

President's Corner 會長的話

TAKING ANOTHER LOOK AT URBAN RENEWAL

The new managing director of the Urban Renewal Authority, Mr Wai Chi-sing, an ex Under-Secretary with the Development Bureau, has said he is looking to find the right balance between demand-led projects and comprehensive planning in redeveloping the city.

The demand-led approach is essentially a bottom up approach where the URA responds to submissions by property owners to implement redevelopment of buildings. While this of necessity leads to a piecemeal approach, in many ways incremental development brings into focus how we have always defined urban renewal in the Hong Kong context, and how we differentiate this from redevelopment and regeneration. The historical problem with urban renewal in the city, is that it rarely renews – rather it replaces. A consistent underlying problem however is the difficulty in framing renewal within a well-considered urban design framework that genuinely benefits the community.

Renewal goes on all the time to a lesser or greater extent of its own volition, unless there are prevailing reasons that prevent it such as conservation area zoning. Renewal can best be described as the physical change stemming from prevailing economic forces. It is normally stimulated when the actual building on a site comes to be worth less than the land it is sitting on, and as we know land values in urban HK are colossal – some of the highest in the world. All land in the city is zoned and has a development value according to its plot ratio designation. This means that all relatively low-rise sites are vulnerable to either private or institutionally orchestrated redevelopment in response to simple market values. This is, in practice, very nearly written into our prevailing planning and development process. In the post-war period shop-houses began to give way to t'ang lau tenements, then to mansion blocks and latterly to gigantic high-rise complexes.

On the other hand regeneration, wherever it occurs, requires a comprehensive and integrated vision aimed at lasting improving through measures that resolve a range of problems in the urban domain. It is best implemented through small one-off projects that are meaningful to the community and consolidate

local identity. The complexity of Hong Kong's urban area, coupled with its high land values, indicate that improvements need to be carried out in an adaptive way to provide for continuity of urban character rather than predetermined, totalizing solutions that bulldoze all the character away. So this process must simultaneously relate to aspects of physical fabric, social structures, and economic conditions. Regeneration therefore has a long-term strategic purpose, and should represent all stakeholders who have a legitimate interest in the city building process.

To get the renewal model right is not easy. Up to the present time our renewal mechanisms have arguably been overly simplistic in genuine city building terms, and these together with the speed of implementation and lack of development or design control too often conspire to replace positive aspects of urbanism with less than positive ones. The gain we get is new building that has often in the past been spatially removed from the grain of the city. In the process Hong Kong is rapidly losing not just its distinctive urban neighbourhoods but its intangible heritage and social traditions. Over the past thirty years Hong Kong's urban area has gradually become spatially undifferentiated. We have lost not just older buildings of character but entire streets and small neighbourhoods, and the businesses and communities that go with them.

As other cities have found to their cost, planning often suffers from a tyranny of easy development decisions. In response genuine urban regeneration must of necessity represent a bottom-up process. This has to be handled slowly and very sensitively. Few points are scored for speed when dealing with comprehensive aspects of city betterment.

Mr Wai has stated that the authority will continue to adopt a holistic and district-based approach to redevelopment and he has laid out four major directions in urban planning, which are well taken. They are high density, low carbon, walkability and smart city. He is also looking to bring in more walking streets and turn Hong Kong into a "walkable city".

In addition to the four strategies of redevelopment, rehabilitation, revitalisation and preservation, Mr Wai has added "retrofitting". The new strategy includes adding barrier-free access facilities and energy saving facilities to the buildings during rehabilitation.

These are all welcome words. There is much more to renewal and regeneration than comprehensive redevelopment. While the Land Development Corporation, the predecessor to the URA, could legitimately facilitate redevelopment because a number of its target enclaves were in advanced state of deterioration, this is scarcely the case today. Smart cities genuinely pursue liveable city scenarios. One positive start would be to realign the URA as an Urban Regeneration Authority.

We welcome C S Wai's appointment, and are extremely pleased that he has accepted our invitation to

speak to members at the HKIUD Annual General Meeting on 5 September 2016.

PETER COOKSON SMITH

President

June 2016

Recent Events and Meetings / 近期活動及會議

BCI Asia Awards 2016 - Hong Kong



Peter Cookson Smith was invited to be the Guest of Honour at the 12th BCI Asia Awards in Hong Kong on 3 June 2016, Friday

Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas: Invitation to Focus Group Meeting (Professional Institutes)



The Planning Department invited HKIUD members to participate in the focus group meeting (FGM) for the Wan Chai North and North Point harbourfront to discuss in details about the harbourfront enhancement proposals on 11 June 2016.

