

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

For discussion
on 31 May 2011

TFK/11/2011

The Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier : Restoration and Revitalization

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier (the “Pier” hereinafter) is prominently situated at the southern tip of the Kowloon Peninsula. It was built in 1958 as a functional pier to accommodate two popular public ferry crossings operated by The “Star” Ferry Company, Limited (the “Star Ferry” hereinafter) under the Franchise governed by Cap.104, the Ferry Services Ordinance. The Pier is one of the most recognized buildings at the waterfront of Kowloon Peninsula, it is aging, somewhat run-down and in many ways under-utilizes the prime water front location that it occupies.
- 1.2 The survival of the iconic ferry crossings is progressively changing from reliance on fare receipts from local commuters to be more reliant on visitors and cross-subsidy from the concession activities in the Pier. A review has been undertaken by the Star Ferry to see how the Pier could be revitalized which would in turn help sustain the iconic ferry crossings.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the proposal are :-
 - To provide public access to the roof of the Pier so that people could enjoy the remarkable views of the Victoria Harbour and Hong Kong skyline;
 - To provide space on the roof level for restaurants for public enjoyment;
 - To upgrade the access facilities within the Pier to modern standards, including additional provisions for access of wheelchair users;
 - To restore the Pier, and to anew its original architectural appearance.
- 2.2 The achievement of these objectives is constrained by the following:-

Structural Limitations

The Pier was built in 1958, and there are structural engineering limitations as to the loading that can be placed on the Pier and its piles that it rests on. A preliminary structural study has shown that

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

provision of new space for food and beverage outlets could not be built on the existing roof, but it might barely accommodate pedestrians and landscaping. Any new building works on the roof would need to be located on the landward side of the Pier.

Protection of the Harbour Ordinance

It would be difficult to justify additional structure or reclamation to support the proposed roof top expansion over the water. The expansion of the building over the landward side would provide a reasonable alternative which neither requires piling nor reclamation works on the harbour. The concept therefore has no implications in relation to the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance.

Town Planning Zoning

The zoning boundary for the Pier follows the outer dimensions of the building and excludes the canopy over the entrance area and the pedestrian walkway. The zoning also limits the height to the existing building of two storeys. It is therefore necessary to apply for a change to the zone boundary and to the two storey height restriction for the concept to proceed. Also, any retail or restaurant use on the site would require planning permission from the Town Planning Board.

Heritage Value of the Pier Building

The Pier is not a graded building, but it is considered by many to have some cultural and heritage value to the community. A prime objective of the study process was to identify the architectural characteristics of the building and to reinforce these features as far as possible in the new design. At the same time the existing building would be restored by the removal of inappropriate external additions and equipment and restoration of the concrete structure to a good standard of repair. In this respect the basic approach adopted has been to take the architectural qualities of the existing building facade and carry them forward to a new façade to be built about 5 to 10 metres in front of the existing building wall. In effect the existing façade is to be re-built but expanded to cover three storeys in height.

3. The Concept

- 3.1 The concept can be seen in the attached drawings, photos and photomontages. The section through the building illustrates how the new portion is to be constructed over land and will accommodate all of the modern requirements for lift access and emergency exits. It shows the new restaurant level on the same level as the existing roof and a

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

public walkway which faces inland.

- 3.2 The floor plans are schematic at this stage but indicate the general intention. On the Ground Floor the existing entrance areas will be rationalized and the commercial kiosks replaced by properly designed retail spaces. The existing pedestrian walkway under the canopy would remain at about 8 metres wide, while the canopy itself would be replaced by part of the new building and a new canopy. Public exhibition space will be provided in the entry to the east pier.
- 3.3 The First Floor will include the entrance to the First Class deck of the ferries and include lift access. It will also include the upper levels of the shops including a “Star” Ferry gallery (exhibiting the development of the Star Ferry service with the change of the skyline along the waterfront of the Victoria Harbour) and extend about 4.5 metres from the existing façade of the pier building.
- 3.4 The roof level may include space for food and beverage outlets mainly as part of the new building, and each will have its own outdoor eating space. The existing machine rooms with their old equipment will be opened up for the public to see, and they will be able to walk through them to the end of the piers for viewing the harbour and the city in all directions. The area will be landscaped and will have furniture, and some shelter to make it inviting to the public. Green-power generation devices and environmental-friendly materials will be used to act as a demonstration site of renewable energy and environmental conservation facilities.
- 3.5 The photos of the pier building before and after illustrate how with sensitive architecture it would be hardly noticeable as an expansion.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Over the last 6-9 months the Star Ferry has carried out informal consultation with groups, stakeholders and individuals who may have an interest in the project. This included various government departments, District Councilors, Legislators, trade and special interest groups.
- 4.2 Initially, two options were proposed for the design of the new building façade, and the public area on the pier roof did not extend beyond the Lift Machine room. However, there was a consensus on one particular design which is that now under this concept. Also there was a strong insistence on providing public access to the outer end of the pier roof

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

and provision of free performance space at the Ground Floor area.

