

Translation

Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum

Date: 28 February 2012 (Tuesday)

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Venue: The Hall, 4/F, S.K.H. Holy Carpenter Church Community Centre,
No.1 Dyer Avenue, Hung Hom, Kowloon

Present:

Chairman: Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan

Members: Mr James Mathew Fong

Mr Ho Hin-ming

Rev Hor Yiu-man

Ms Christine Kwok Mun-yee

Dr Lawrence Poon Wing-cheung

Ms Peggy Poon Wing-yin

Ms Siu Yuen-sheung

Dr Tang Bo-sin

Mr Wen Choy-bon

Mr Wong Kam-sing

Ms Iris Tam Siu-ying

Executive Director
(Planning and Project Control),
Urban Renewal Authority

Ms Winky So Yuen-ling

District Officer (Kowloon
City), Home Affairs Department

Ms Fiona Lung Siu-yuk

District Planning Officer /
Kowloon, Planning Department

Mr Lee Wai-bun

Chief Traffic Engineer /
Kowloon, Transport Department

Ms Winnie So Chui-ying

Principal Assistant Secretary
(Planning and Lands) 4,
Development Bureau

Secretary: Ms Lily Yam Ya-may Chief Town Planner /
District Urban Renewal Forum,
Planning Department

Absent:

Members: Mr Daniel Lau King-shing
Mr Timothy Ma Kam-wah
Ms Connie Wong Wai-ching
Ms May Fung Mei-wah

In attendance: Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming Conservation Architect
Mr Calvin Lam Che-leung Executive Director
(Operations and Project
Control), Urban Renewal
Authority

The Chairman welcomed all Members and Ms Fiona Lung Siu-yuk, new District Planning Officer / Kowloon, Planning Department who attended the meeting for the first time.

Agenda Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the Third Meeting

2. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had received requests from two Members for amendment to the draft minutes of the third meeting of the Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum (“DURF”). The revised minutes of meeting were forwarded to Members by email on 22 February. Subsequently, a request was received from a Member for amendment to paragraph 57 of the draft minutes. The Secretary stated that the relevant amendment was shown on the replacement page tabled at the meeting. As agreed by Members, the Chairman announced that the revised minutes of meeting were confirmed.

Agenda Item 2 Matters Arising

3. **The Chairman** invited the Secretary to report on matters arising from the third meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Proposal of Undertaking Revitalisation Initiatives with Non-Governmental Organisations

4. **The Secretary** stated that the Secretariat uploaded the details of the scheme onto the DURF's website on 21 November 2011 and sent letters to inform the local social service agencies, art groups and educational institutions in December inviting them to take part in the scheme. Afterwards, the Secretariat received some related enquiries.

Agenda Item 6: Criteria on and Arrangements for Handling Public Requests for Personal Attendance at DURF Meetings to Make Representations on Urban Renewal

5. **The Secretary** stated that having regard to Members' discussion at the third meeting, the Secretariat circulated the amended handling criteria and arrangements to Members on 4 January 2012. After receiving Members' comments, the Secretariat uploaded the relevant handling criteria and arrangements onto the DURF's website on 20 January.

6. **The Chairman** thanked the Secretary for reporting on the matters arising.

*[Since Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming, speaker of Agenda Item 3, could not attend the meeting in time for some business, **the Chairman** proposed and Members agreed to discuss Agenda Item 4 first.]*

**Agenda Item 4 Urban Renewal Authority Building Conditions Survey
(Discussion Paper No.: DURF KC/02/2012)**

7. **The Chairman** welcomed and invited Mr Calvin Lam Che-leung to report to Members on the building conditions survey conducted by the Urban Renewal Authority ("URA"). He said that building condition was a key criterion for the preparation of the preliminary urban renewal proposals by the DURF Secretariat and the pertinent criterion was established on the basis of the result of the building conditions survey conducted by the URA. Hence the presentation could

provide Members with a better understanding of the building conditions survey.

