



By Email & Fax

The Secretary for Transport and Housing,
Transport and Housing Bureau,
22/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.

(Attn. Mr. Chan Fan, Frank JP)

5 July, 2017

Dear Mr. Chan,

**Creating a Better Pedestrian Environment to Improve Streetscape and
Promote Walking**

First of all, on behalf of the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects (HKILA/The Institute) I would like to extend our warmest congratulation to you for assuming the post of Secretary for Transport and Housing on 1 July 2017.

Attached please find HKILA's letter dated 17.5.2017 addressed to the Office of the Chief Executive-elect (**Appendix I**) and the subsequent reply from the Chief Executive-elect dated 24.5.2017 (**Appendix II**) for your background information.

As referred, I write to appeal your deliberation and support for reactivating the Project on relocation of the Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Bus Terminus for development of a piazza with the following supplementary information.

In urban areas of Hong Kong, streets are congested with pedestrians and these result in an unpleasant walking experience. There is inadequate commitment to cater for the needs of pedestrians and priority is always given to vehicular traffic in planning, design and management of road traffic. There is a genuine need to redress the balance for the rights of pedestrians by reshaping the urban space allocated for vehicular traffic.

The recent trend to promote walking is a good move to alert the government to rethink the need to put more effort in creating a better pedestrian environment. Pedestrianisation is one of the most direct and effective measures to uplift the quality of streetscape and promote walking. Sadly, the development and extent of pedestrianisation in urban areas of Hong Kong are very limited. The Institute urges the government to create more pedestrian streets and streetscape enhancement measures to uplift the quality of our cityscape.



Piazza Navona, Rome – Before (left) and After (right) pedestrianisation

There are hindrances to the implementation of pedestrianisation schemes. These include inadequate policy steer and resource, lack of management support to regulate street activities and restrictive maintenance requirements which suppress design features to enhance pedestrian environment. To achieve successful implementation of pedestrianisation schemes with support from the public, we should be grateful if the government can strengthen the policy steer and resource, improve management support for pedestrian streets and enhance design quality of pedestrian streets.

Strengthen Policy Steer and Resource to Support Pedestrianisation

There are many famous pedestrian streets and plazas in other cities which attract visitors from all over the world. When we find out the history of these places, many of them are transformed from roads dominated by vehicles. Those governing authorities are well aware of the need to create pedestrian streets for their people.

“Previously, cities sought identity through their tallest building, biggest astrodome, or some other landmark of historic and promotional value. Now they associate themselves with their pedestrian streets.” **Brambilla and Longo, 1977**

Our government has been focusing on the development of large scale projects (like mega infrastructural works and theme parks) and the resource allocated to improve streetscape in existing urban areas is largely neglected. The streets in the urban areas are visited by a significant part of our population every day. Their role is more than just transport corridors but also places for social, leisure and cultural activities. The creation of pedestrian streets to enhance streetscape can raise the attractiveness of our city. This benefits both local people and tourists as it provides more destinations with local character for them to visit and appreciate the place. Streets in the urban areas

definitely deserve investment of more resource to improve the streetscape quality, particularly by means of pedestrianisation.

The effort of the Energizing Kowloon East Office serves as a good example to improve the streetscape and open space framework in Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay. However, there are still a lot of potential sites in the urban areas which can be transformed into pedestrian streets to improve the streetscape. Strengthening the policy steer and support to encourage implementation of more pedestrianisation schemes and streetscape enhancement projects are essential. The government should form a dedicated task force with disciplines from relevant professionals including planners, architects, engineers, landscape architects and surveyors to review the urban framework and identify areas for pedestrianisation and streetscape enhancement and, more importantly, implement the schemes accordingly.



Proactive Approach in the Management of Pedestrian Streets

The lack of proactive management of street activities in pedestrian streets is one of the key factors which retards the development of pedestrianisation in urban areas. The current passive approach to act based on complaints is ineffective as this encourages issues to develop into conflicts which adversely affect the relationship between users and local stakeholders.

