

PROPOSAL

Redevelopment of Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market and
Lamma Island Study

The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners applauds the Hong Kong Government's initiative to redevelop the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market into a world-class Fisherman's Wharf. It is therefore our pleasure to submit the following Study for the Government and its appointed consultants to consider in moving this project forward.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Hong Kong's history began as a fishing village located at the mouth of the Pearl River. Over the years, this village has grown to become an international world-class city with modern architecture, a state-of-the-art international airport, a suspension bridge that is the world's second longest and a bustling economy.

In the last few years, tourists and business arrivals have dropped substantially and Hong Kong must find ways to rejuvenate its tourism industry and maintain its market share of international tourists and business visitors. Numerous themes and concepts have been proposed including the development of Disneyland, revitalisation of Ocean Park, and most excitingly, Fisherman's Wharf.

The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners initiated some years ago the redevelopment of the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market (WFM) into a Fisherman's Wharf as a new tourist attraction. The WFM is a golden opportunity to reflect Hong Kong's traditional Chinese fishing culture and its heritage, and to set new standards for tourism-related initiatives in Hong Kong.

San Francisco is famous for its Golden Gate Bridge, Cable Cars and Fisherman's Wharf. Hong Kong can become even more attractive and famous for its Tsing Ma Bridge, Peak Tram, Star Ferry as well as a Fisherman's Wharf.

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OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposal recommended by the Federation is to redevelop the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market (WFM) into a modern tourist facility and to explore the opportunities of incorporating Aberdeen's neighboring areas as a regional hub for consideration when a Fisherman's Wharf project is planned for development.

A tourist site does not stand in isolation. At the moment, the WFM site is too small to be developed as a single tourist site. Instead it should be considered as part of the larger redevelopment of Aberdeen, linking it to Ocean Park and along the Southwest Island around Pokfulam, and also Lamma Island if possible. Therefore the project should be looked at as part of a larger redevelopment plan from a macro and long-term planning point of view.

BENEFITS TO HONG KONG

With the Fisherman's Wharf redevelopment, Hong Kong will have an additional major tourist attraction and an economic generator, and more interesting tour packages to sell to foreigners. Visitors would be more willing to stay longer to visit all the sites and do shopping.

In recent years, the waters around Hong Kong have become polluted. This project will provide an opportunity to clean up part of the Aberdeen typhoon shelter area and to set new environmental standards, again making Hong Kong known as a staunch supporter of a clean and sustainable environment.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

To maximise the potential of this redevelopment, we believe that the project must be far-sighted and broad enough to consider the potential for tourism development in nearby districts. Appropriate advance feasibility studies must be undertaken and carried out. The project must be impressive in its design, scope of facilities and attractions.

All matters relating to size of development, environmental and neighbourhood issues, accessibility, traffic flow, facilities, amenities and attractions should be examined and tabled for discussion. The development's design should be environmentally friendly, theme driven and creative.

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The Federation believes that the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market is the most appropriate site for this redevelopment in view of its immediate surroundings and their potential for development. Potential opportunities and threats are illustrated as follows:

Opportunities

◆ *Heritage Value*

1 *Middle Kingdom in Ocean Park*

The Middle Kingdom of Ocean Park is very close to Aberdeen. Tourists may enjoy a visit to Ocean Park as a starting point for further exploration of the area. The performance of martial arts, acrobatics, the architecture and the handicrafts together with the new Pandas are good ways for tourists to have a taste of Chinese culture.

2 *Monorail Links*

A monorail that links Aberdeen to Ocean Park could be considered. Visitors to Ocean Park and Aberdeen would find it scenic, interesting and convenient to be shuttled this way between two major attractions. This monorail link is not only for sightseeing but it would help reduce environmental pollution as well as save parking space and reduce traffic congestion in both Aberdeen and Ocean Park.

3 *Cable Car*

A cable car that links the Peak to Aberdeen or Pokfulam may add to their attraction. The ride almost straight up the mountain to reach the famous Hong Kong Victoria Peak would be most breathtaking and an attraction in itself, since the southwest part of the Island is famous for its sea view and landscape.

4 *Aberdeen as a Fishing Village*

Tourists could then take a few minutes journey to see the Aberdeen fishing village. This will present the history of Hong Kong to tourists. The proposed site provides heritage value as Aberdeen has long established itself in Hong Kong's history as the home of the boat people with their floating homes. The name originated from a famous fishing village in Scotland.

5 *Floating Seafood Restaurants*

The proposed site has been the location for the world famous floating seafood restaurants for years. The floating restaurants have been featured in all the local tours of Hong Kong and a large portion of the tourists of the past have been enchanted by the short sampan ride to the floating restaurants and the fresh seafood served in a Chinese style.