8. **Mr Calvin Lam Che-Leung** briefed Members on the background of the building conditions survey conducted by the URA in 2009-2010 covering some 3,000 pre-1981 buildings in the old urban areas, and elaborated on the methodology used, the constraints on projecting building conditions and the main building conditions ratings. Mr Lam stated that the survey result would be presented in sub-areas in the form of a ratio of buildings over 30 years in dilapidated conditions as a whole in each of the sub-areas. However, Mr Lam stressed that the building conditions ratings were only snapshots valid for the time of the survey inspection, as the ratings would change with time and human factor. With regard to the findings of overall building conditions survey in Kowloon City District, Mr Lam said that according to the data collected, about 15% of the buildings over 30 years in the district were “marked dilapidated”, 29% of them were “dilapidated” and 56% of them were “good/satisfactory”. He also briefed on the percentage of building dilapidation in different sub-areas of Kowloon City.

9. In response to **the Chairman’s** enquiry about the areas covered by different colours in the briefing material, Mr Calvin Lam Che-leung explained that the grey area stood for the relatively new buildings with occupation permits issued after 1981 whereas the purple area represented government buildings or public housing. These two types of buildings were not the subject of the study.

10. **The Chairman** asked why the findings did not indicate the conditions of individual buildings and use different colours to show the building dilapidation conditions of each building, and only broadly showed the percentage of building dilapidation in individual sub-areas instead.

11. **Mr Calvin Lam Che-leung** responded that the survey conducted by the URA had carried out assessments of the individual inspected target buildings. As for the buildings not actually inspected, projections had been made. While the building conditions survey was conducted by experienced professionals, it was still inevitable that there

were somewhat subjective judgements. Moreover, the building conditions would change with time. If the results of individual surveyed buildings were disclosed, the owners concerned might worry that the property value would be affected, leading to disputes with the owners concerned in future. Mr Lam remarked that the conditions of individual buildings were not shown in the findings on the grounds of the confidentiality of the survey, and it was hoped that the conditions of individual buildings would only be concluded after the owners concerned had invited professionals to undertake more comprehensive survey of the buildings.

12. **Mr Ho Hin-ming** asked whether the survey had included the information of illegal structures and structural alteration as building dilapidation might be caused by illegal structures or unprofessional conversion.

13. **Mr Calvin Lam Che-leung** responded that when carrying out visual inspection, the investigators had recorded the illegal structures detected or structures with noticeable conversion. As for the indistinguishable conversion, the investigators had considerable difficulty in inspecting such hidden conversion since there was no approved plan readily available for comparison. For this reason, there is no guarantee that all conversion could be recorded. Nevertheless, if the investigators noticed cases of immediate danger during visual inspection, the cases would be referred to the Buildings Department or Police at once. Should they found the cases of potential danger, they would gather together the cases and refer them to the Buildings Department for follow-up action within a short period of time.

14. **Dr Lawrence Poon Wing-cheung** asked whether the number of blocks in the sub-areas or the number of units in the buildings were used in the survey as the base number for presenting the percentage of building dilapidation in the sub-areas. Since the buildings in the district varied in height, the number of units among the buildings might be different. He reckoned that if the number of units was to be used for calculation, the seriousness of the dilapidation problem in the district and the redevelopment need would be better known. This would be of assistance in making resource allocation. Thus, he suggested using the number of units as the base number in the survey.

15. **Mr Calvin Lam Che-leung** stated that in surveying the local building conditions, the number of building blocks over 30 years instead of the number of units in the buildings was used for calculation. He said that most of the buildings over 30 years covered by the survey (i.e. the buildings with occupation permits issued before 1981) were of eight storeys or less, and the number of units among the blocks was broadly the same. He explained that some definite criteria were adopted in designating the building as a block, and reference had been made to the lot demarcation of the Lands Department. He believed that in the course of designation, the number of units among the blocks should be with little difference.

16. **Ms Iris Tam Siu-ying** added that considerable difficulty would arise if units were used for calculation during the survey because in the concerned buildings, a flight of stairs could lead to several units rather than just two units, particularly when sub-divided units were increasingly common. It was really difficult for the survey carried out by the URA to ascertain the number of units in a block.

17. **The Chairman** understood that the survey conducted by the URA used blocks for calculation. This had something to do with their major building redevelopment work. He also concluded that the purpose of the building conditions survey was mainly for use by the URA.

**Agenda Item 3 The Vanishing Tong Laus: Case Study on Conservation and Adaptive Reuse of Historic Shop Houses in Kowloon City and Other Districts in Hong Kong
(Discussion Paper No.: DURF KC/01/2012)**

18. **The Chairman** welcomed and invited Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming, Conservation Architect, to brief and share with Members on the history of Tong Laus, the examples of conservation and adaptive reuse of shophouses. He said that Members could make reference to the briefing when considering and offering proposals on the conservation and revitalisation initiatives in the Kowloon City District.