- 4.3 Although the Star Ferry had exchanged views with some relevant government departments on the technical aspect, they have not yet obtained any formal agreement with the relevant government departments to proceed. Hence, the Star Ferry is carrying out the conceptual design of the improvements, and the purpose of this submission is to seek the Commission's view for further enhancement on the conceptual design of this initiative.
- 4.4. The Star Ferry now invites the Harbourfront Commission to offer comments on the concept so that it can be further refined for subsequent town planning applications and further consideration by the Government.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 The Pier is owned by the Government and managed and operated by the Star Ferry under the Franchise. Structural maintenance responsibility of the Pier remains with the Government.
- 5.2 The Star Ferry is carrying out the conceptual design of the improvements and will obtain the relevant approvals and endorsements on the refined design concept up to the stage that building approval is required.

6. The Way Forward

- 6.1 The Star Ferry has informally consulted various bodies on the proposal and is now formally consulting the Harbourfront Commission, and it is hoped that support can be given to the proposal.
- 6.2 Constructive comments of the Commission will be incorporated, and a refined proposal will then be submitted to the Town Planning Board for consideration, to allow for the increase in building height, the expansion of the pier area further inland and to permit the detailed designs. The approved proposal and detailed designs would then be put forward to the Government for consideration of project implementation.

7. Conclusive Remarks

- 7.1 The proposal is a basis for re-vitalizing the Pier by restoring the existing building in a sensitive and practical way so that it regains its significance as an important attraction on the water front. The modest expansion of the building by one floor will not only provide improved access to the Pier and ferry service but it will also enable the public to

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

have access to enjoy magnificent harbour-views on the roof for the first time.

- 7.2 The additional retail floor space will provide a financial source for the Star Ferry's survival which cannot rely on fares alone. The provision of purpose designed space for food and beverage outlets with perhaps the best view in the world, will help revitalize the waterfront and become an attraction and a focal point for both locals, visitors and tourists. The main benefit though will be for the general public where as much of the roof level as possible will be made available for public access will become a prime public viewing point.

**The "Star" Ferry Company Limited
May 2011**



Figure 1 (a) : The existing pier boundary (an extract from the Draft Tsim Sha Tsui Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K1/25)

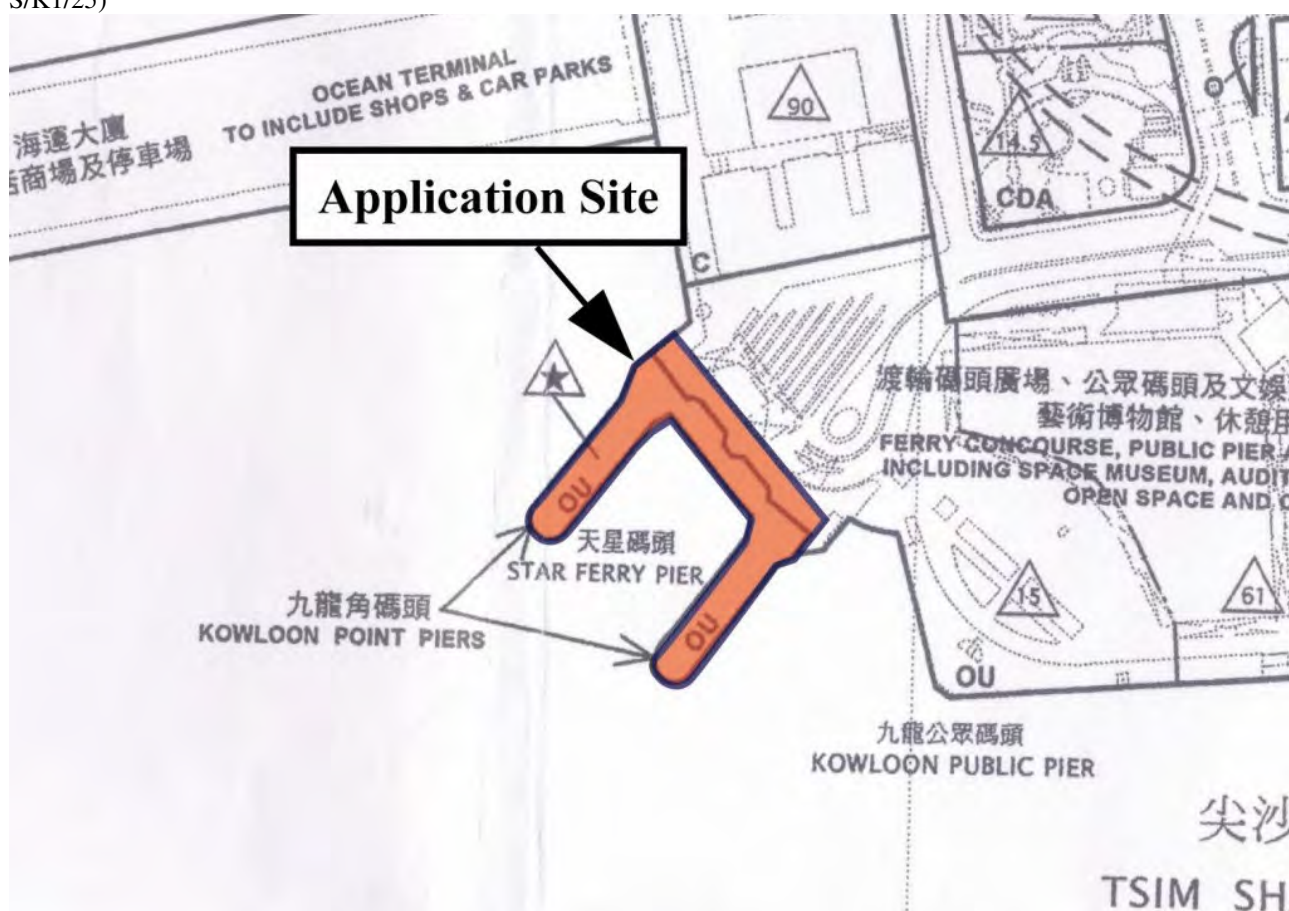


Figure 1 (b) : Location Plan (an extract from the Draft Tsim Sha Tsui Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K1/25)



Figure 2 (a) : The existing façade



Figure 2 (b) : A photomontage of the proposed façade



Figure 3 (a) : The existing façade from Harbour City



Figure 3 (b) : A photomontage of the proposed façade from Harbour City.



Figure 4 (a) : The existing façade from Clock Tower



Figure 4 (b) : A photomontage of the proposed façade from Clock Tower.

