

Section 12A of the Town Planning Ordinance

**Proposed Amendments to the
Central Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H4/12, and the
Central (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan No.S/H24/6.**

Designing Hong Kong

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SECTION 12 PLANNING APPLICATION

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CENTRAL OUTLINE ZONING PLAN NO. S/H4/12 AND THE CENTRAL (EXTENSION) OUTLINE ZONING PLAN NO. S/H24/6

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Appendices

1. Extract from the Design Study Brief

Attachment

**Review of the Design Study for Central Waterfront, Report of the Workshop
held Monday 13 November 2006**

Application under Section 12A of the Town Planning Ordinance

Proposed Amendments to the Central Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H4/12, and the Central (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan No.S/H24/6.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In August 2005, in response to submissions made by the Society for the Protection of the Harbour, the Town Planning Board (Board) requested Planning Department to undertake an Urban Design Refinement Study of the waterfront area in Central (Central Design Study). In November 2006 the Planning Department placed a brief for the Central Design Study on the Planning Department Website and this explained the nature and likely outcome of the study process.
- 1.2 There have been a large number of studies or proposals prepared by NGO's, Government, developers, and public interest groups for the Central Waterfront. Many of these schemes may not have been formally presented to government and to the Town Planning Board. The content of these schemes varies significantly and it was considered desirable to bring all the different ideas together in a public forum (the Workshop) and to see if consensus could be reached on relevant aspects. If this was possible, it would then be useful to formally present the conclusions to the Board in advance of the Government's Central Design Study being too far advanced. This would then help further improve the process and design of the final Central Waterfront.
- 1.3 "Citizens Envisioning @ Harbour" (CE@H), an alliance of various NGOs and academic institutions, and "Designing Hong Kong" (DHK), an alliance of four private individuals, jointly sponsored the Workshop which was held in November 2006. Masterplan Limited provided assistance in preparing the material for the Workshop, presented a summary of the various schemes and prepared the "Report of the Workshop" (the Report) which is included as an attachment to this Application.
- 1.4 Based on the Report, DHK has asked Masterplan Limited to review the Report and to identify the most fundamental changes desirable to the two Outline Zoning Plan's which cover the Central Waterfront, and to prepare an application to the Board accordingly. By presenting these changes to the Board it is hoped that the planning and design process can be reviewed and that the zoning can be changed.
- 1.5 The proposed changes in this submission will result in:
 - Reduce the wall effect of single large developments,
 - Greater visual permeability,
 - Reduce traffic generation,
 - Reduce air and noise pollution,
 - A more competitive business environment,
 - Increased diversity and vibrancy.

PART A : The Workshop

1. The Workshop Process

- 1.1 The Workshop was advertised and promoted by the various groups which make up CE@H and DHK and was open to all members of the public. Approximately 70 people attended the Workshop from a wide range of interests and backgrounds. Many had been involved in the preparation of the 13 schemes which were used as a basis for the discussion and were generally knowledgeable of the background and issues involved.
- 1.2 After a brief introduction of the schemes that had been prepared, the participants were divided into groups which basically relate to the sites which were identified in the Planning Department's Study Brief. The relevant plan showing the sites is included in **Figure 1**.
- 1.3 Each group was provided with relevant material from the previous proposals and after considerable discussion were requested to complete a proforma which focused attention on the fundamental design criteria such as objectives and functions for the site, proposed uses for the site, relevant building controls for the site such as height, site coverage and plot ratio, and any special design criteria that should be applied to the site. The proforma summary sheets are included in the Report.
- 1.4 Each group reported back to the whole Workshop their discussions and conclusions. The purpose of this process was to establish consistent ideas or themes which could be taken forward as a basis for formal submissions.

2. General Themes and Points of Agreement

- 2.1 To conclude the Workshop a summary was made of a number of overarching issues that were present among all sites and all groups. The Workshop brought to light the importance of alternatives to the government proposal. The objectives of the Workshop were met, in that it identified similarity in the ideas calling for connectivity, linkages, and transition between the various areas.
- 2.2 A number of common concerns arose. One overarching aspect was made clear in all of the groups, and this was the need for significant public open spaces on the waterfront available and accessible for all people of Hong Kong. This open space area should be capable of flexible use and should have a design and content which is vibrant and attractive.
- 2.3 A number of common planning themes or parameters were further identified, namely: -
 - small building footprints,
 - natural ventilation,
 - lower plot ratios,
 - creation of visual corridors,

- the option of placing service facilities underground,
- connectivity and transition between spaces,
- diversified uses in spaces.

