

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN RESPECT OF
THE REVITALISATION OF THE BRIDGES STREET MARKET**

BACKGROUND

Batch III of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (Revitalisation Scheme) was launched in 2011. In 2013, the Secretary for Development approved in-principle the proposal to adaptively reuse the Bridges Street Market (BSM) as The Hong Kong News-Expo (the News-Expo) submitted by the Journalism Education Foundation Hong Kong Limited (JEF). Government funding for capital works will be sought for this project. The project will be financially self-sustainable in revitalising the BSM site into an exhibition-cum-education facility with news as the main theme by using interactive multi-media technologies and news-reports of historic events over the past 150 years to show how Hong Kong has evolved into an international financial centre. The News-Expo will also show the development of Hong Kong media and how news is reported. Visitors will get to appreciate how a culture of diversity, including the free flow of information, the freedom of expression and press, the rule of law, fairness, justice and anti-corruption, forms a key component of Hong Kong's cornerstone of success.

2. The BSM was an indoor wet market built by the Urban Council in 1953 to serve a growing local community at a time when there was major redevelopment in the Sheung Wan area.

3. The site itself had earlier connections with the life of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. For a period of time in the 1880s, the young Sun had lived at the American Congregational Mission Preaching Hall (now named as China Congregational Church), an earlier building on the site, while attending the Government Central School in the nearby Gough Street. Those years were his formative years when he began to be exposed to certain Western values and ideas and to formulate the desire to renew and reform China.

4. The BSM is a three-level structure – G/F, 1/F and 2/F – with a near trapezium-shaped footprint that takes advantage of its wedge-shaped corner site. It should be noted that the 2/F, which is of much smaller size than other levels (90 square metres as opposed to 430 square metres and a rectangular shape) – has

only one wall flush with the rest of the building, and is not visible from Bridges Street itself. The building also incorporates a children's playground on 1/F. In recognition of the heritage value of the BSM, the Antiquities Advisory Board has accorded a Grade 3 status to the building.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)

5. In accordance with the Development Bureau Technical Circular (Works) no. 6/2009, the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) considered that an HIA is required to be carried out. Based on AMO's Conservation Guidelines contained in the Resource Kit of the Revitalisation Scheme, a set of heritage impact assessments has been conducted to outline the proposed project scope and design and to set out the mitigation measures to avoid adverse impact on the historic building in the course of revitalisation works. The HIA for the BSM site has been completed and submitted to the AMO for consideration. Key points of the HIA are summarised below.

A. Project Proposal

6. Under the Consolidated Project Proposal submitted by JEF, the site will be adaptively reused as an education/visitor centre. The News-Expo will accommodate themed display area, historic display area, periodic display area, experiential studios, a bookstore, multi-purpose rooms and staff offices. The existing adjacent Refuse Collection Point (RCP) will be demolished for reinstatement of street steps so as to remove local obstruction for uphill vista of Shing Wong Street leading up to the Mid-levels as well as to unveil the side elevation of the market building which is of International Modernist style. A portion of stair landing at Shing Wong Street will be landscaped to enhance the environment of the site. A lift will be installed outside the building in the rear alley to allow disabled access from Bridges Street to Wing Lee Street.

7. The News-Expo will offer media education programmes to show the youth the legacy of press and the current works of the news media profession in Hong Kong. Apart from organising visits for local community groups, non-government organisations, the elderly and underprivileged groups, the News-Expo will also work with travel agencies and operators of other heritage properties in the neighbourhood to organise visits and walking tours for both

local and overseas tourists who are able to explore the cultural heritage of the Central and Western District.

8. Themed display and periodic showcase through old newspaper cuttings, oral history, old journals and multi-media device will be installed to interpret the history of Hong Kong. History of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his association with the BSM site (former site of the American Congregational Mission Preaching Hall) will be highlighted in the display. The News-Expo will also organise talks by experienced journalists on topics of the press history and media development.

B. Conservation Principles

9. According to the HIA report, the Conservation Policies to conserve and interpret the BSM are as follows:-

(a) Building Use

The new use of the BSM should be compatible with its original use, which means that it should not prejudice the outward appearance of the wet market and any unnecessary alterations should be avoided.

(b) Interpretation

Interpretation should be provided by selective retention of key elements relating to the former and original use and accompanied by explanatory materials so that the visitors may readily comprehend their significance.

(c) Preservation of Building Fabrics

A number of character defining elements (CDEs) have been identified and tabulated in the HIA.

The CDEs to be preserved include:-

EXTERIOR

- The general form of the building, including the Staff Quarters

on 2/F;

- The front (North) elevation facing Bridges Street;
- The streamlined horizontal window fenestration on the front and rear (South) elevations;
- The principal entrance including the adjacent Shanghai Plaster finishes, large multi-light window, original Chinese/English signage and projecting eaves; and
- The window fenestration on 2/F lighting the Staff Quarters.

INTERIOR

- The main stair and associated balustrades, handrails and circular column;
- The secondary stair from 1/F to 2/F;
- A selection of original market stalls;
- A selection of stencilled signs indicating the original uses; and
- The generally open-plan character of the interiors on G/F and 1/F.

