

**Minutes of 838th Meeting of the
Town Planning Board held on 8.7.2005**

Present

Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands
Mrs. Rita Lau

Chairperson

Hon. Patrick S.S. Lau

Vice-chairman

Dr. Alex S.K. Chan

Dr. Rebecca L.H. Chiu

Mrs. Angelina P.L. Lee

Dr. Peter K.K. Wong

Mr. Michael K.C. Lai

Professor K.C. Ho

Mr. Alex C.W. Lui

Mr. Francis Y.T. Lui

Mr. Keith G. McKinnell

Mr. S.L. Ng

Dr. Greg C.Y. Wong

Mr. C.K. Wong

Ms. Carmen K.M. Chan

Mr. Erwin A. Hardy

Professor Nora F.Y. Tam

Mr. Nelson W.Y. Chan

Mr. Leslie H.C. Chen

Dr. Lily Chiang

Professor David Dudgeon

Mr. Edmund K.H. Leung

Professor N.K. Leung

Dr. C.N. Ng

Mr. Daniel B.M. To

Mr. Stanley Y.F. Wong

Mr. Alfred Donald Yap

Ms. Sylvia S.F. Yau

Principal Assistant Secretary (Transport)
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
Mr. Eric Yue

Director of Planning
Mr. Bosco C.K. Fung

Assistant Director(2) Home Affairs Department
Mr. Patrick Li

Deputy Director of Environmental Protection
Dr. Michael Chiu

Director of Lands
Mr. Patrick L.C. Lau

Deputy Director of Planning/District
Miss Ophelia Y.S. Wong

Secretary

Absent with Apologies

Dr. Pamela R. Rogers

Mr. Tony W.C. Tse

Mr. David W.M. Chan

Professor Peter R. Hills

Mr. Tony C.N. Kan

Professor Bernard Vincent W.F. Lim

In Attendance

Assistant Director of Planning/Board

Mr. P.Y. Tam

Chief Town Planner/Town Planning Board

Mr. C.T. Ling (a.m.)

Ms. Brenda K.Y. Au (p.m.)

Senior Town Planner/Town Planning Board

Ms. Teresa L.Y. Chu (a.m.)

Mr. Tom C.K. Yip (p.m.)

[Open Meeting]

Agenda Item 1

Confirmation of Minutes of the 837th Meeting held on 17.6.2005

1. The minutes of the 837th meeting held on 17.6.2005 were confirmed subject to the amendment proposed by Mr. Patrick L.C. Lau to line 1 of paragraph 96 from 'even with planning approval given by the Board' to 'even if planning approval were to be given by the Board'.
2. The Chairperson suggested and Members agreed to consider the agenda items which were scheduled for public viewing first and the items under Matters Arising afterwards.

Agenda Item 2

Matters Arising

3. The minutes of sub-items (i) to (iii) under this item were recorded under confidential cover.

(iv) Town Planning Appeal Received

Town Planning Appeal No. 11 of 2005 (11/05)

Warehouse for Storage of Houseware, Building Supplies

and Plastic Materials in "Undetermined" Zone

Lot 543RP in DD 106, Kam Sheung Road, Kam Tin, Yuen Long

(Application No. A/YL-KTS/328)

4. The Secretary reported that an appeal against the decision of the Board to reject on review an application (No. A/YL-KTS/328) for warehouse for storage of houseware, building supplies and plastic materials at a site zoned "Undetermined" ("U") on the Kam Tin South Outline Zoning Plan was received by the Town Planning Appeal Board on 22.6.2005.

5. The Secretary continued to say that the review application was rejected by the Board on 22.4.2005 on the grounds that approval of the application would pre-empt the land use review exercise of the “U” zone, the permanent warehouse use was incompatible with the surrounding church and residential uses, and there was insufficient information to demonstrate that the development would not cause adverse traffic and environmental impacts on the surrounding areas. The hearing date of the appeal was yet to be fixed.