19. **Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming** briefed Members on different terminology (including Tong Laus, Verandahs and Shophouses) and historical origin of Tong Laus, and introduced the building typology and differentiation of Tong Laus at different times and places and their influence on streetscape. Mr Lee compared ways of preservation of Tong Laus at different places and relevant cultural heritage significance, and investigated the considerations for adaptive reuse of Tong Laus. He cited some cases for adaptive reuse of old buildings in Hong Kong, including Woo Cheong Pawn Shop in Wanchai, the Cattle Depot in To Kwa Wan and the Blue House cluster in Wan Chai, and highlighted the importance of getting support from proper conservation policy. He concluded that the biggest challenge in the long run was how to foster sustainable development in the old communities and successfully revitalize old buildings under effective proposals without solely relying on the financial assistance of the government.

20. **The Chairman** thanked Mr Lee for sharing his studies with Members and invited Members to comment on the issue.

21. **Mr James Mathew Fong** noticed that in the conservation case of the Blue House cluster in Wanchai quoted by Mr Lee, the original residents could have the priority of choosing to reoccupy the former units after rehabilitation. He asked about the transitional arrangements during rehabilitation and whether the internal maintenance had to gain the consent of the residents. In addition, whether the residents would be given extra financial assistance for future maintenance after the rehabilitation of the buildings.

22. **Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming** responded that the distinctive characteristic of this conservation case was the participation of the Blue House cluster residents. He stated that the residents had set up an organisation which applied for the revitalisation scheme together with St. James Settlement. The residents were participants in terms of architectural design and conservation proposal and had the opportunity of group participation. The rehabilitation scheme would, to a certain extent, affect the daily life of the residents. Fortunately there were nine Tong Laus in the Blue House cluster, including Blue House in Stone Nullah Lane, Yellow House in Hing Wan Street and Orange House in King Sing Street.

Regarding the transitional arrangements, the scheme would be phased: carrying out rehabilitation work for Yellow House and Orange House first, and then undertaking rehabilitation work for Blue House after rehabilitating Yellow House and Orange House. The affected residents could stay at Blue House which was to be rehabilitated. When rehabilitation work for Blue House commenced, the residents could move to the rehabilitated Yellow House and Orange House. Each affected resident was only required to move away from and back to their unit once. Under the rehabilitation scheme, the architectural feature of the external walls would be retained. With respect to internal rehabilitation, new facilities would be incorporated in Tong Laus, including stabilization of structure, improvement of sewage disposal facilities, water supply system and electricity system, and the inclusion of kitchens, bathrooms, lifts, passageways and bridges to link up the cluster. Furthermore, the open space behind the cluster would be used as public area. Since the scheme required the residents to participate in community activities actively, the residents who intended to live in the Blue House cluster in future had to lodge applications for assessment by the kaifongs to see whether they were suitable to live in the Blue House cluster.

23. As regards the above conservation issue, **Mr Ho Hin-ming** had the following questions and observations: (1) Whether there was sufficient land for development in Hong Kong when such clusters were conserved at the same time; (2) With reference to the cluster conservation cases overseas such as Nanyang, whether their population growth rate was different from the population growth rate in Tong Laus of Hong Kong; (3) He noticed that most of the residents of Nanyang conservation areas were elders, and the youth mostly moved to the city. He asked whether Hong Kong had to conserve these buildings to accommodate the retired elders; (4) He considered that the individual conservation examples of Hong Kong quoted were not so successful for the reason that Tong Laus in these examples were modernized after conversion. Their appearance was not the same as that in the past and could only be regarded as “conservation-like” examples; (5) As to the conservation case of the Blue House cluster, how much resources did the government allocate for conservation, and whether more resources could be provided by the government or private sector for the similar conservation projects.

