Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum

For discussion
on 25 August 2011

Paper No.: DURF KC/05/2011

Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum

Report on Site Visits

Purpose

This Paper serves to report to Members of the Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum (“DURF”) the three site visits conducted in July 2011, and summarize the major views and suggestions raised by participating Members and district councillors during the visits.

Background

2. Members agreed in the first meeting of DURF on 13 June that site visits to different sub-districts of the Kowloon City District be conducted as soon as possible to identify local issues and problems, and concerned district councillors would be invited to join the visits. For this, the Secretariat has arranged three site visits, which were held on 11, 20 and 27 of July 2011 respectively.

The First Site Visit – Hung Hom Sub-district (11 July)

3. A total of 12 Members participated in the site visit, with district councillors of the district in attendance. Members mainly inspected the condition of buildings on Ma Tau Wai Road and the Ma Tau Wai Road/Chun Tin Street project of the Urban Renewal Authority (“URA”), and paid a visit to a household in the project site. Members then inspected the funeral and related uses on Bulkeley Street/Baker Street/Winslow Street, and visited Man Tai Street in Hung Hom. The key points of discussion raised by Members and the district councillors in

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attendance during the site visit included:

- (a) Members opined that there was lack of management and maintenance for the old buildings on Ma Tau Wai Road. Although the Government had acted swiftly in response to the building collapse incident that happened earlier, more redevelopment projects should be undertaken in the district. Buildings that had not yet been included under any redevelopment projects should be rehabilitated at a quicker pace for environmental improvement;
- (b) While inspecting the funeral and related uses on Bulkeley Street/Baker Street/Winslow Street, Members pointed out that the concentration of such uses within the district has a long history. Members also noted that the newly issued Undertakers of Burials License by Food and Environmental Hygiene Department prohibited the storage of coffins and human ashes in licensed premises. However, even after the undertakers of burials in the district had moved out, other funeral-related commercial activities (e.g. shops selling wreaths or human ashes containers, etc.) might move in;
- (c) A district councillor pointed out that the formation of owners' incorporation for effective management of the buildings on Bulkeley Street/Baker Street/Winslow Street was difficult as there was fragmentation of ownership and many owners had already moved out. He also opined that the subsuming of "licensed undertakers of burials" under "Office" or "Shops and Services" from a planning perspective needed to be discussed and "funeral services centre" under the "Definitions of Terms" promulgated by the Town Planning Board should include funeral and related uses like shops selling wreaths or human ashes containers. According to the Hung Hom Outline Zoning Plan,

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“funeral services centre” use was not permitted in the “Residential (Group A) 4” Zone; and

- (d) A district councillor pointed out that there was currently a proliferation of eating places on Man Tai Street and some residents there were affected by the oily smoke emitted from the eating places. He supported the proposal of enhancing Man Tai Street as a food street. Residents’ views on pedestrianization of Man Tai Street should be sought.

The Second Site Visit – To Kwa Wan Sub-district (20 July)

4. A total of 15 Members participated in the site visit, with a district councillor of the district in attendance. Members mainly inspected the condition of buildings in the eight “Wan Streets” and that of private streets, and the underground pipe maintenance as well as resurfacing works being undertaken/undertaken by the Government on Wan Fat Street, Wan Lok Street and Wan Shun Street, and visited a household in the area. Members then inspected the condition of a building on the nearby Kai Ming Street. Afterwards, they inspected the condition of buildings in the “5 Streets” and “13 Streets” and visited the Pak Kung Café that had special characteristics. Members finally visited the ex-Ma Tau Kok Animal Quarantine Depot (Cattle Depot Artist Village) to have an understanding of the existing condition of the Cattle Depot and the future revitalization work. The key points of discussion raised by Members and the district councillor in attendance and residents’ views collected during the site visit included:

- (a) A district councillor pointed out that some of the buildings on the eight “Wan Streets” had been acquired by developers. However, resources had been put in the maintenance of those buildings pending redevelopment (e.g. Operation Building Bright), thus resulting in waste of resources. He hoped that

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integrated planning would be made and redevelopment could be expedited by the party concerned to avoid the above situation;