2.4 Common design features included:-

- north-south connectivity,
- water features,
- a new mode of transport,
- changing P2 into a boulevard,
- creating focal points in Central.

2.5 In terms of managing the public realm facilities, the participants agreed that multi-partnership means of ownership and management would be best, (not just government) and that there should be 24-hour accessibility to public spaces.

2.6 These desirable themes and common points could be translated into specific changes in the planning and use of the Central Reclamation areas. These have now been used here to prepare the changes proposed to the Outline Zoning Plans in Section B below.

3. Interface with the Central Design Study.

3.1 It was identified in the Workshop that the brief may unnecessarily limit the Central Design Study to the existing zoning and development restrictions on the two OZP's. This constraint may not enable the achievement of the best design and development of this important waterfront area. There should be scope for an innovative review of the whole waterfront area, including scope to review the constraints and uses that may have been determined at the time the OZP was developed. There should be scope for reconsidering the distribution and scale of uses proposed on the plan, the need for the roads and alternative transport, and the extent, content and management of the public areas and spaces.

3.2 In addition to the restrictions on the scope of the Central Design Study approach, another matter of concern is that it will be allocated to one consultant to come up with design parameters for specific areas. It is not seeking to establish any substantive innovation in defining approaches to the design and use of the Central Waterfront which will one day be the signature space defining Hong Kong.

3.3 Although presented to the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC) and the Legislative Council (LegCo), there has also been little public input into the content of the brief for the Central Design Study and it has basically been defined within Government. Without getting the Study Brief right, the outcome of the Study may well lead to delay and unnecessary dispute when seeking acceptance from 'the public' which has expressed a considerable interest in what is to be achieved for the Central Waterfront.

3.4 By making this application at this stage, we look to address the above concerns in a constructive and timely manner.

4. Interface with the International Planning and Design Competition

- 4.1 In parallel with the submission of this application to the TPB, Designing Hong Kong (DHK) will assist the organisation of an International Urban Planning and Design Competition (the Competition).
- 4.2 The public Workshop that has resulted in this application will also provide the basis for the Competition. A public engagement process will be part of the Competition and the selection of the winning entries to enable the best possible representation of the public aspirations for the future design and use of the harbour.
- 4.3 The participants in the competition will not be presented with a blank piece of paper to start but will be provided with all the previous schemes as reflected in the Report and the proposals contained in this Application. However, the Competition will not be limited to the proposals in this Application, but entrants will be encouraged to look beyond both the existing OZP's, the Government plans and the changes proposed in this application for further improvements.
- 4.4 Although the entrants in the Competition will be provided with a degree of freedom in planning and design which is lacking from the Government's Central Design Study, 'feasibility' and 'practicable' will be made important criteria in judging the entries.
- 4.5 The outcome of the Competition will be presented to Government departments, the Board, HEC, District Councils and the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works of the Legislative Council (Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront) providing input in a timely manner and prior to completion of the Central Design Study.

PART B: Proposed Amendments to the Central Outline Zoning Plan

- 1.1 The area from the Central OZP which was included in the Study Area is the waterfront space which includes the existing ferry piers 1 to 6, the space between them and the IFC, and adjoining areas. Together they form an important part of the Central Waterfront and make up the most extensive transport interchange in Hong Kong – bringing together ferry, rail, bus and road networks.
- 1.2. There have been several proposals for this area including the HEC's CHARM study, a 'Rainforest' Study by Chinese University and a proposal by the IFC owners. These proposals are summarized in the Report.
- 1.3 The prime objectives for the area established during the Workshop were:-
 - (a) To be a transport interchange area between various transport modes;
 - (b) To be a low rise area where there were strong pedestrian connections from the waterfront to the development behind;
 - (c) To make the area green and to connect the roofs of the ferry piers back to the landscape area in the IFC and maximize public views;
 - (d) To have a mix of uses including kiosks and market-type stalls, retail areas and offices, a boutique hotel and eating places;
 - (e) To keep IFC 2 as a landmark building and limit the heights of any other buildings located between the IFC and the piers.
 - (f) The proposed bus terminus should be deleted as alternative locations should be found rather than in this prime area.
 - (g) These proposals should be implemented and managed by the private sector
- 1.4. To achieve this it was considered that the existing zoning should have a height limit of 50m PD, the same as for the adjacent Groundscraper site. The heights of development above the piers should be limited to 22m PD. To achieve an integrated design the site zoned as "C" should be integrated with the CDA(1) zone. There should be no large podium, lots of green open space, no big tower blocks, lots of visual permeability and the open space at the ground level waterfront promenade should be retained.