24. **Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming** responded that the above areas involved government policy. Mr Lee stated that to share the conservation experience of other countries' old city areas and compare with the situation of Hong Kong's old areas was intended to let Members ponder over the renewal direction of Hong Kong's old areas and the implementation methods available. Yet Hong Kong could take account of its actual situation and would not necessarily follow the overseas models. In respect of land resource problem, as Kowloon City was in the vicinity of Kai Tak Development Area, this vast tract of undeveloped land would provide opportunity for the renewal of Kowloon City old area, and it was believed that integrated consideration of the areas could be given. Additionally, in the example of Malacca old city area mentioned above, the local government chose to retain the appearance of the old area and had development in the new area. This well reflected the importance of government policy support when choosing urban renewal proposal.

25. In reply to the question of **the Chairman** about the general situation of Tong Laus in Kowloon City District, **Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming** stated that according to his observation, there was not any street in the sub-areas of Kowloon City wholly occupied with shophouses cluster, and only about eight to ten single-blocks of shophouses were in existence. In Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan old areas of the whole Kowloon City Administrative District, there were also not many shophouses remaining, and the majority of the buildings in the district were post-war balcony-type buildings. He indicated that most Tong Laus in the district were under private ownership, and all Tong Laus were not declared monuments or Grade 1 historic buildings.

26. **The Chairman** remarked that owing to the ownership problem and absence of historic grading for these Tong Laus, the conservation of such buildings mainly depended on the intention of the owners.

27. Referring to the conservation case of the Blue House cluster in Wan Chai, **Ms Iris Tam Siu-ying** supplemented that the buildings of Blue House coated with blue paint fell within the land recovered by the government, and the adjoining pieces of private land were initially purchased by the Hong Kong Housing Society ("HKHS") when helping

the URA to undertake the conservation plan. Later, the HKHS withdrew from the plan, and surrendered the land concerned to the government. As such, the whole property right of the Blue House cluster was eventually acquired by the government. Afterwards, the government invited tenders for the conservation project through the “Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme”. St. James Settlement won the tender with the conservation concept of “retaining the building and its setting tenants”. The government therefore took the case as a pilot scheme for conservation and revitalisation. Apart from some Blue House residents who asked for in-situ rehousing, the URA also rehoused some residents there. The government had to reserve a sum for St. James Settlement to serve the purpose of carrying out essential maintenance for Blue House and upgrading its facilities in future. After that financial assistance would be rendered for a period of two years so that the operation of the St. James Settlement could be sustained. However, if the organisation could not continue with its operation after two years when no financial assistance was available, the project would be terminated and the government would recover the property concerned.

28. **Mr James Mathew Fong** opined that without the provision of government land and the assistance of various departments and organisations, the process for handling the Blue House cluster case would surely not be so smooth because revitalisation of the old areas involved a lot of private property right problems.

29. **Ms Winnie So Chui-ying** added that the conservation project of the Blue House cluster in Wan Chai was one of the projects of the “Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (Phase II)” of the Commissioner for Heritage’s Office, Development Bureau. The project was previously discussed in the Public Works Subcommittee of the Legislative Council and would be submitted to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in April again for funding application so as to proceed with the revitalisation works.

30. **The Chairman** was concerned about the private property right problem encountered during the conservation of Tong Laus. He asked Ms Iris Tam Siu-ying to explain the consideration and selection criteria of the URA for purchasing Tong Laus at Prince Edward Road West

for conservation earlier on, and whether Tong Laus in Kowloon City met the criteria.

31. **Ms Iris Tam Siu-ying** responded that the URA started to study the conservation of shophouses in 2008 covering more than 70 blocks of shophouses in the target area. It was found that most shophouses were distributed sporadically, with two or three blocks connected occasionally. There were only two rows of fairly complete shophouses clusters at Shanghai Street and Prince Edward Road West. Shanghai Street shophouses cluster was formed by two groups of four-block connected shophouses and a group of two-block connected shophouses, mixed with two blocks of post-war buildings in the middle, and the building conditions were pretty poor. On the other hand, Prince Edward Road West shophouses cluster was formed by a group of eight-block connected shophouses and a group of two-block connected shophouses, mixed with two blocks of tall buildings in the middle, and the building conditions were relatively better. The URA assigned “Grade One” to these twenty blocks of shophouses in two rows which were relatively complete and quite deserving of preservation, and the compensation offered to the owners was higher than the market price. The relevant shophouses were zoned “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Shophouses for Commercial and/or Cultural Uses” on the statutory plan. The conservation plan was implemented by way of a development scheme under the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance. In connection with the “Grade Two” connected shophouses (such as Lok Hau Fook in Kowloon City), the URA had lobbied the owners to sell the properties for conservation by taking a voluntary purchase approach. But the owners generally gave a lukewarm response. In relation to some single-block and feature shophouses, the URA assigned “Grade Three” to these buildings to draw a distinction. The URA would set out some conditions to the owners, and establish a matching fund to rehabilitate the buildings. The URA would give financial assistance to the owners through the fund for rehabilitation, and the owners had to agree to the conditions, such as no demolition of the buildings within five years and opening them for visit by the public at a particular time. The URA was now handling two cases. Since the owners had to make investment and comply with specific conditions, the effectiveness had yet to be evaluated.