(v) Town Planning Appeal Statistics

6. The Secretary reported that as at 8.7.2005, 19 cases were yet to be heard by the Town Planning Appeal Board. Details of the appeal statistics were as follows:

Allowed	:	12
Dismissed	:	80
Abandoned/Withdrawn/Invalid	:	107
Yet to be Heard	:	19
<u>Decision Outstanding</u>	:	<u>3</u>
Total		221

Agenda Item 3

Greening Master Plan for Tsim Sha Tsui

(TPB Paper No. 7347)

[Open Meeting (whole agenda item)]

7. Mr. Eric Yue, representative from the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (ETWB), declared an interest in this item as the Steering Committee on Greening (SCG) was chaired by the Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works). As this was a general paper, Members agreed that Mr. Yue could be allowed to stay at the meeting and participate in the discussion of the item.

8. The following representatives from the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) were invited to the meeting:

Mr. T.N. Cheng

Assistant Director, CEDD

Ms. Kathy Ng

Senior Landscape Architect/GMP, CEDD

Mr. Jimmy P.M. Chan

Senior Engineer/GMP1, CEDD

Presentation Session

9. The Chairperson extended a welcome and invited Mr. T.N. Cheng to brief Members on the Paper.

10. With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation, Mr. Cheng covered the following aspects as detailed in the Paper:

- (a) background and objectives of preparation of Greening Master Plan (GMP) in selected urban areas;
- (b) opportunities and constraints in preparing GMPs and proposed short, medium and long term implementation measures and maintenance arrangements;
- (c) findings and recommendations of the study for developing GMP for Tsim Sha Tsui, including the theme of 'Jade Necklace' to link up major green areas in a green route and the implementation of 6 pilot schemes;
- (d) consultation with the Tsim Sha Tsui District Council (DC), Yau Tsim Mong South Area Committee and the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC); and
- (e) progress of studies for developing a GMP featuring the theme of 'Heart of Gold' in Central and other GMPs for Sheung Wan, Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Yaumatei/Mongkok.

Discussion Session

11. Members generally expressed strong support to the greening concept and formulation of GMP. The Secretary relayed to Members the comments of Dr. Alex S.K. Chan who had tendered his apology for being unable to attend the morning meeting. Major questions and comments raised by Members were as follows:

Scope and Coverage of GMP

- (a) noting the general lack of space in existing urban areas, whether new areas such as West Kowloon reclamation in the Yaumatei/Mongkok GMP could present greater greening opportunities;
- (b) whether the triangular area comprising the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Cross Harbour Tunnel (CHT) transport corridor could be incorporated into the Tsim Sha Tsui GMP;
- (c) apart from Government land, suitable private land should be identified for greening;

Selection of Species, Design and General Maintenance

- (d) what the criteria for plant selection were and whether there were any considerations for the sustainability of the greening works;
- (e) care should be exercised in the choice of plants on footpaths, medians of busy roads and exposed areas to improve survival rate of plants. Species with weak roots likely to be damaged in typhoon and inclement weather should be avoided;
- (f) based on experience in Mainland cities, massive planting of Chinese Cotton Tree would need to be carefully considered;
- (g) who would assume the maintenance responsibility for the greening works;
- (h) whether roadside planters and potted plants, which were easy to transport and maintain, could be an alternative to planting on areas with limitation of planting space;
- (i) old and mature trees, being precious assets in the urban areas, should be protected and be incorporated as part of the GMPs;

- (j) concern on the monotonous treatment of large tracts of slope areas in the long-term plan;
- (k) why only limited number of sites had been selected to develop rooftop gardens;

Ecological Network

- (l) whether consideration had been given to ecological aspects to allow wildlife to take shelter in the city;
- (m) whether consideration had been given to the creation of an ecological network for planting;
- (n) quality should be more important than quantity of greening proposals;

Interface with Ongoing Studies and Redevelopment Projects

- (o) whether the GMP could integrate with other on-going studies and development proposals, such as the pedestrainization studies to maximize greening opportunities;
- (p) greening should be taken as a component of the overall urban upgrading and comprehensive planning strategies rather than an end in itself;

Interface with Underground Utilities

- (q) why trial holes and site investigation were required prior to greening works given that records of underground utilities were already available;
- (r) given the complexity of the underground utility network in the urban area, consideration should be given to devising a comprehensive database to be maintained and updated by a centralized body and for shared use;