Specific Changes Proposed to the Central Outline Zoning Plan

- 1.5. The specific changes proposed to the Outline Zoning Plan are indicated on **Figure 2** and listed below:-
- (a) The site shown as “C” be rezoned to be included in the “CDA(2)” zone;
 - (b) The Notes to the CDA(2) zone be changed to include a height limit of 50mPD except above Piers 4, 5 and 6 where a limit of 20mPD would be applicable.
 - (c) The Notes to the CDA(2) zone be changed to exclude “Public Transport Interchange”;
 - (d) To be consistent, the “G/IC” site to the west of the CDA(2) site and north of Man Po Street be restricted to a maximum building height of 50mPD in the Notes to the G/IC zone.

PART C: Proposed Amendments to the Central (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan.

There were several areas on the Central (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan where it was considered that changes should be made and these are illustrated on **Figures 3 and 4.**

1. The Statue Square Corridor

- 1.1 The corridor from Statue Square to the waterfront park and the new Star Ferry piers is dominated by a link from the southern side of Connaught Road across the area currently occupied by the Star Ferry Car Park building, the former Star Ferry Pier and an area of new reclamation. Under the current zoning this will be a portion of the Groundscraper which will be up to 16mPD or 2 to 4 storeys in height, with a landscape deck on top and various floors underground.
- 1.2 The conclusion was that this area is a very important visual and symbolic link from the historical centre of Central and should remain a public open space at ground level. To convert this to a retail shopping mall above ground blocking views was considered inappropriate and should be integrated into the existing ground level open space network provided by Chater Garden, Statue Square, Edinburgh Place and the open space within the City Hall complex. It also was seen as an important ventilation space between the high rise walls of buildings in the CBD. There was a suggestion made that the links could be underground connecting into the Central MTR station and that retail shops could be located underground to make the pedestrian connection vibrant and interesting. This amendment will also enable the Star Ferry Clock Tower to be rebuilt on the previous location.

The Specific Changes Proposed to the Outline Zoning Plan for the Statue Square Corridor.

- 1.3 The rezoning proposal is indicated on **Figure 3** and it is proposed that the lower portion of the Groundscraper be rezoned from “CDA” to “Open Space”.

2. The Groundscraper

- 2.1 The remaining portions of the Groundscraper are proposed to be reduced in size and only have footbridges built over Roads P1 and P2, rather than having them totally covered by commercial buildings. This will result in three buildings with smaller footprints and more in character with the nature of most developments in the vicinity other than the IFC, and of a more human scale. In order to provide variety in design they could be developed by different developers and these buildings would add to the total office GFA in the CBD, but in a more modest manner than the Groundscraper. The reduced scale of these buildings is considered more compatible with the waterfront location along side the proposed Park. The maximum building height of 50mPD should be retained.

- 2.2 Together with the Statue Square Corridor, we then effectively create a continuous park (albeit crossed by several roads) which becomes the address for the surrounding buildings critical to Hong Kong's landscape: Hong Kong Club, Legislative Council, HSBC, Prince's Building, Mandarin Hotel, Jardine House, the three new buildings, the Star Ferry pier, the developments planned in front of City hall, and City hall itself.

The Specific Changes Proposed to the Outline Zoning Plan for the Groundscraper

- 2.2 The specific proposals for the rezoning of this area are:-
- (a) To rezone parts of the CDA zone to "Road" where roads P1 and P2 are located;
 - (b) To show elevated footbridge connections between the three buildings;
 - (c) To rezone the single "CDA" site to three "Commercial" sites so that they can be developed as separate buildings by competing owners.