[More](#)

KODW 2016: "design. cities. health in the new economy" 13-17 June 2016 @ Hotel Icon



The Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC) invited HKIUD members to join the Knowledge of Design Week (KODW) from 13 to 17 June, 2016 for which HKIUD was a supporting organization

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PROFESSIONAL SEMINAR SERIES: Toward a "Green-Smart" City: How ICT Can Help Tackle Local and Global Environmental Challenges

Planning Department invited HKIUD members to the Professional Seminar Series: Toward a "Green-Smart" City: How ICT Can Help Tackle Local and Global Environmental Challenges on 18 June 2016.



HKIUD Meetings Calendar (June)

六月會議

Date	Time	Meetings	Venue
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23/6 (Tue)	6:30 pm	Council Meeting	Immediate Past President's Office
29/6(Wed)	6:30 pm	PAC Meeting	Vice President's Office

Upcoming Events and Meetings / 活動及會議預告

HKIUD Urban Design Award 2016 - Call for Nomination

The Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design (HKIUD) Urban Design Award 2016 aims at recognising urban design related projects with outstanding performance and contributions in promoting excellence in Urban Design Practice. This award is now opened to all relevant projects under the following three categories.

1. Award for Urban Design Built project
2. Award for Urban Design Plan / Concept
3. Award for Research

Submission Deadline: 11 July 2016 (Monday) 3:00 pm HK Time

For more details, please visit our website: <http://www.hkiud.org/en/hkiud-urban-design-award-2016>

HKIUD
香港城市設計學會
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design

Betterment of the City
URBAN DESIGN AWARDS
2016

Award Categories

- Award for Urban Design - Built Project
- Award for Urban Design - Plan / Concept
- Award for Research

Submission Requirements

1. No limitation to the project nature and size.
2. The Submission should include a CD or USB containing the digital copies in pdf format of all the graphics as shown in the submitted hard copies (Resolution not less than 350 dpi, pdf file size not larger than 20MB for 2 panels).
3. Nomination must be made by a Member of HKIUD.
4. It is the responsibility of the participant to have acquired the consent from the Project Owner for taking part in the Award. The participant also agrees that the HKIUD shall henceforth have possession of the unequivocal copyrights of all the design and materials as submitted.
5. All submission must be made in English.

Enquiry Contact

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Submission Deadline:
11 July 2016

HKIS Annual Conference 2016 on 10 September - "Kowloon East – Building Our Future Model City"



HKIS Annual Conference 2016



The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS) would like to invite HKIUD Members to participate in the HKIS Annual Conference 2016 on 10 September. Details are as follows:

Date: 10th September 2016 (Saturday)

Time: 9:00am to 4:30pm

Venue: JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong

Theme: Kowloon East – Building Our Future Model City

Guest of Honor: Mr. CHAN Mo Po, Paul, MH, JP, Secretary for Development, Development Bureau, HKSAR Government

[More](#)

The 8th Guangdong Hong Kong Macau Sustainable Development Conference 2016 [23 September 2016]

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE), Guangdong Provincial Association for Science and Technology and the Macau Institution of Engineers would like to invite HKIUD to the 8th Guangdong Hong Kong Macau Sustainable Development Conference 2016 on 23 September 2016 for which HKIUD is one of the Supporting Organisations.



[More](#)

17th Asian Congress of Architects – ACA17



The Hong Kong Institute of Architects - HKIA would like to invite HKIUD members to the Asian Congress of Architects (ACA) Forum which is a major regional congress held every two years that take the form of a large international congress for fostering intellectual exchange and strategic discussion on regional challenges, initiatives and development amongst hundreds of architects

The theme for the ACA17 in 2016 is “Growth and Diversity: The Green Age of Asia”.

Date: 25 September 2016 to 1 October 2016

Venue: Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

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Walk21 Hong Kong Conference



WALKING PUTS
PEOPLE FIRST
3-7 October 2016



Civic Exchange, one of the organisers of the Walk21 Hong Kong Conference 2016 would like to invite HKIUD participate in the coming Conference from 3 to 7 October 2016 for which HKIUD is one of the Supporting Organisations.

[More](#)

Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design Limited

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