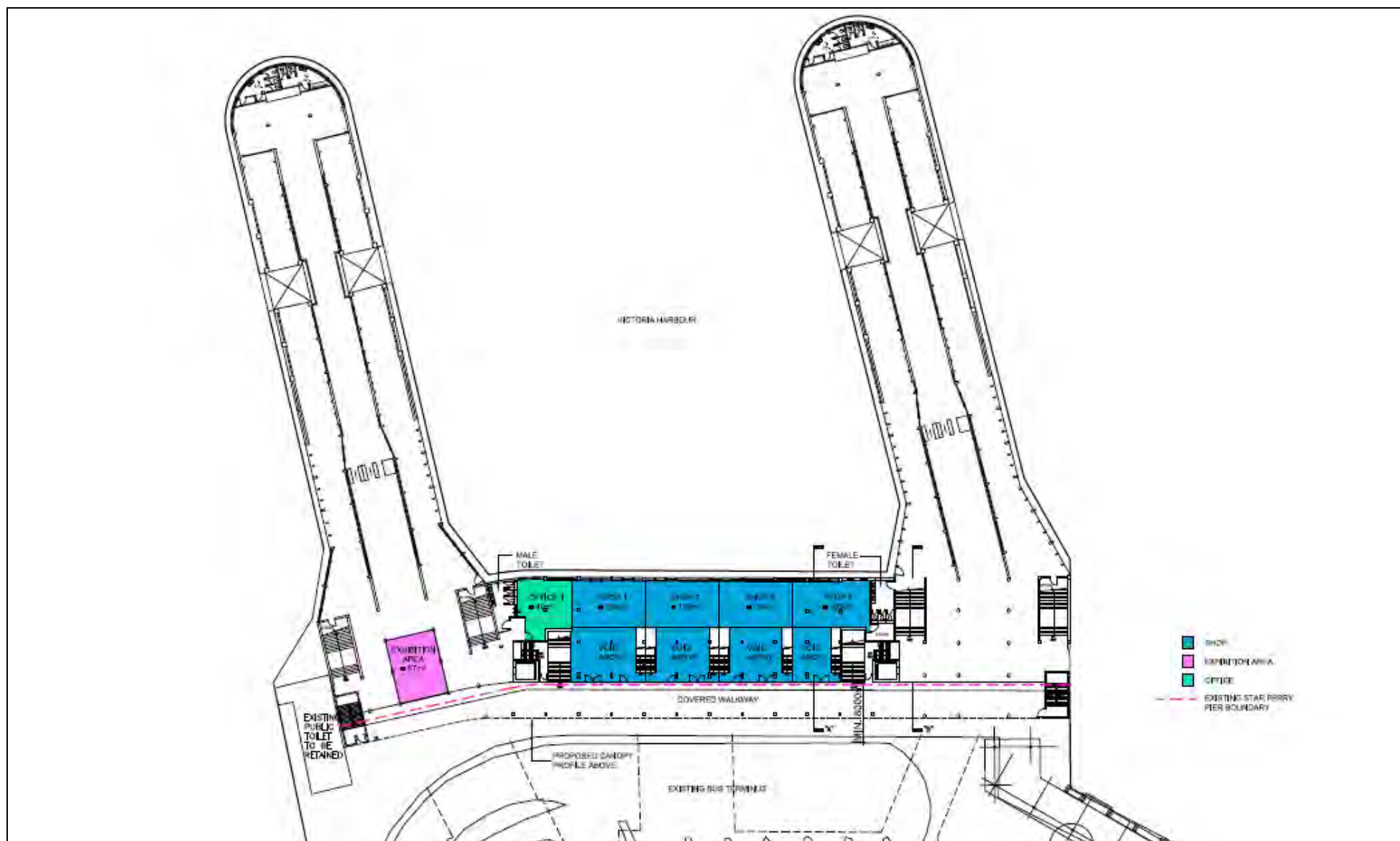


Figure 5 : Proposed Ground Floor Layout Plan

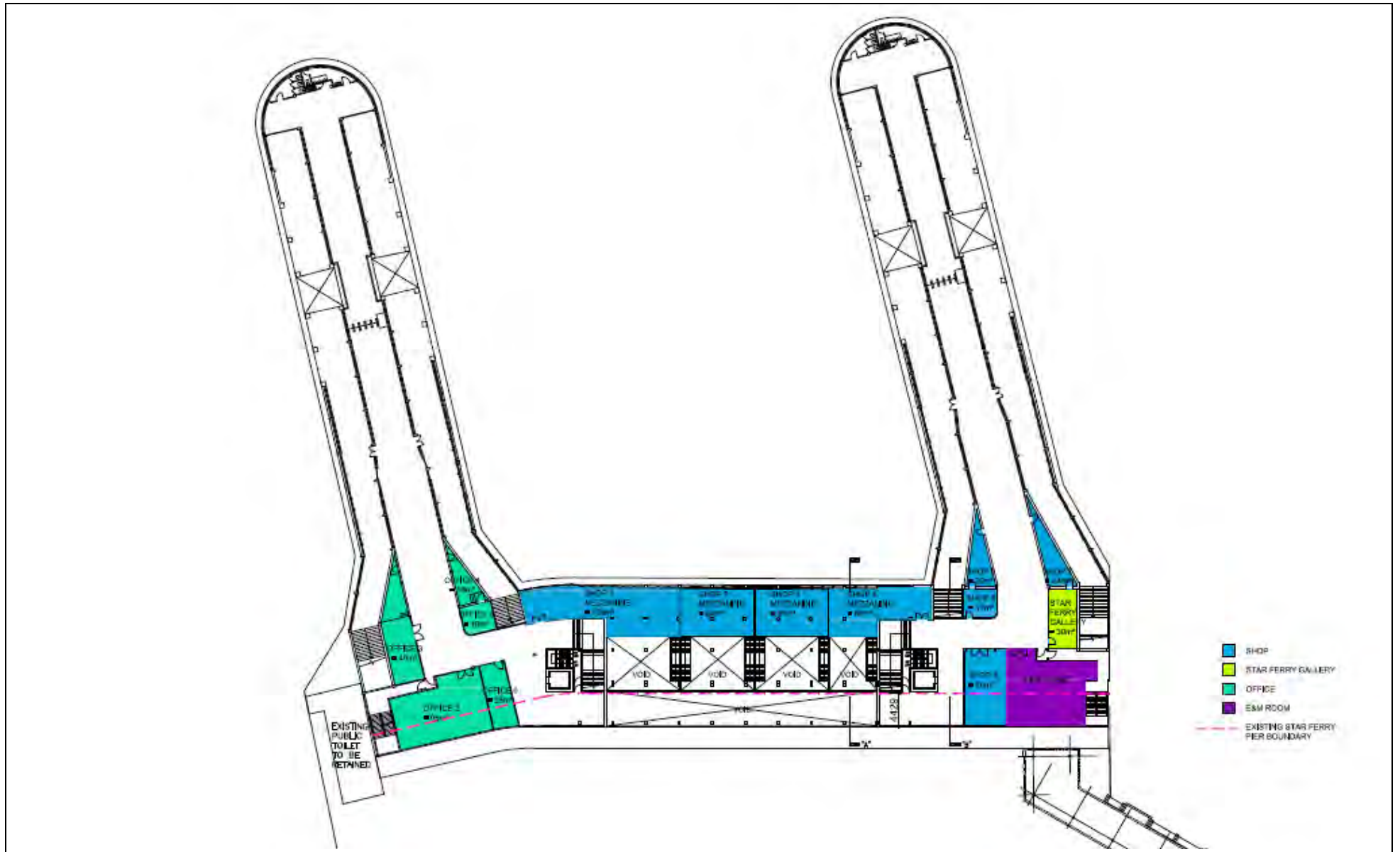


Figure 6 : Proposed First Floor Layout Plan