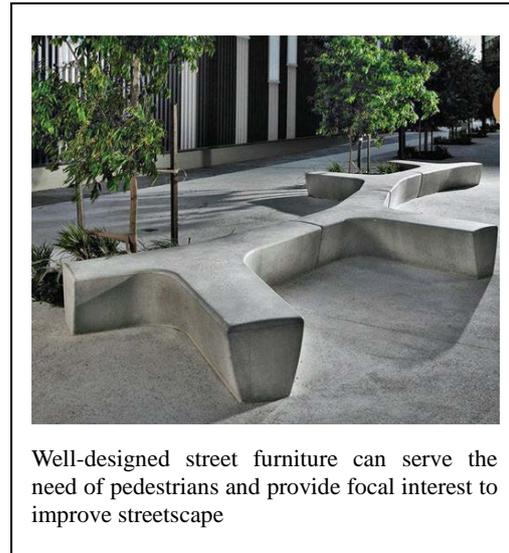
At present, the issues include unregulated and monotonous street performance activities (e.g. dominated by singing), abuse in the use of amplifiers leading to noise pollution, excessive on-street commercial activities and illegal occupation of pedestrian space blocking pedestrian flow. These are the areas requiring regulatory measures to balance the concerns of users and local stakeholders.

Licensing regime for regulation of street performance is one of the most effective measures adopted in other international cities e.g. Tokyo, London and Singapore. Similar approach can also be applied to regulate the commercial activities

in pedestrian streets. The government should make reference to these successful models and allocate adequate resource for management of pedestrian streets to address the issues instead of leaving the space unattended and reducing the extent of pedestrian streets.

Introduction of Quality Street Furniture for a Friendly Pedestrian Setting

Seating facility is a common feature in the streets of other cities but it is a rare feature in the streets of Hong Kong, including pedestrian streets. With the increase in pedestrian space upon pedestrainisation, seating facility should be provided to create a friendly pedestrian setting to allow people to take a rest upon walking. The seating facility can also be designed as an amenity feature to enhance focal interest of the place. In addition, other street furniture, e.g. railing and bollard, can be specially designed to enhance the streetscape and local distinctiveness. However, there is a strong resistance from the maintenance party to allow these non-standard items to exist in the streets.



Street furniture in pedestrian streets should deserve higher design quality. The design of street furniture should cater for the need of users and reasonable maintenance requirements. The relevant maintenance party should adopt an open attitude and arrange suitable contractors or agents to maintain these features to serve the public. To enhance the pedestrian setting, pocket parks and sitting-out areas adjacent to the pedestrian streets can be incorporated to form an integrated pedestrian framework. Boundary fences and walls enclosing these public spaces should be removed to facilitate circulation.

The above recommendations may involve deployment of relevant professionals to take up the tasks, allocation of additional resource and establishment of relevant regulatory and administration control measures. However, in view of the long term benefit to the community, we would highly appreciate it if the government can accept the above recommendations and take actions to improve the streetscape by creating more pedestrian streets to create a better pedestrian environment. You are welcome to contact the undersigned at 2896 2833 or via email to president@hkila.com for further discussion on the issue.

Yours sincerely,



Tak Wong
President

Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

c.c.

The Chief Executive, Chief Executive's Office (Attn.: Mrs. Carrie Lam, GBM, GBS)
The Secretary for Development, Development Bureau (Attn.: Mr. Michael Wong, JP)
President, The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (Attn.: Mr. Marvin Chen)
President, The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (Attn.: Mr. Thomas Chan)
President, The Hong Kong Institute of Planners (Attn.: Ms. Fiona Lung)
President, The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (Attn.: Mr. Thomas Ho)
President, The Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design (Attn.: Prof. Stephen Tang, BBS)

Together We Can Make Hong Kong a Better Place to Live

Appendix I

Office of the Chief Executive-elect,
9/F, Champion Tower, 3 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong.
(Attn.: Mrs. Carrie LAM, GBM, GBS) – By Fax: 2352 3171

17 May, 2017

Dear Carrie,

Reactivate the Project on Relocation of the Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Bus Terminus for Development of a Piazza

From landscape and urban design points of view, the Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry bus terminus is located at a prime location in the heart of the city adjacent to our unique and beautiful harbour, it deserves high quality design to transform it into a public space for enjoyment by the public. Currently, its potential is significantly restricted by keeping it as a bus terminus where many buses are sitting idle at this precious location.