- (s) whether the underground utilities should be taken as a constraint, since there might be options of diverting or relocating existing utilities in key locations to accommodate highly desirable planting work and environmentally significant greening projects;
- (t) innovative design should be adopted to avoid interference of young trees by utility works to ensure higher survival rate, such as by demarcating protection area and provision of underground conduit to facilitate future utility installation and maintenance without affecting the roots;

Programme and Budget

- (u) whether there were any specific targets to be achieved, in terms of the greening area per capita and the number of trees, and whether there were any definite programmes for the short-, medium- and long-term proposals;
- (v) what the estimated budget for the GMP was;

Local Concerns, Private Participation and Public Education

- (w) there was general concern on insufficient local support generally and resistance in some specific cases from the affected shop owners and operators, towards greening works on pavements on their shop fronts and on waterfront promenade, as compared to the successful overseas experiences where roadside businesses were enhanced as a result of local amenity upgrading and greening;
- (x) in view of the lack of planting space, incentives should be provided to encourage provision of additional building setback to facilitate roadside planting and to encourage provision of green balconies and verandas; and
- (y) on the software aspect, community education and enhancement to promote acceptance and support to greening initiatives should be considered.

12. In response, Mr. T.N Cheng and Ms. Kathy Ng made the following points:

Scope and Coverage of GMP

- (a) the GMPs initially were focused on greening works on Government land in existing urban areas. The West Kowloon Reclamation area, which was covered by an another project, was not covered in the Yaumatei/Mongkok GMP;
- (b) as the Hong Kong Polytechnic University contained no Government land, it was not included in the GMP. Whilst only Government land was involved in the current GMP, private participation in greening were welcome and would be explored in the next stages;

Selection of Species, Design and General Maintenance

- (c) a balanced approach taking account of site specific and other relevant considerations would be adopted in plant selection to ensure that the species chosen would provide shade, buffer, visual relief and aesthetics impacts. Sustainability and maintenance implications would also be duly considered. For instance, deciduous trees with crowns would offer shade in summer but would shed leaves in winter, while flowering species like Cotton Tree would give colour but not shade. Preference would be given to year-round evergreens with greater endurance along busy roads and in exposed areas, having regard to the available soil depth and other site specific constraints;
- (d) local consultation had been undertaken with the relevant DC and locals and they would be further consulted with a view to achieving consensus on specific choice and location of plants;
- (e) Chinese Cotton Tree would be one of the components to provide variety in the tree mix but not in massive clusters to form the dominant species;
- (f) maintenance for short-term greening would be undertaken by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department while medium- and long-term plans

would need to be further considered;

- (g) roadside planter boxes and potted plants would take up more road space and would be more costly to implement and upkeep. They would also pose constraints to crowd control on busy streets. Nevertheless, potted plants would be considered in suitable locations;
- (h) the GMPs were intended to bring in new planting to the existing urban areas, without affecting any existing trees. There were Government policies and practices to protect trees from works and developments. There was also a register of champion trees. Currently tree felling with adequate provision of replanting and compensatory planting was only allowed if it was absolutely necessary after exhausting all alternatives;
- (i) other than safety considerations, due regard would be given to slope greening which was an important element in long-term GMPs to enhance visual appearance of slopes;
- (j) as for rooftop gardens, trial schemes would initially focus on Government buildings by the Architectural Services Department to test out the concept. Extension to private buildings could be considered subject to the interest and participation of developers;

Ecological Network

- (k) effort would be made to retaining and suitable replanting of native species to maintain and enhance the urban habitats;
- (l) the initial emphasis behind the ecological network was to improve on connectivity through the provision of green corridors. The concept would still need to be further developed and refined;
- (m) native plants would not be the only component in the network as not all local species were ecologically significant. Instead, emphasis would be given to connecting key nodes and habitats with a diversity of faunas and

birds, such as Kowloon Park, Hong Kong Observatory Signal Hill and Gun Club Hill, through green corridors with ecologically enhancing plants and fruit-bearing trees to attract the patronage of wildlife;

- (n) integration with the general environment would be accorded higher priority than the number of trees in the greening proposals;