32. **The Chairman** concluded that the main consideration of the URA in conserving Tong Laus was whether Tong Laus concerned were a row of complete cluster. Since the URA and the locals of Kowloon City might have differing views on the conservation of Tong Laus, he proposed further examining the considerations in conserving Tong Laus in future.

33. **Ms Winky So Yuen-ling** expressed that according to the information of the Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”), the monuments in Kowloon City District did not include Tong Laus as most of the local monuments were churches, temples and hospitals, mainly the western buildings with long history. Ms So asked Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming whether some special Tong Laus in Kowloon City District had preservation value from the cultural and historical perspectives.

34. **Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming** responded that from the cultural heritage angle, vernacular architectures signify the life style of the contemporary community. If the architectures ceased to exist, the past life could only be traced by pictures or written records. Judging from the pictures in the past, the value of Tong Laus in terms of architectural beauty was not too great. Instead, they occupied a more important role in preserving community life style, community network and mutual elements of culture. He suggested that emphasis should not only be placed on the appearance and year of construction of the old buildings when exploring the conservation of the old areas. Attention should also be given as to whether the old life style of the community had to be conserved because it was always the case that the cost had to be paid for the conservation of the old areas when the redevelopment potential was sacrificed. If choice had been made for the conservation of the old areas, the land supply and town planning policies should complement each other. He cited Lee Theatre as an example, indicating that if supported by a policy allowing the transfer of development potential at that time, there would be a greater opportunity to preserve Lee Theatre building.

35. **Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming** also provided supplementary information about whether there was a need to change the functions or add modern facilities when rehabilitating and revitalising Tong Laus. He pointed out that different people had divergent views on the matter. Nevertheless, the overseas cases reflected that even the conservation

requirement of the world-class cultural heritage accepted the renewal of functions and addition of modern facilities during revitalisation. The provision of suitable facilities only reflected the need of contemporary life. Besides, the inclusion of new functions could often attract a new group of people to use them. As a result, the old buildings could be successfully revitalized.

36. **Ms Siu Yuen-sheung** considered that conservation depended on the demand of the district. Kowloon City was a district with long history. On the one hand, there was a large number of private buildings with high redevelopment value. On the other hand, there were aspirations for conservation. She was of the opinion that a proper balance should be struck between conservation and development. In Lai Wan of Guangzhou, the local government preserved the verandahs at the front elevation of Tong Laus and redeveloped the buildings at the back. The conservation project was thus of more distinguishing feature. Such experience could be used for reference when renewing Kowloon City District in future. She hoped that the consultants would further study the conservation approach and liaise with the concerned owners for achieving such a balance.

37. **Mr Wen Choy-bon** took the view that the Eastern Cotton Mills cluster near Mok Cheong Street in Kowloon City District deserved preservation. He indicated that the cluster was of considerable architectural feature and was the sole site related to textile industry. The Kowloon City District Council had actually taken the initiative in putting forward preservation proposal to the AMO. As far as he knew, the owner had proposed preserving the building of his own accord. That said, the revitalisation proposal did not comply with the requirement of the statutory plan. Hence, communication and cooperation with various government departments was still required. He hoped that the Eastern Cotton Mills cluster could be preserved and revitalized, and would become a focal point in the Kowloon City District for recalling the textile industry.

38. **The Chairman** pointed out that the revitalisation case of the Eastern Cotton Mills cluster might involve town planning issue. He invited Ms Fiona Lung Siu-yuk to provide details of the case.

39. **Ms Fiona Lung Siu-yuk** responded that information relating to the case was not available at the moment. Relevant information would be provided to Members in due course.