6 *Lady Maurine*

The Lady Maurine, which many Governors in colonial times have taken from the old airport to Central, should be permanently docked at the Aberdeen Fisherman's Wharf as a tourist attraction. She would be turned into a showcase of the past Governors' stories including pictures and illustrations/ literature etc. The Lady Maurine provides significant historic value as the first British naval ship to enter Hong Kong over 150 years ago.

7 *Maritime Museum*

The site is historical because the British navy first landed Hong Kong at Waterfall Bay to take fresh water supplies. The fishing village culture should be well represented in the history of Hong Kong. The tradition and modern life of boat people, the lifestyle of Hakka people as well as the story of Aberdeen could enrich the content of the museum. In contrast to Ocean Park's Marine Land, a maritime museum in Aberdeen containing antiques, fishing artifacts and memorabilia particularly found from the South China Seas may be planned.

8 *Chinese Cuisine Training Institute (CCTI)*

There is a proposed training centre for Chinese cuisine to be set up at the Vocational Training Council in Pokfulam. This centre would be open to entertain visitors. They may have an opportunity to take simple Chinese cuisine training as well as taste the excellence of traditional Chinese cuisine. This CCTI would act as a live attraction to the Chinese heritage.

9 *A Sunset Promenade along the Cyber Port*

The site of the future Cyber Port will be situated between Sandy Bay and Waterfall Bay. The site itself is a beautiful place. A long promenade could be considered, starting from Sandy Bay and extended to Aberdeen promenade. This would be a good recreational facility to the locals and tourists as well. It is worth while to consider a long promenade when planning a promenade in Aberdeen.

10 *Ferry to Disneyland on Lantau*

Aberdeen could build piers directly to the future Disneyland on Lantau Island. Aberdeen could be another sea route centre to the outer islands like Lamma Island, Peng Chau, Cheung Chau. For tourism purposes, piers in Aberdeen may be decorated in ancient Chinese style. Moreover, this alternative sea routes centre could also provide more choice of ferry services for locals to the outlying islands.

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◆ *Sporty Package for the Youth*

1 *Water Race*

Daily water races should be scheduled throughout the year. This attraction should be planned as regularly as the famous tourist attraction of the "Changing of the Guard" in London, England. Tourists from all over the world come to London to witness this daily ritual. The types of races that may be held include dragon boat racing, and sampan races.

2. *A Ride of Kai-do (街渡) to Lamma Island from Aberdeen*

Lamma, Hong Kong's third largest island, offers diverse pleasure. There are two main villages, island hikes, stunning sea views and a slice of Europe. Visitors may also enjoy seafood at the open-air restaurants in Sok Kwu Wan and visit the Hong Kong style marine culture floating rafts (漁排). There is a youth hostel and some privately operated hostels which may allow budget travellers to stay overnight. For those who choose back to downtown, they can take 40-minute ride from its pier to Central or Aberdeen.

3. *Hill Walking to the Peak*

For those who do not have enough time or those who prefer exercise on the ground, they may enjoy a less than an hour hill walking to the peak from Aberdeen. There is a protected country park where visitors may escape from the city. The reservoirs and the trails are well preserved and well formed. Tourists may also enjoy picnics or barbecues at the site.

Threats

◆ *Transportation*

1 *Insufficient Car Parks*

Since there is no mass transportation railways like KCR or MTR in districts like Ocean Park, Aberdeen, or Pokfulam, transport congestion may arise. Also there are insufficient car parks.

2 *Disturbing to the Typhoon Shelter*

The existing typhoon shelter is a long established home for boat people. If there are water races, it may disturb the marine traffic. A well-furnished pier is also needed to support the traffic to Lamma Island.

◆ *Preservation of Typhoon Shelter vs the Redevelopment*

It may be difficult to preserve the typhoon shelter without disturbing resident boat people when developing it into a tourist's site.

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◆ *Supporting facilities in Aberdeen*

It is of concern whether Aberdeen has the capacity to support the redevelopment. There is insufficient space to hold large amount of visitors in the limited district.

◆ *The nearby Industrial Buildings*

There are industrial buildings in Wong Chuk Hang and Tin Wan. These two areas are old industrial areas. For long-term planning purpose, Government should consider how to renew these areas and make them compatible to new attractions as well as renew the nearby community.

◆ *Environmental Concerns*

The water in the Aberdeen typhoon shelter is heavily polluted. It may not be suitable to carry out water races if the water quality cannot be improved. Also the redevelopment project may disturb the boat people whose living style would add value to the future Fisherman Wharf.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners pledges its full support for the development of a Fishermen's Wharf project. We believe that a world-class facility, properly conceived, well marketed and managed will spell success in terms of economic returns for Hong Kong. However, the project should also look into the development of the immediate neighbourhood and vicinity. A tourist attraction would not stand alone but should be compatible to or complement its nearby community.

The Federation and its members sincerely urge the Government to look into this project with a far-sighted and macro view. We are also prepared to assist the Government in bringing this project to an exciting fruition and Opening.

Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners