

2 Pages submitted by Fax and E-mail

26th July 2005

Chair and Members of the Town Planning Board
c/o The Secretary of the Town Planning Board
15th Floor, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road,
North Point, Hong Kong

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Re: Application No. A/H25/5 to the Town Planning Board regarding the area between Phase I and Phase II of the HKCEC, Wanchai, Hong Kong for an Exhibition Hall

Honourable Chair and Members of the Town Planning Board,

1. Since our formal launch in June 2005 we have been studying the threats and opportunities for Harbour-front enhancement in Hong Kong. It has become clear to us that one of the key threats is failing to act on the need for harbour-front enhancement, and to apply a consistent process to review new and on-going proposals.
2. We strongly encourage the Board to establish a harbour planning process for evaluation of the captioned or subsequent applications including, but not limited to:
 - i. Endorsing as a matter of urgency the Harbour Planning Principles updated by the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee in conjunction with the Planning Department.
 - ii. Requesting the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC) to undertake a evaluation/ Harbour-front Enhancement Assessment of the captioned project, giving due consideration of its alignment against the Harbour Planning Principles;
 - iii. Deferring decision making on the application until the HEC has considered the proposal and included its findings in its planning of the Wanchai harbour-front. (We believe this proposal should be a part of the ongoing Harbour-front Enhancement Review for Wanchai, Causeway Bay and adjoining Areas (HER), and the Planning and Engineering Review for Wan Chai Development II (Wanchai Review)).
3. For members' information, we have undertaken an initial review of the proposed development against the Harbour Planning Principles and believe that a significant gap exists between the harbour-front enhancement principles and the details outlined in the proposal.
4. While we are certain that the issue of zoning of the proposed HKCEC expansion site has come to the attention of members, we highlight that the OZP for the site is currently designated as road, and will evidently need to be rezoned. This in itself is not of course a major obstacle without precedent, but will require time for consideration.
5. Similarly, we are uncertain of the specific provisions of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance, and whether decking over the harbour is in compliance with the letter or the spirit of the ordinance. We bring these issues to your attention for your consideration.

6. A wide range of technical issues will need to be taken into account including but again not limited to:
- i. Possible physical and visual impairment of the harbour and harbour-front;
 - ii. Impact of traffic movement to and from the HKCEC;
 - iii. Impact of restricted access to the area, to accommodate exhibition, shows, and VIP movements;
 - iv. Interface with traffic networks including the planned Central Wanchai Bypass;
 - v. Interface with adjacent facilities both existing and planned;
 - vi. The public aspirations for harbour-front enhancement including, among others, accessibility, public space, vibrancy and a continuous East-West promenade;
 - vii. The limited North-South pedestrian connectivity to the harbour, and the facilities;
 - viii. The public aspirations to minimize impairment of the harbour and harbour-front;

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your consideration of our comments and requests, and to encourage you to join us in our commitment to realizing a world-class harbour, by setting a transparent and consistent process for harbour-front planning and enhancement, aligned with the Harbour Planning Principles.

Yours sincerely,
Harbour Business Forum



Mr. Andrew Long
Chairman, Executive Committee