[Post-meeting note: The Eastern Cotton Mills located at 7 Mok Cheong Street is a Grade 3 historic building. This building with Nos. 70-78, Sung Wong Toi Road is zoned "Comprehensive Development Area (2)" on the approved Ma Tau Kok Outline Zoning Plan. In December 2003, the Town Planning Board (TPB) approved the proposed comprehensive residential development with retail shops at that location, but the approval stated if the development permitted was not commenced on or before 5 December 2007, the planning permission would lapse. Since the building plan at that location was approved on 30 November 2009, the planning permission for that development had lapsed. Future development at that location should comply with the prevailing requirements of the Outline Zoning Plan, and only proceed after obtaining planning permission from the TPB.]

40. **Dr Lawrence Poon Wing-cheung** indicated that owing to different statutes, conservation in the foreign countries was easier as compared to Hong Kong. The statutes of foreign countries were stricter as redevelopment potential was not great and the government could afford financial assistance to owners for maintenance. In regard to the conservation of the old areas in Hong Kong, maintenance fee subsidized by the government was, relatively speaking, not the strongest incentive. On the contrary, the redevelopment potential of the old areas in Hong Kong was greater. If the development control of the land lease was not too strict, the owners could take joint action to pull down Tong Laus for redevelopment given the fact that most of the Tong Laus in the old areas are usually of low-density involving not many property rights. Under the circumstances, unless the government played a leading role or there was legislative control, the conservation of the old areas just basing on commercial consideration would certainly be beset with difficulties. To conserve the old areas, he held the view that several factors had to be considered in detail: (1) conservation value of the old areas; (2) land lease control, and (3) property right problem.

41. **Mr Ho Hin-ming** stated that according to his observation, there would be no private sub-area in the Kowloon City District for conservation. For individual single-block dwellings, the difficulty would be even greater. Conversely, there would be opportunity to conserve the government Cattle Depot. Mr Ho concurred with the opinion of Ms Siu Yuen-sheung expressed earlier on, and proposed making stipulation about the preservation of the verandahs at the front elevation of the buildings during redevelopment by administrative means. However, he did not concur that the scene in popular films showing the old urban areas would be a factor triggering for conservation.

42. **The Chairman** thanked Mr Eric Lee Chung-ming for his briefing and Members for offering their comments.

**Agenda Item 5 Preparation of the Preliminary Urban Renewal Proposals for Kowloon City and Programme for Relevant Studies
(Discussion Paper No.: DURF KC/03/2012)**

43. **The Chairman** invited the Secretary to introduce the content of the Discussion Paper to Members.

44. **The Secretary** told Members that the replacement page for page 3 of the Discussion Paper was tabled at the meeting. She briefed Members on the background, vision of the proposals, approach and proposed different urban renewal areas, and reported on the progress of the funding application in respect of the relevant studies submitted to Urban Renewal Fund Limited. **The Secretary** said that the relevant studies were expected to commence in the second quarter of this year.

45. **The Chairman** stated that the redevelopment within the Redevelopment Priority Area mentioned in the Paper could be led by the URA and/or private developers. He opined that private developers should include owner-initiated group. While the different urban renewal areas proposed in the Paper were some preliminary ideas, if the properties were included in (a) Redevelopment Priority Area, (b) Rehabilitation and Revitalisation Priority Area, and (c) Mixed Redevelopment and

Rehabilitation Area, he would like to know the impacts on the owners, in particular what expectations the owners should have regarding the “Demand-Led Redevelopment Project” and “Facilitating Services” pilot schemes introduced by the URA earlier on.

46. **Ms Iris Tam Siu-ying** expressed that with respect to the two pilot schemes, the cases where project applicants’ old buildings were located in the “Redevelopment Area” proposed by the DURF would be well received by the URA. But the URA would have reservation about the applications in case the old buildings were located in the “Conservation Area” eventually proposed by the DURF. If the applicants’ properties were located in the Mixed Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Area mentioned above, it did not mean that the URA would not accept the applications. She clarified that the areas proposed presently were still at the conceptual stage. The URA would certainly consider the proposals of the DURF once they were refined.

47. **Dr Tang Bo-sin** commented that the current proposed areas were still quite preliminary. He believed that the study consultant commissioned in future would provide comments or amendments in respect of these preliminary proposals through the public engagement activities.

