

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation took place between 23/10/2009 to 8/11 2009.

The exhibition held on the ground floor of 3 Sun Street in the heart of the study area ran for two weeks including three weekends. Comprising a brief history of the area, a written description of the proposals, six 'before and after' images and a scale model of the proposed scheme, visitors were invited to post their views and comments in order to better understand the needs and wishes of the local community and general public in shaping the design development of the project.

Methodology:

An exhibition venue located within the study area was seen as an important factor garnering public participation particularly among locals. Similarly, a relatively informal exhibition design sought to attract a wider audience with graphics extended to the pavement area to attract passer-by.

A formal press briefing held at the venue one day prior to the formal opening in addition to a reception for key stakeholders and facilitators, and subsequent coverage in major publications also helped to extend the invitation a wider audience.

The main information gathering technique used a simple 'comment card'. The statement "I believe these proposed Old Wanchai revitalization initiatives will bring enhanced social and economic benefits to the residents, visitors and businesses in the area" along side a check box together with a space inviting "other comments". Basic information requested at the bottom of the card included a request for the name, signature and date. Besides written comments, visitors were approached by the full time attendant at the exhibition venue both to offer help in understanding the proposals and to gather additional feedback.

Key comments received:

1. Support for retention of the existing local culture, community and historic structures
2. Enliven the area
3. Simple and robust design
4. Low-key design and improve pedestrian accessibility

HISTORIC SIGNAGES AT DOMINION GARDEN & KWONG MING PARK

The design of the signages incorporate local arts & history of Wanchai, highlighting the heritage of the neighbourhood; reassembling the collective memory.



Open Space Tour

Project: Old Wanchai Revitalization Initiatives - Revitalizing Old Wanchai
Client: Swire Properties Limited
Size: Approx. 13,000sq.m
Cost: Approx. HK\$25M

The revitalization of St. Francis Street, Star Street, Sun Street and Moon Street is a landmark project intended to rebuild a sense of local identity and purpose within the historic context of old Wanchai. Conceived as Public Private Participation project with capital costs provided by Swire Properties Ltd, designs are sensitive to the interests of multiple stakeholders including government departments, private landowners and the general public involving a public consultation exercise garnering the views of over 700 individuals. The project includes revitalization of the streetscape together with the integration of two pocket parks merged into a fluid urban landscape. Project implementation and ongoing maintenance handover to government further illustrate the cooperation and continued support for the community and value assigned to the urban fabric of the area. This tour recaps key issues and decision making in the context of the built design commencing with Moon Street followed by Kwong Ming Park managed by LCSD, Sun Street and finally Dominion Garden under private management but opened to the public in a design that merges public and private spaces into the urban context.



SUMMARY

Old established businesses are often housed in new buildings, but new innovative businesses and social initiatives need old buildings.

The St. Francis Street, Star Street, Sun Street and Moon Street area was developed in the 1900s. Although none of the original Edwardian terraced buildings survives, the street pattern retains the traditional Hong Kong shop-house urban character. Now the area has a mix of small offices and retail blocks and ground level distribution warehouses. The general atmosphere is one of being slightly down at heel and in gradual decline.

The objective of this scheme is to help rebuild a sense of identity and purpose in the Star Street / Sun Street / Moon Street / St. Francis Street area. We hope to encourage the area to play an important role for the future of Hong Kong and the existing community and building fabric are important in this regeneration process.

We begin by understanding what is special about the area. The low-rise urban environment, the mature trees, the inclusive nature of the neighbourhood allowing both the trendy and the local to co-exist, the absence of heavy vehicular traffic, the relaxed atmosphere of an urban village, the stable local community, the feeling of a safe district, the historic connection with the Roman Catholic missionary in the 19th Century. The presence of creative industry such as metal craft workshops, designer studios, art galleries, and the proximity of the area to the business districts of Wanchai and Admiralty are all valuable assets. We should aim to retain and build on these assets.

The area could become home to new and innovative initiatives in sectors such as organic food and beverages, social enterprises, local arts and crafts, cultural tourism, design and multimedia. It should provide accommodation for the people and businesses involved in these initiatives. Most of the people and companies in innovative, fledgling businesses cannot afford large luxury apartments and plush offices but need to be near the centre of action. These people often also have the seemingly contradictory tendencies to frequent both cheap cafes and stylish restaurants. They take pride in living in studios adjacent to real tenements and industrial workshops. The social and cultural inclusiveness of the Star Street area is a precious urban characteristic.

There are three parts to the Plan. The first part is to improve the physical environment. We should show our commitment to the long term future of the area by installing good quality paving slabs, durable and thoughtfully designed street furniture and planting that provides shading from the hot midday sun while screening overlooking neighbouring buildings. The second part is to empower and enable innovative social and business initiatives to take root in the area. Quality is more important than quantity. Experience has shown that one innovative small enterprise can lead to the regeneration of an entire street. The third part is a two-way communication process enabling the community, local government and general public to participate in the regeneration of the Star Street to St. Francis Street area.

This scheme builds on the belief that the existing urban fabric and local community of Hong Kong is one of our greatest assets. It is possible to develop a sustainable urban future through the development of this strength.