Interface with Ongoing Studies and Redevelopment Projects

- (o) in formulating the Tsim Sha Tsui GMP, CEDD had worked closely with PlanD's pedestrianization study team, such as taking advantage of the Granville Road pavement widening for planting proposal;
- (p) the greening concept was intended to interface with other redevelopment projects to achieve more comprehensive urban improvement. The medium- and long-term proposals would be subject to resolution of implementation issues to be further examined by the Greening Master Plan Committee;

Interface with Underground Utilities

- (q) as the site plans for underground utilities might not indicate the exact depth and layers of different utility cables, it would be prudent to conduct site investigation to ascertain the soil thickness for the required root depth prior to planting works;
- (r) there was already an existing system for co-ordination and updating of record for underground utilities under the purview of the Highways Department (HyD). Members' suggestion for a comprehensive data base would be relayed to HyD for consideration;
- (s) underground utilities would not be taken as a constraint for the GMP. For important and landmark greening features, liaison with utility providers would be initiated to resolve any underground interface issues to make way for planting works;

- (t) consideration would be given to such proposals as tree grills, protection areas and underground conduits to enhance the growth and survival of plants/trees;

Programme and Budget

- (u) there were no specific planting targets under the GMPs as the intention was to green up as much area as possible. While the short-term proposals for the Tsim Sha Tsui GMP were already underway for completion in 2006, medium-term plans would tally with the ongoing area improvement study with no definite timetable at present;
- (v) the budget for the short-term projects was estimated to be \$22m while further plans would be subject to funding availability;

Local Concerns, Private Participation and Public Education

- (w) continuous liaison with affected shop owners would be carried out to solicit support and to address their concerns on specific design, location and choice of planting works;

[Professor Patrick S.S. Lau left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

- (x) incentive to encourage building setback for roadside planting would involve other issues which needed to be further examined by concerned departments and bureaux. Although the granting of bonus plot ratio for extra setback at ground floor and more greening was supportable from the greening angle, it could result in taller buildings which might compromise the lighting and ventilation aspects, and might have adverse impacts on the building bulk and the overall cityscape. Suggestions from Members would need to be further studied; and
- (y) the proposal for public enhancement to promote awareness for greening was fully appreciated and supported. Greening initiatives could only

succeed with community participation and ownership rather than depending simply on government effort. More thoughts would be given to this aspect based on overseas experience and continuous dialogue would be maintained with the DCs and stakeholders with a view to achieving a win-win situation.

13. Mr. Bosco Fung said that the success of greening could not depend on Government effort alone but would require the support of the community. The Board could play and had been playing an active role in promoting greening initiatives through zoning in the plan making process, and through the imposition of tree preservation and landscape conditions in the approval of planning applications.

[Professor Patrick S.S. Lau returned to join the meeting at this point.]

14. On the issue of incentives to encourage greening, the Chairperson said that while the Buildings Ordinance had provision to encourage greening, further allowance for building setback would need to be considered comprehensively in the light of possible impacts on the other related building and planning aspects. Whilst recognizing the significance of community participation in the successful implementation of the GMPs, the Chairperson stressed that there should be sufficient flexibility in the process in order to bring benefits to all parties concerned. Besides involving the DCs, individual stakeholders should also be further consulted to address their specific concerns prior to commencement of the planting works.

[Dr. C.N. Ng left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

15. The Chairperson concluded by pointing out that the success of the GMPs would require complementary measures and joint-efforts of all sectors concerned. Mr. T.N. Cheng said that Members' views would be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of GMPs. The Chairperson thanked the representatives from CEDD for the briefing. They all left the meeting at this point.

Agenda Item 4

Landscape Character and Value Maps of Hong Kong

(TPB Paper No. 7348)

[Open Meeting (whole agenda item)]

16. The following representative from the Planning Department (PlanD) and consultant were invited to the meeting:

Mr. Augustine Ng	Deputy Director/Territorial, PlanD
Mr. David Morkel	Director, URBIS Ltd.