(d) Setting

Alterations to the exterior have been minimised to protect the image of the building as a wet market and to mitigate any adverse impacts on nearby historic buildings¹. All existing fenestration is to be retained and the original metal window frames will be repaired and retained in-situ. No major change to the external of the BSM is proposed, other than installation of a lift, services plant and the associated access facilities to satisfy barrier-free access

¹ The nearby historic buildings include the Former Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road, the Central Police Station Compound, Man Mo Temple and the Chinese Y.M.C.A. of Hong Kong (Central Building).

(BFA) and means of escape (MOE) requirements. The lift will be sited at the rear of the building to minimise its visual impact. Other visual impacts will arise from the provision of services plant required for air-conditioning and fire services installations.

C. Key Design Proposals

10. The key proposed works for the revitalisation project are listed below -

(a) Overall Site Approach

- i. The project is intended to renovate and adaptively reuse the existing BSM building to accommodate an education/visitor centre. The RCP will be demolished for reinstatement of street steps on Shing Wong Street. A portion of stair landing at Shing Wong Street will be landscaped; and
- ii. The outward appearance of the BSM will be preserved save only for provision of a lift, services plant and MOE that are necessary to comply with statutory and operational requirements.

(b) Conservation and Conversion Works for transforming the BSM into an Exhibition-cum-education Facility

- i. Exterior
 - No alteration works will be carried out to the facades and fenestration, other than: (i) a new access door in the East elevation to fulfil the BFA requirements, which will be partially shielded by the steps on Shing Wong Street; (ii) provision of a lift and associated landings, all for BFA-compliance purposes; (iii) formation of a new single doorway with stairs from the Staff Quarters on 2/F to Wing Lee Street in order to comply with MOE requirements;
 - Existing metal window frames will be retained and

repaired where necessary ;

- Existing horizontal streamlined open windows on the front (North) and rear (South) elevations will be glazed (including fire-rated glazing) at the inside wall faces to ensure minimum impact on the external facades;
- Defective render will be replaced and the whole of the facades will be repainted; and
- Removal of the RCP and reinstatement of steps on Shing Wong Street.

ii. Interior

- The interiors will be altered except the architectural features to be preserved and new facilities will be installed to accommodate the new use;
- New internal partitions will be reversible and abut external walls without any loss of historical building fabric; and
- New services will be routed internally as far as possible.

iii. Preserved Features for Heritage Interpretation

- A selection of market stalls on G/F and 1/F;
- Main stair, including the balustrade of the main stair, Shanghai Plaster finishes and handrails (the balustrade of the secondary stair will need to be replaced to satisfy statutory requirements);
- Stoves and chimneys in the poultry scalding room; and
- Original Chinese/English signage whenever feasible.

iv. Enhancement Works for Complying With the Statutory Requirements of the Buildings Ordinance or other modern day's requirements

- BFA lift to serve 1/F and 2/F;
- BFA access door on G/F;
- Provision of fire services including water tank on roof level;
- Air-conditioning, lighting and electrical power distribution including associated plant to be sited in alley at the rear of the building;
- Upgrading of existing bridges to provide access between the building and Wing Lee Street;
- Provision of glazing behind the existing open horizontal windows on G/F and 1/F; and
- Provision of a staircase connecting to Wing Lee Street as the second exit for 2/F to fulfil the MOE requirements.

D. Mitigation Measures for the Conversion Works

11. For areas where impacts of the conversion works could not be avoided, the following mitigation measures are to be implemented based on the Conservation Principles stated above -

- i. The new BFA lift is sited at the rear of the building to minimise its impact on the outward appearance of the building. It will be constructed of materials in compatible design but to be distinguishable from the original building;
- ii. The new G/F BFA access is sited in the alley adjacent to the East elevation facing Shing Wong Street but close to the main entrance, which should be convenient for users with disabilities whilst

minimising the impact on the outward appearance of the building;

- iii. A selection of original market stalls will be retained in-situ for interpretation;
- iv. Existing stencilled signage will be retained in a selective number of locations with appropriate interpretation. While signs on the walls which are proposed to be demolished, they will be recorded prior to demolition;
- v. Original wooden doors within the Staff Quarters on 2/F will be repaired where necessary and retained for reuse in the re-planning of the Staff Quarters;
- vi. The use of Shanghai Plaster finishes will be retained where feasible, including at the principal entrance, the main stair balustrades, and the dados generally. Where the material is applied to areas that are subject to demolition, its existence has been recorded on drawings and photographs;
- vii. The provision of services plant has been sited on roof level and at the rear of the building, and in a manner to mitigate the impact on the outward appearance of the building;
- viii. Cartographic and photographic surveys of the building have been preliminarily conducted. A set of as-built record drawings will also be conducted upon completion of the conversion works;
- ix. Provision for protection of CDEs will be incorporated into the contract documents for the construction works, followed by regular monitoring of the protection measures by site supervisory staff during the construction; and
- x. Any renovation, alteration and maintenance works during the conversion and future operation of the building should follow the principles set out in the HIA.

THE WAY FORWARD

12. JEF will ensure that all works to be carried out for heritage conservation are in strict compliance with the requirements set out in the HIA as endorsed by the AMO.

The Journalism Education Foundation Hong Kong Limited

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