Figure 7 : Proposed Rooftop Layout Plan

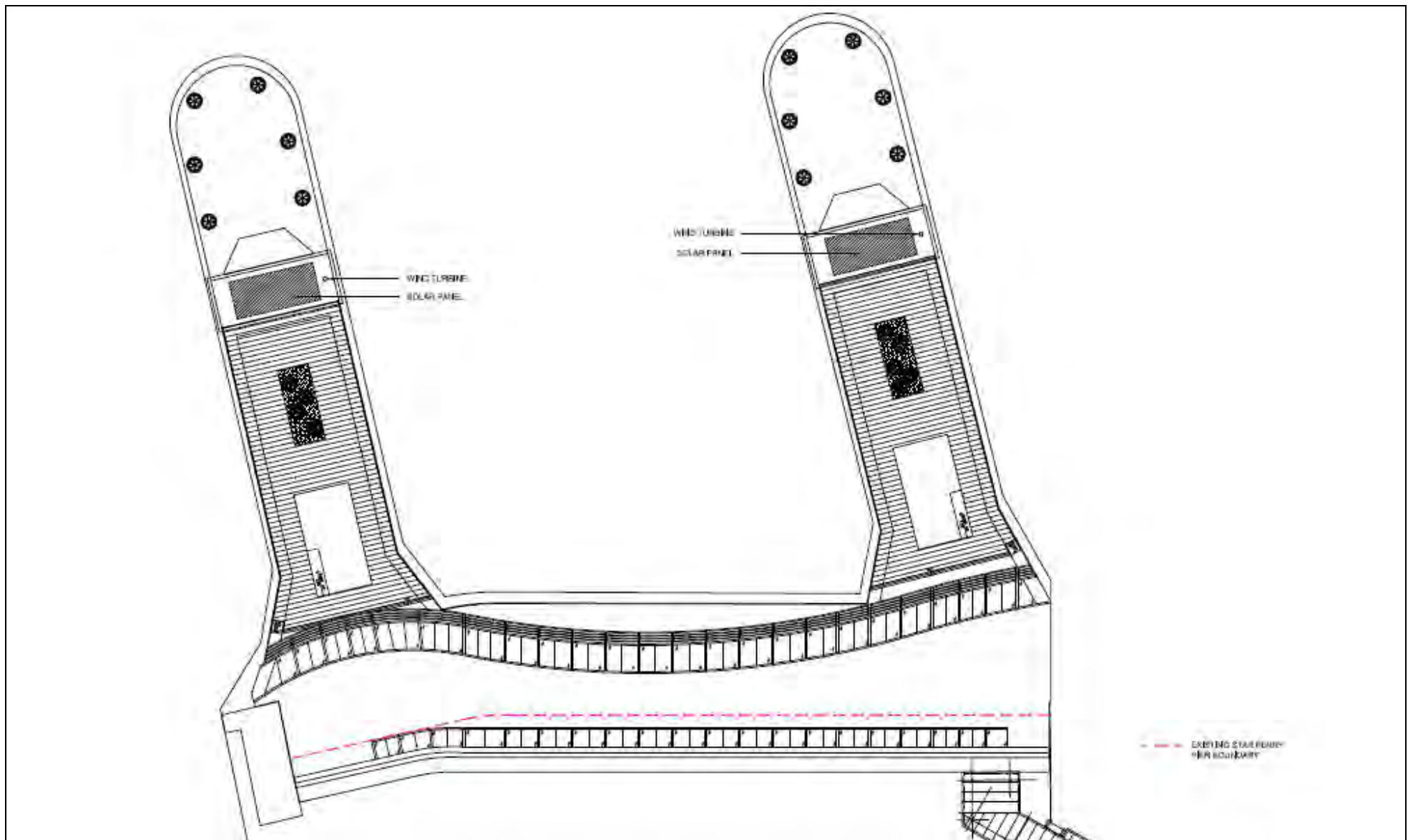


Figure 8 : Proposed Rooftop Layout Plan – Machine Room.

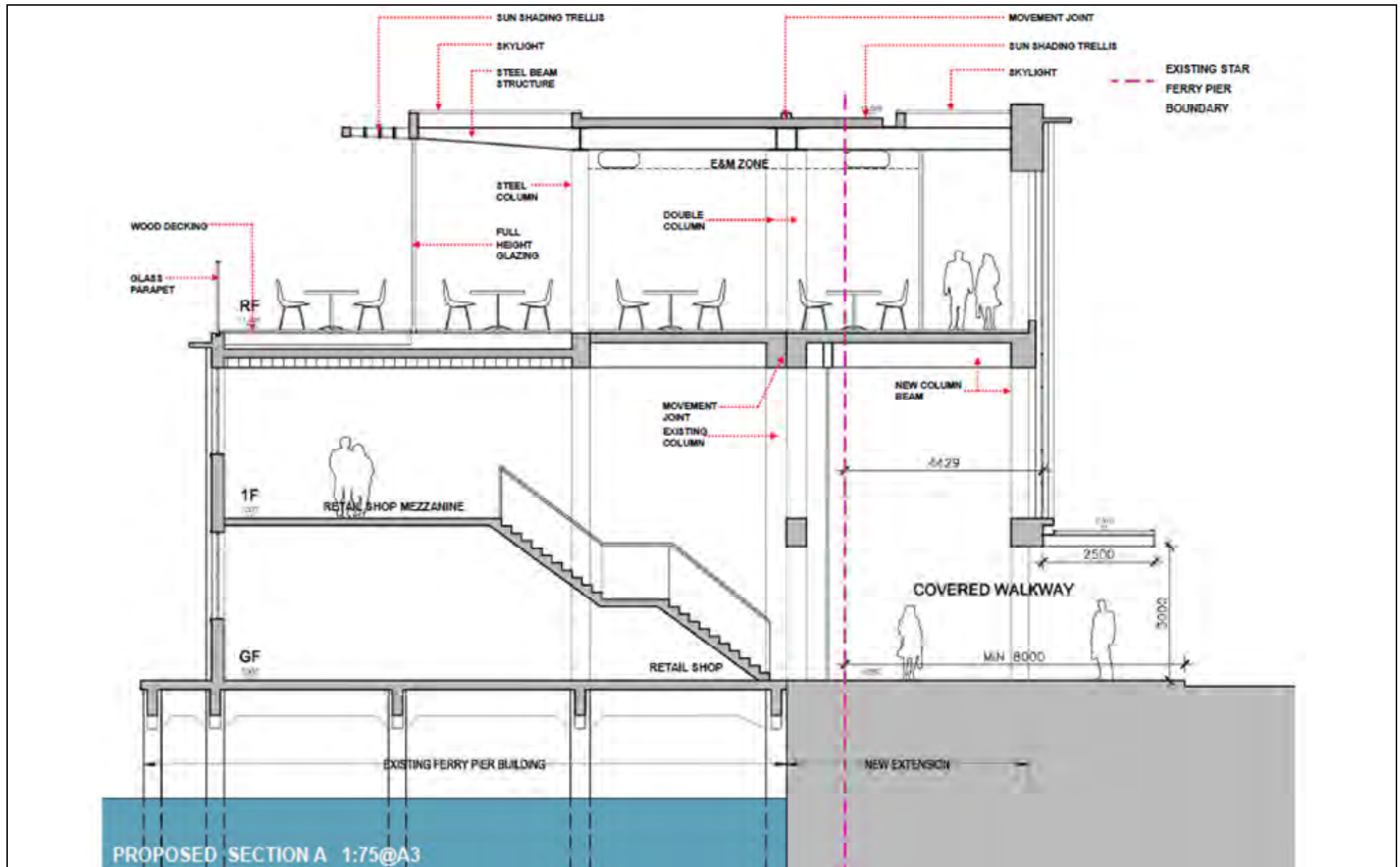


Figure 9 : Section A Plan

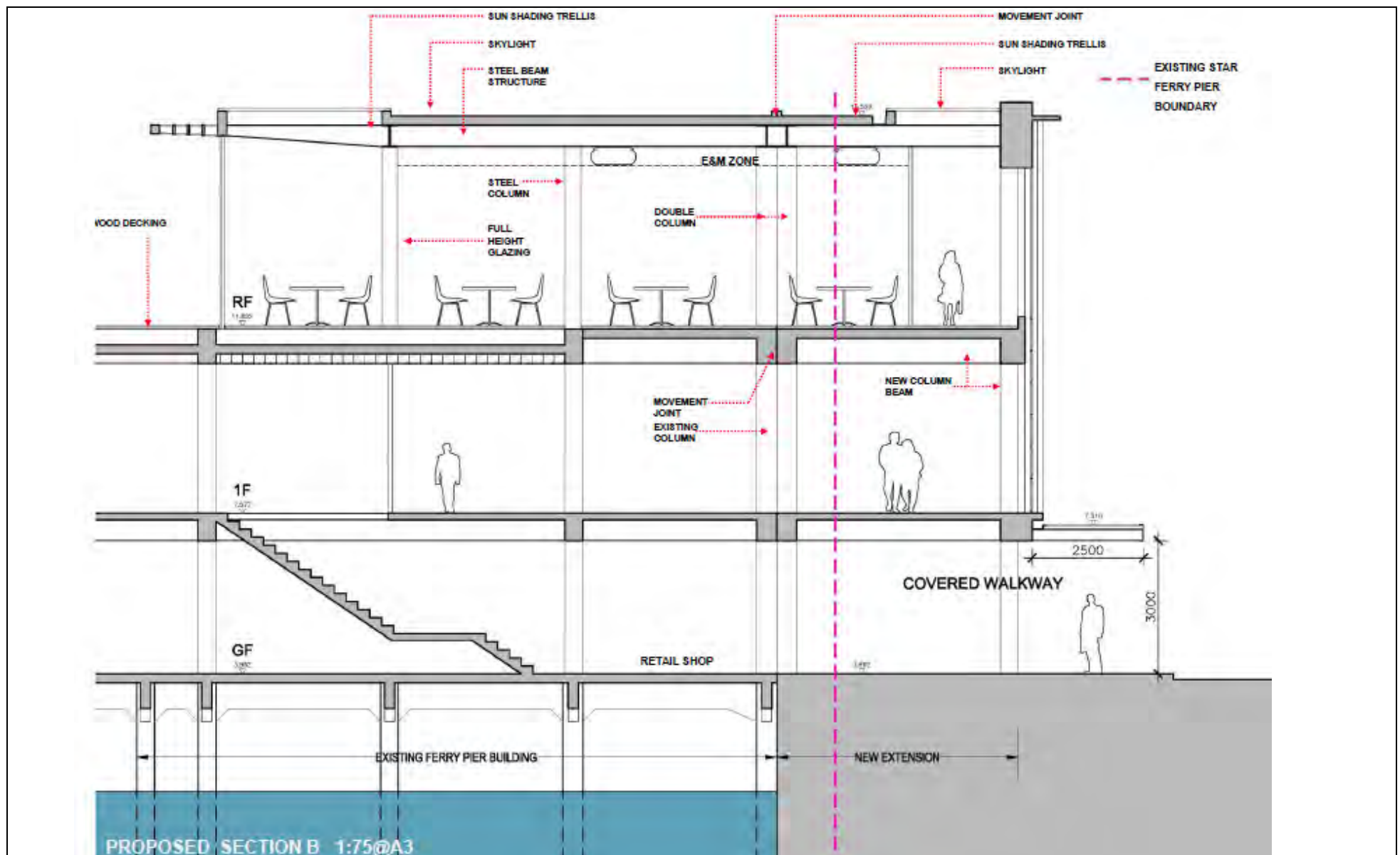


Figure 10 : Section B Plan



Figure 11 : A photomontage of the streetscape outside the pier entrance



Figure 12 : A photomontage of the outdoor dining and public access.