17. The Chairperson extended a welcome and invited Mr. Augustine Ng to brief Members on the Paper.

Presentation Session

18. With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation, Messrs. Augustine Ng and David Morkel covered the following major aspects in the Paper:

- (a) the background, objectives and process of the Landscape Value Mapping Study (the Study);
- (b) a brief description of the 6 broad landscape types and the 41 refined types identified in the Landscape Character Map (LCM);
- (c) the process of the Study and criteria that had been taken to derive the Landscape Value Map (LVM);
- (d) measures that had been adopted to minimize subjectivity in the assessment, including a structured methodology with systematic documentation, professional assessment, research reference and engagement with stakeholders;
- (e) a brief description of the broad landscape values applied to the LVM and the geographical information system (GIS) containing all data on landscape features, using Wu Kau Tan valley as a case for illustration;

Application of Information

- (f) the application of the findings and deliverables of the Study, i.e. the LCM and LVM and GIS; and
- (g) promulgation of the study findings.

Discussion Session

19. Major questions and comments raised by Members were as follows:

Methodology and Assessment

- (a) the methodology focussing on general classification of land into landscape character areas was considered broadbrush and the findings could only present a snapshot and pictorial representation of the landscape element. Other factors that contributed to the landscape formation should also be included so that the assessment could be conducted in a holistic manner. There should be quantitative and scientific analysis in addition to the qualitative investigation;
- (b) there was concern on how to make the plans a practical and user friendly tool for planning assessment. The landscape value of Wu Kau Tan was only ranked moderate whilst it had been identified as one of the 12 pilot scheme areas for consideration of new conservation measures under the Nature Conservation Policy. The rating seemed to have been affected by criteria such as visual attractors/detractors and visual coherence due to the presence of temporary open storage or scrap yards on-site. More in-depth analysis taking into account other factors, such as the temporary nature of the open storage, should be made;
- (c) there should be weighting in the criteria to differentiate the relative significance of indicators;
- (d) a robust methodology supplemented with more fine-grained information

should be adopted. However, the level of details need not be the same for different areas, as the type of information for remote rural area might not be applicable to the fast changing situation in the Metro area. For instance, the data base might not be adequate for the assessment of a specific hotel proposal in Wan Chai given the broad level of information. In addition, the information presented was only two dimensional without a 3-D picture;

- (e) there was query on why the ex-airport site at Kai Tak and the Hong Kong Disneyland site were classified as having 'low landscape value' on the LVM;
- (f) more frequent updating would be preferred for the Metro area to keep abreast with the development tempo while remote areas unlikely to experience great changes could be reviewed in longer time spans;

Presentation of Plan

- (g) the colour code for the LVM at Figure 3.1 was not desirable as areas with high landscape value were in light green whereas those with low landscape value were in dark green;
- (h) the lines shown in Figures 1 and 2 of the Paper linking off-shore islands might give a wrong impression that these areas were suitable for possible reclamation;

[Dr. Lily Chiang arrived to join the meeting at this point.]

Integration and Interface with other Studies and Information

- (i) as landscape represented the visual outcome of various factors at play, the LCM and LVM seemed to have presented only the value of the surface landscape in a pictorial form, without comprehensive reference and elaboration on the other essential constituents in landscape, such as geology,

geomorphology, ecology, cultural heritage and vegetation etc;

- (j) LCM and LVM should be more comprehensive and integrate the data on other topics and sectors;

[Mr. Michael K.C. Lai and Ms. Sylvia S.F. Yau left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

Application and Use of Findings

- (k) it was important to understand how the data and findings could be applied to facilitate the Board in future plan making and assessment of development proposals;
- (l) demonstration on data retrieval from the GIS system would be helpful to enable better understanding of the application of the findings;
- (m) it would be preferable to discuss with potential users on their views and requirements so as to ensure effective application of the findings;

[Mr. Michael K.C. Lai returned to join the meeting at this point.]

Way Forward and Further Tasks

- (n) it would be preferable for the Study to make more practical recommendations relating to development control and plan preparation with a view to enhancing and protecting areas with high landscape values. Clear guidelines were also required on devising methods to safeguard high value areas and measures for improvement of areas with low landscape values, to be supplemented by precautions that development proposals should not lower the prevalent landscape value grading; and
- (o) it would be worthwhile to consider allocating extra resources and effort if further follow up work on the study was considered necessary.