The government had a good intention to transform the bus terminus into a piazza and the proposal was initiated in 2002. According to the proposal, the bus terminus would be relocated to a new bus terminus under a landscaped deck near Wing On Plaza at Tsim Sha Tsui East where the buses could be parked there. This wise arrangement could release the precious waterfront space near the Star Ferry Pier for pedestrians and enhance connectivity and vibrancy of the promenade. The proposal could also address the need to maintain bus service near the piazza to serve the public. Relevant stakeholders including district councils, professional institutions, adjacent commercial owners, public transport operators and the public were consulted and they generally supported the proposal. Preparation works were undertaken in steps and the bus terminus at Wing On Plaza was completed in 2007 to cater for further transport arrangement. It was unfortunate that the proposal was politicalized without due consideration of its benefit and it was then withdrawn by the government in response to the objections in 2012.

The Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry bus terminus was built in 1920. At that time, it played a key role in the transport network because people heavily relied on ferry service to cross the harbour and alternative means of public transport was not yet well-developed. With the development of Mass Transit Railway and other cross-harbour tunnels to facilitate land-based transport across the harbour, the significance of this bus terminus to serve as a public transport connection between bus and ferry services is now largely reduced. Its historical role to serve as a key public transport link is fulfilled. Changes in the land use for the bus terminus are required to suit the new needs and to optimize the use of our limited land resource for the benefit of the society.

We share the sentiment on preserving the bus terminus in view of its past history by some members of the public. In this regard, old-style or vintage buses served in the past can be displayed in the piazza to reflect the history and enhance local distinctiveness of the piazza. Some of these buses can offer bus tours so that the public can have access for direct experience. This special arrangement can address the need to preserve the history and create quality open place for the public.

Hong Kong is a densely populated city and spatial elements such as piazza and pedestrian streets are lacking in the urban framework for the public to appreciate our place. There is a genuine need to create more quality public spaces for urban dwellers by reshaping the urban space allocated for vehicular traffic and pedestrians. Implementation of more pedestrianization schemes is required to uplift the quality of urban area. This can benefit both local people and tourists as it can enhance the streetscape and provide more destinations with local character for them to visit.

The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects has great concern on creating more open spaces and pedestrian streets in urban area to serve the public. We should not adopt “do nothing” approach and leave this bus terminus at such prime location without improving it for us and our future generations. For the benefit of the community, we appeal the government to reactivate the project to transform Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry bus terminus into a piazza so that it can raise the attractiveness of the city for enjoyment by the public.

We would highly appreciate it if positive feedback can be received from the government. Please feel free to contact the undersigned at 2896 2833 or via email to president@hkila.com for further follow up discussion on the issue.

Yours sincerely,



Tak Wong
President

Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

c.c.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Attn.: Mr. SO Kam Leung, Gregory, GBS, JP) – Fax 2537 6720

The Secretary for Development, Development Bureau (Attn.: Mr. MA Siu Cheung, Eric, JP) – Fax 2810 3961

Together We Can Make Hong Kong a Better Place to Live

Appendix II



Our Ref.: L/M (443) to CEE0 Adm/1-70/1/3
Our Case No.: CEE0_000936
Our Tel.: 2821 0305

29 MAY 2017

24 May 2017

Mr Tak WONG,
President, Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects,
P.O. Box 20561, Hennessy Road Post Office,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Dear Mr WONG,

Thank you for your letter of 17 May 2017 to the Chief Executive-elect. The content is noted. We have relayed your views to the Transport and Housing Bureau for reference.

Yours sincerely,



(Bond YU)

for Private Secretary to the Chief Executive-elect

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Office of the Chief Executive-elect of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region of the People's Republic of China
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9/F, Champion Tower, 3 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong