

Area Improvement and Pedestrian Planning in Hong Kong

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Abstract

This paper shows “pedestrian planning” and “urban greening” in improving the environment of older urban areas in Hong Kong by using an “Area Improvement” approach. The concept of “Area Improvement” is recommended to enhance the environment of older urban areas through measures that do not involve massive redevelopment/ new development, so as to minimize disruption to the local communities. Instead of “demolishing old and replacing it with new”, the concept of Area Improvement would mean “to co-exist new with old”. The benefits of such an approach are not just confined to quicker implementation and lower capital cost, but also its sustainable nature and ability to preserve local characteristics. This paper introduces the pedestrian planning principles, briefly describes the elevated walkway system and underground development in Hong Kong and outlines the Greening Master Plan. It selects Tsim Sha Tsui, one of the most popular shopping and tourist areas in Hong Kong, as a case study to demonstrate the process of developing “Area Improving Plan” for the purpose of enhancing the general environment of the older urban cores. As a comprehensive improvement approach, the “Area Improvement Plan” integrates pedestrian area improvement, streetscape improvement, greening, traffic management and minor land use restructuring to enhance the physical environment and promote the vibrancy of the district. Extensive public engagement has been conducted such that members of the public can also shape the physical fabrics of their neighbourhoods themselves in the planning process.