20. In response, Messrs. Augustine Ng and David Morkel made the following main

points:

Methodology and Assessment

- (a) the methodology was based on systematic documentation, professional assessment, research reference and an engagement process involving stakeholders to minimize subjectivity in assessment. The findings represented the outcome of systematic and methodical assessment of both quantitative and qualitative data. Relevant information on such areas as geology, ecology and cultural heritage, was already incorporated into the landscape element. The final product was organized into a database and presented in a spatial form through the GIS system;
- (b) a systematic methodology with structured assessment criteria was adopted to facilitate application and evaluation. For the case of Wu Kau Tan, the ranking reflected the overall assessment taking into account all the criteria at a certain point in time. Visual attractors/detractors and visual coherence were two of the criteria used at the time of survey. It was noted that the landscape value of an area would depend on the evolving site conditions and reflect the on-going development process that might change the overall ranking over time;
- (c) the criteria adopted were taken as equal with no weighting, given the purpose of the map was to provide a generalized picture for broad assessment while the relative significance of different indicators might be subject to changing circumstances;
- (d) the aim of the study was to provide a broad assessment at territorial level as the basis for more refined and specific landscape analysis in the detailed planning stage. The findings were spatially presented in a GIS format. The level of details would depend on the specific data available, survey details and character of the area. Given the scope of the Study, there would be constraints in providing site-specific data at localized scale due to resource and time limitations;

- (e) the LVM was intended to present a snapshot at a specific timeframe. Since the survey was undertaken in early and mid 2004 when the Kai Tak site was vacant while construction of the Hong Kong Disneyland was in progress, both areas were ranked as low value just to reflect the then site conditions. The assessment of both areas could be updated upon the completion of development;
- (f) the data base would normally be updated every 5 years while information for areas with major changes, new development and sensitive issues could be reviewed at a shorter time interval and ongoing study findings could be incorporated as warranted;

Presentation of Plan

- (g) the colour scheme of the plan could be further considered for visual clarity;
- (h) the lines linking the islands were to delineate the boundary of landscape character areas. The presentation could be improved cartographically;

Integration and Interface with other Studies and Information

- (i) the relevant information on other areas, such as ecology, geology, cultural and heritage elements, had been incorporated in the database and included in the assessment in devising the landscape maps;
- (j) relevant data of other sectors were incorporated into the landscape plans which could be retrieved in a spatial format through the GIS system, without the need to resort to separate sources and different studies;

Application and Use of Findings

- (k) the information was intended to provide a systematic and comprehensive database as a tool for broad screening, such as overall landscape appraisal at the plan making stage and broad assessment for strategic proposals,

while detailed and location-specific analysis could be accessed through the GIS system to facilitate more in-depth analysis;

- (l) a demonstration session could be arranged to brief Members on the application of the GIS database;
- (m) in addition to uploading the reports, Executive Summary, the LCM and LVM at suitable scale onto the PlanD Homepage, detailed information could be made available to the public on request. The feedbacks and requirements of users would be given due consideration;

Way Forward and Further Tasks

- (n) it was agreed that the study findings could be put into practical use to facilitate ongoing planning work. Consideration would be given to applying the study findings to the plan-making and planning control processes; and
- (o) further tasks and refinement of the study could be considered in future subject to the public need and resource availability.

21. The Chairperson remarked that as the focus of the briefing was on a broad assessment of landscape values of the territory in an overall manner, information on the more detailed ingredients might not have been adequately covered in the briefing. Given Members' general views and interests, the Chairperson suggested to invite PlanD and the consultant to conduct another briefing to address Members' comments, especially on the methodology and assessment, together with a demonstration on the application of the database.

[Ms. Sylvia S.F. Yau returned to join the meeting at this point.]

22. In response, Mr. Augustine Ng said that he would be pleased to conduct a further briefing with demonstration on the use of the data with reference to some case studies. He suggested that a pre-briefing could be arranged to invite interested Members to have a hands-on session on the application of the GIS system. Members' views would be taken

into account and addressed in the further briefing.

23. The Chairperson thanked the representative from PlanD and the consultant for the briefing. They all left the meeting at this point.