3. The Festival Market Site

- 3.1 This site is currently zoned OU(2) and is located in front of City Hall on an area yet to be reclaimed. It is a long site limited to 24mPD in height and is intended for "Waterfront Related Commercial and Leisure Use".
- 3.2 The consensus was that this type of use could be appropriate, but that it must relate to the functions and form of City Hall, possibly as an extension. The commercial/retail use should not be in the form of a conventional shopping mall. It should maximize public enjoyment and Hong Kong's spirit of free enterprise highlighting local customs and local culture. The form of the buildings on this site should be low rise and low density scattered amongst areas of open space. It was considered that a maximum height of 25mPD was suitable but most portions of the site should be lower. Also the amount of site covered by buildings should be limited to 50% so that the relationship of outdoor spaces to small buildings could be successfully achieved. The site was considered to be very long and obstructed public views through to the waterfront.

The Specific Changes Proposed to the Outline Zoning Plan for the Festival Market Site

- 3.3 The specific changes introduced to this site are designed to reduce the scale and footprint of the building and to open up the site in a manner more suitable to the waterfront location. The specific proposals are :-
- (a) To rezone portion of the site opposite Road D7 to "open space" so as to provide a visual link through to the waterfront;
 - (b) To split the single site into two separate sites, promoting competition and diversity;

- (c) To introduce a maximum of 50% site coverage in the Notes to this zone.
- (d) To incorporate into the Explanatory Statement an indication as to the type of use envisaged and the form of development in relation to the open space areas as mentioned above.

4. Reduce Surface Roads and Road P2, and to retain Queens Pier Insitu

- 4.1 There is general concern over the amount of space devoted to roads and the bulky form that they take. There is also concern over the amount of traffic that will be attracted to these roads and the negative effect that this will have on an area which should be designated to be pedestrian friendly.
- 4.2 It is therefore proposed that the road D6 to the east of the CDA zone be deleted as the rezoning and reduction in size of the CDA development proposed above enables this road to be deleted and the area rezoned to open space.
- 4.3 The alignment and width of P2 can be sensitively reduced to enable additional space for people and planting while enabling the existing Queen's Pier structure to be retained in a park which would include Edinburgh Place. The Queens Pier structure should be retained as a heritage feature as an integral part of the design of the park.

The Specific Changes Proposed to the Outline Zoning Plan for the Festival Market Site.

- 4.4 The changes to be made to the Outline Zoning Plan to implement this are:-
 - (a) Deletion of the Road to the east of the CDA zone and rezoning it to Open Space;
 - (b) Deletion of the road to the west of City Hall and zoning it to Open Space;
 - (c) Realignment of Road P2 so that Queens Pier can be retained in situ;
 - (d) Reduction in the width of Road P2 to the minimum required for a dual 2-lane road;
 - (e) Rezone the Queen's Pier to 'OU' and annotate as a "Historic Structure to be Retained".

5. To Rezone Part of the PLA Barracks site for Public Open Space

- 5.1 There is concern that in the context of the new waterfront the existence of the large site for the PLA Headquarters is somewhat out of place and that there should be a review made of the space required for the Headquarters functions. Where these are possibly excessive, then part of the site which may be surplus to requirements, should be considered for returning to

public use and integrated into the new waterfront in the best possible manner.

- 5.2 It is realized that there are procedural and possibly jurisdictional issues which relate to dealing with military land which was included in the Joint Declaration as part of the land to be handed to the PLA in 1997. There is no intention to remove the Headquarters from the present site by the raising of this issue. However, the use of the site is one of public interest and the issue did arise during the Workshop. The procedural and other issues should not mean that the best long term use of the surplus part of the site should not be discussed in the context of planning the new waterfront.
- 5.3 The discussion at the Workshop indicated that the western portion of the PLA Headquarters site occupied by several small buildings and the swimming pool could be incorporated into the open space design which is proposed to the west and north of the City Hall Complex. The proposal could result in retaining the existing and underused swimming pool complex for public use, providing a unique public facility along the Central Waterfront.

The Specific Changes Proposed for the PLA Headquarters Site

- 5.4 It is proposed that the western portion of the site be rezoned from "OU annotated "Military Headquarters" to "Open Space".

6. Provide a Designated Pier for the PLA

- 6.1 There is a need to provide a pier for the PLA navy on the Central Waterfront. Several points were raised during the Workshop, including the actual need for the pier given that there has been no similar pier access for the navy for the past 10 years. There was also a concern that the location of the proposed pier, and the security requirements needed, would compromise the design of the waterfront and good public usage of the area required for the pier.
- 6.2 Having discussed the various issues involved it was considered that the best design solution would likely be the provision of a separate T-shaped pier located away from the seawall. This would allow the public access to the sea wall at all times and would also enable the PLA Pier to be easily secured when in use. It is considered that such a pier would be capable of justification under the PHO given that any impairment of the harbour is sufficiently compensated with enhancement of the value of the harbour, creating a longer harbour-front for public enjoyment and a secure and safe land-water interface for vessels. The public overriding need can be established with cogent materials generated during the Central Design Study and the detailed design process.