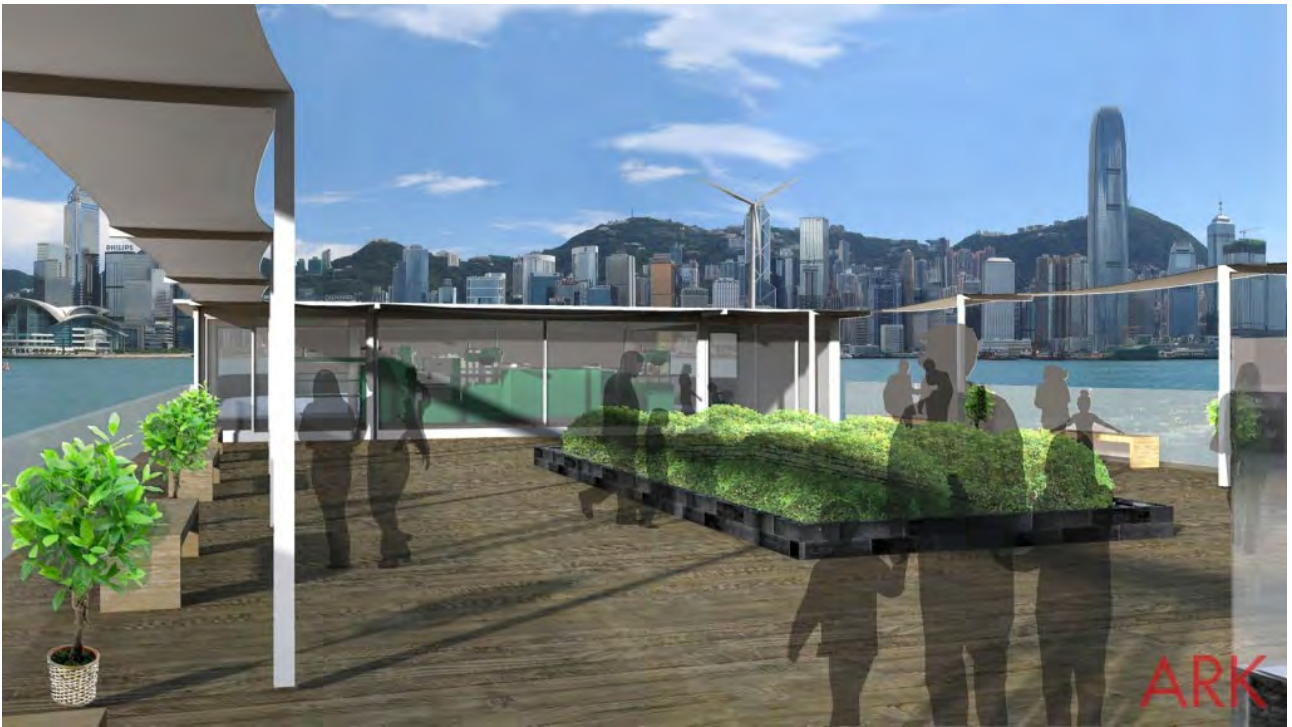


Figure 13 : Portions of the walls of the machine room are proposed to be converted to glass for the public to view the original machinery working. Public access will be available through this to the end of the piers.

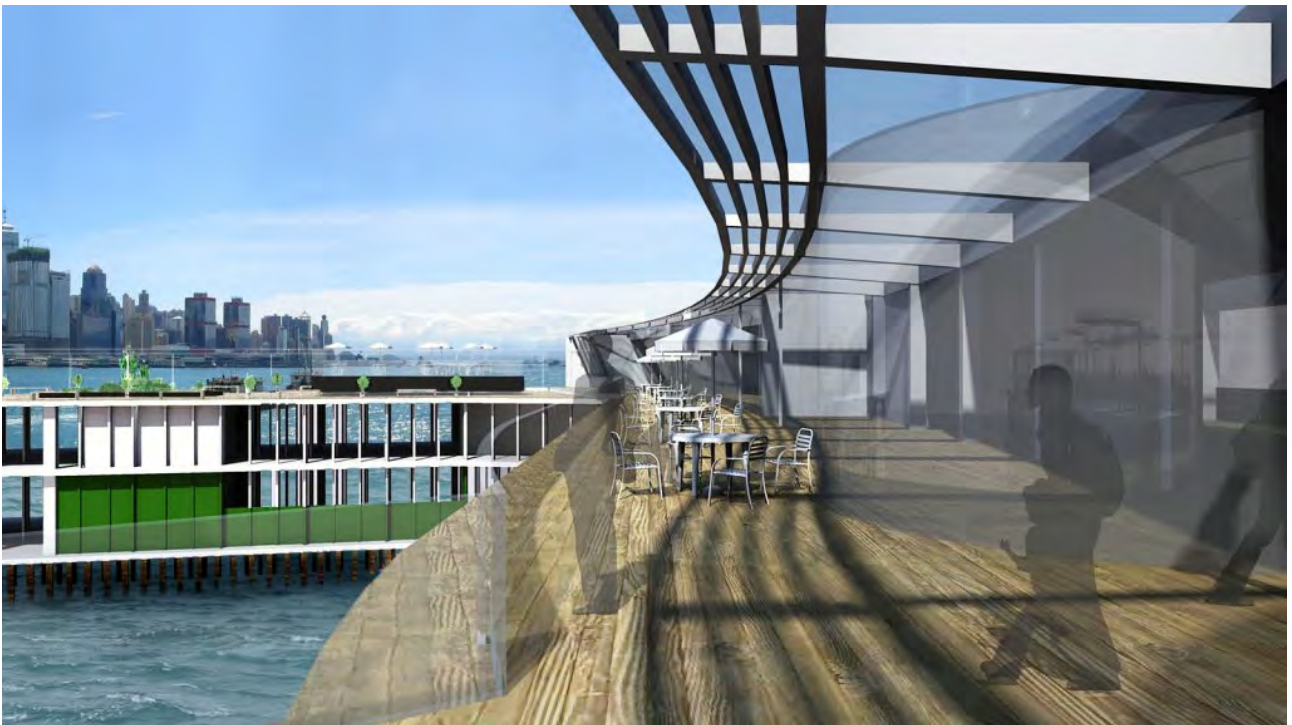


Figure 14 : A photomontage of the restaurant and public access to the roof of the western pier building.



Figure 15 : A photomontage of what the proposed building would look like from the Central Star Ferry Pier. This demonstrates that the visual impact of the proposed building would be minimal.



Figure 16 : A photomontage of what the proposed building would look like from the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.