- (b) During their visit to a household on Wan Fat Street, Members noted that the flat had been affected by emission generated in the course of operation of the vehicle repair workshops on private streets and considered that the issue needed to be examined;
- (c) A Member pointed out that the “5 Streets”, which were located in waterfront lots and had a high development potential, were the target of acquisition by many private developers previously but the acquisition was fruitless due to fragmentation of ownership. For the “13 Streets”, there were management problems like poor environmental condition and unauthorized parking of vehicles in the past. All private streets were later resumed by the Government with the efforts of the Kowloon City District Council and district councilors, and the local environment was improved; and
- (d) Members of the “Network of Old Districts in Kowloon City” (「九龍城區舊區網絡」) presented a letter to the Chairman and Members of DURF when they arrived at the “5 Streets”, “13 Streets” and the ex-Ma Tau Kok Animal Quarantine Depot. They wished to participate in DURF and that the Government should resettle residents in the old districts orderly when undertaking redevelopment projects. As regards the integrated planning for the Kowloon City District, they requested the Government to undertake large-scale land resumption for integrated development; to provide more community facilities and public space; to provide more car parks; to solve traffic congestion problem; and to enhance the concept of greening in district planning.

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The Third Site Visit – Lung Tong and Ho Man Tin Sub-districts (27 July)

5. A total of nine Members participated in the site visit, with district councillors of the district in attendance. Members inspected the revitalization project for old dwellings (stone houses) at Nos. 31-35 of Hau Wong Temple New Village, the condition of buildings on both sides of Nga Tsin Wai Road and its nearby feature shops and eating places and the “Lung Tsun” and “Lok Sin Tong” plaques in Lok Sin Tong Primary School, and visited a household in the district. Members also inspected the condition of buildings in the area along Soares Avenue and Victory Avenue. The key points of discussion raised by Members and the district councillors in attendance and residents’ views collected during the site visit included:

- (a) A district councillor pointed out that the Kowloon City District had abundant historical resources and proposed that a historical trail linking relevant attractions (consideration might even be given to extending the trail to the To Kwa Wan area (e.g. Hoi Sham Park)) should be built. He also opined that the buildings in the district were dilapidated and lacked proper maintenance, and their life span could only be extended for several years even after rehabilitation. He also conveyed the aspirations of local residents for speedy redevelopment. He considered that in planning for redevelopment, the Administration should avoid the emergence of “toothpick blocks” as far as possible and should instead encourage integrated redevelopment for provision of suitable community facilities;
- (b) A Member opined that a dilemma had appeared in urban renewal work at present in that “toothpick blocks” would emerge if sites were zoned “Residential (Group A)” (“R(A)”) though title

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assembly for redevelopment would be easier. If the sites were zoned “Comprehensive Development Area”, title assembly for redevelopment would be very difficult, though appropriate planning controls for the development mix, scale, design and layout could be imposed. For the Nga Tsin Wai Road area that was currently zoned “R(A)2” on the statutory plan, he opined that the provision on the plan that the maximum building height restriction for sites having an area of 400 square metres or above could be relaxed from 80mPD to 100mPD might help prevent the development of “toothpick blocks” on small lots and encourage the amalgamation of land for comprehensive development (including provision of parking and loading/unloading and other supporting facilities);

- (c) While visiting a household on Nga Tsin Wai Road, Members understood the difficulties encountered by the head of household in forming an owners’ corporation for reasons that most occupiers were tenants/elderly people and most owners are not living in the property, they were not interested in the building management work of owners’ corporation;
- (d) While inspecting the buildings on both sides of Nga Tsin Wai Road, a Member opined that a heritage trail linking local historical resources might be built and consideration might also be given to aligning the trail along local shops and eating places for promotion of economic and tourism development; and
- (e) A district councillor pointed out that many properties on Victory Avenue and Soares Avenue had been acquired and the Government should have an overall planning if it intended to redevelop the area for improvement of living environment and alleviation of traffic problems.

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Follow-up Work

6. Members may further deliberate on the key discussion points and residents' views collected as mentioned in paragraphs 3 to 5 above for formulation of urban renewal plans for the Kowloon City District.

Secretariat

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August 2011