Specific Changes Proposed for the PLA Pier

- 6.3 It is proposed that the existing designation "150m Military Berth (Subject to detailed design) be moved approximately 20 metres off-shore and a T-shaped pier be indicated on the plan by dotted lines.

7. The G/IC(2) Site and “OU” Sites near the APA

- 7.1 The sites in this area should allow space for the development of the arts and culture theme and that some of the sites should be left vacant for organic growth of arts and community uses by natural evolution. The area should not be over-developed or over-designed and the sites should provide space around the buildings for a variety of activities such as art displays and performances, a speaker’s corner and a ‘Dai Pai Dong’ food centre. It was considered that in this area there should be some opportunity for people to actually get into contact with the water – an increasingly safe prospect and relevant planning parameter given the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme. (The ‘Marine Basin’ shown on the Outline Zoning Plan with additional reclamation should be removed as the reclamation may be difficult to justify).
- 7.2 There was again, a strong opinion against a mega-mall, a need for strong connectivity to the inner areas and for Road P2 to be designed as a boulevard. Management of the open areas should not be by LCSD but by private management possibly including NGO’s.

Specific Changes Proposed for this area

- 7.3 It is proposed that the proposed land enclosing the northern portion of the “Marine Basin” be deleted. The GIC(2) site be subject of a maximum building height of 5 storeys and a 50% site coverage restriction. The OU(1) and OU(2) sites be subject to a 50% site coverage restriction and a maximum building height of 5 metres.

8. Transport Connections and Infrastructure.

- 8.1 The waterfront area was seen as an area of Civic property with a mixed use and a green waterfront. It should be a cultural harbourfront developed as a model for sustainable development. There is a need to promote a more eco-friendly form of development such as a new tram system, bike paths and jogging trails.
- 8.2 There is a need to have better north south connections and people movers should be used to assist with integration to the existing developed areas. There should be close connection and integration with the rail stations and bus services.
- 8.3 Given that the harbour is an obstacle to point-to-point travel between the core areas around it, the harbour should increasingly be considered as a transport opportunity with provision for water taxis and ferries. This then requires land water interfaces and marine supporting land uses to interact between the water and the land.
- 8.4 The existing Explanatory Statement in the OZP for the waterfront area requires the provision of an “Environmentally Friendly Transport System”. There has been no attempt by the Government to provide a land reservation for this system and it would seem as if no investigation has been carried out to determine the form of this system. It is also noted that the Notes to the plan do not permit a tramway or other system to be

located though the reclamation area. The provision of such environmentally friendly forms of transport should not be ignored in the design and implementation of the waterfront.

Specific Changes Proposed Relating to Transport

- 8.5 It is proposed that the Notes for the “Open Space” and other relevant zones be amended to permit the development of a tram system. Alternatively the actual alignment and proposals for a tram system or other environmentally friendly transport system be shown on the Outline Zoning Plan.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 There was a strong feeling at the Workshop that the Government’s Central Design Study could well be constrained and may not address all the fundamental public concerns in relation to the planning and development of the Central reclamation area. The existing zoning on the OZPs require a critical review of the fundamental planning criteria and the exclusion of the public in formulating the Study Brief may have been unfortunate.
- 9.2 This application proposes fundamental changes to the OZPs which have been identified in the many schemes created for the study area (but may not all have not been submitted to the Town Planning Board). The submission of these proposed changes to the Central and Central (Extension) Outline Zoning Plans is considered timely as it will enable these to be amended prior to the commencement and completion of the Central Design Study. The proposals can also be utilized by the participants in the International Urban Planning and Design Competition which is about to undertaken for the Central Reclamation area.
- 9.3 We believe the proposed changes are fundamental, sensible and practicable. They will result in better air ventilation and visual permeability. Moreover, they allow more developers to participate, creating a more diverse, a more competitive and a more vibrant environment. This will ensure that the Central Waterfront of Hong Kong becomes a quality experience drawing residents and tourists.