48. **Ms Winky So Yuen-ling** pointed out that the formation of the DURF aimed to integrate the opinions of the locals and experts, and submit urban renewal proposals for reference of the government and URA. The DURF was not an administrative organisation and its proposed areas were not under statutory restriction. She believed that the URA would refer to the DURF’s opinions when considering various urban renewal factors.

49. **Mr Ho Hin-ming** noticed that it seemed the adjoining Kai Tak Development Area was not taken into account in the proposals. In his view, the consultants commissioned in future should consider the opportunities brought by Kai Tak Development Area and the integrated development of the old and new areas.

50. **Ms Siu Yuen-sheung** supported the delineation of different urban renewal areas proposed for the Kowloon City District, including redevelopment, rehabilitation and revitalisation, and the setting up of heritage trail. As regards revitalising the business area, she expressed that Hung Hom Area was the centre of jewellery industry in Hong Kong. The government could consider providing a jewellery street to capitalize on the business opportunities. In relation to revitalising the waterfront promenade, she suggested that the government and developers should explore the feasibility of opening up the vacant Green Island Pier near the existing Laguna Verde to link up with Tsim Sha Tsui and To Kwa Wan waterfront. With regard to beautifying private streets, Ms Siu declared that she was the chairlady of the Incorporated Owners of Shung Tse Houses at Sung Kit Street. She indicated that there were many private streets in the Kowloon City District. Owing to private property rights, the government would not provide maintenance service. Sung Kit Street was a gourmet street. All along the kaifongs intended to beautify the street with distinguishing features. She proposed that the government should consider providing financial assistance to improve the environment of private streets.

51. In **Dr Lawrence Poon Wing-cheung's** view, the delineation of different urban renewal areas was a very sensitive topic. He proposed that in the future open documents of the DURF, including consultation documents, study reports or plans, annotations should be included to specify the purposes in delineating different areas. This could safeguard the DURF and account to the citizens, thus avoiding unnecessary misunderstanding of the public or media. The Chairman agreed to this proposal.

52. **The Secretary** added that the preliminary urban renewal proposals would form the basis for future public consultation. She elucidated that the consultants commissioned in future would consider and follow up public opinions closely. The findings could assist the DURF to prepare the urban renewal plan for Kowloon City and bring forward the proposal to the government. The Secretariat noted Dr Lawrence Poon Wing-cheung's opinion on requesting for the inclusion of annotations on relevant plans and documents in future.

53. **Ms Christine Kwok Mun-yee** asked whether the six areas proposed by the Secretariat had order of priority and whether redevelopment areas would become relatively more important due to the building collapse case. As for revitalisation projects such as the setting up of heritage trail, in fact they could be handled through the existing mechanism of the government. It appeared that there was no need to have discussion or study on such revitalisation initiatives at the DURF.

54. **The Secretary** responded that the proposed six areas involved different domains and there was no order of priority. In the process of public engagement, apart from consulting the citizens about the six areas, public consultation would be sought on the priority of various areas in the district.

55. **The Chairman** perceived Ms Kwok's concern and agreed that ageing building was really an important problem in need of tackling. Having said that, urban renewal was not restricted to redevelopment. Other initiatives including rehabilitation, revitalisation and conservation were also covered. The Chairman indicated that the terms of reference of the DURF also covered these domains.

56. In response to Ms Kwok's concern, **Ms Winnie So Chui-ying** stated that the DURF would handle issues concerning various urban renewal domains. She pointed out that the formation of the DURF was originated from the recommendation of the Urban Renewal Strategy. The DURF advised the government on district-based urban renewal works from a holistic and integrated perspective. There would be conservation domain in addition to redevelopment and rehabilitation domains.

57. **Mr Wong Kam Sing** opined that in preparing the preliminary urban renewal proposals, apart from considering the hygiene of the living environment and air/noise pollution factors, enhancement of the aspects on air ventilation and urban climate could also be taken into account.

58. **The Secretary** expressed that the future studies would investigate the air ventilation issue.

59. **The Chairman** concluded that the proposed urban renewal areas would be refined through broad-based public engagement exercises and consultancy studies in future. The refined proposals would be submitted by the DURF to the government departments and relevant organisations for consideration and could be used by the government and relevant organisations as guidelines, assisting them in implementing urban renewal policies and measures.

Agenda Item 6 Any Other Business

60. There being no other matters for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Secretariat

Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum

February 2012