

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island

For discussion
on 9 September 2020

TFHK/02/2020

Proposed Open Recreation and Sitting Out Area at Quarry Bay

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to seek Members' views on a proposal by St. James' Settlement (SJS) to set up an open recreation and sitting out area at a vacant site off Hoi Tai Street, Quarry Bay by way of short-term tenancy (STT).

BACKGROUND

2. The site concerned, which falls within the harbourfront area, is around 3 770m² in size. It is adjacent to the Quarry Bay Park Phase II and a temporary community garden being implemented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Members were consulted on the temporary community garden via circulation paper TFHK/C05/2019 in August 2019 (see **Annex A**).

3. Victoria Harbour has long been a symbol of Hong Kong and a popular attraction for locals and visitors alike. In order to encourage more people to enjoy this attraction, SJS would like to apply for a STT to utilise the subject vacant government site. The site would be operated as a relaxing outdoor space with an interesting design to engage the various stakeholders who live, study, work in and visit this community. Apart from this, various community events would also be hosted at the site to promote community development and the unique characteristics of the Eastern District.

4. Our STT proposal is also in line with the incremental approach for utilisation and development of the harbourfront sites as advocated by the Commission, as well as the Government's policy to allow non-governmental organisations (NGO) or social enterprises to make gainful use of scarce land sources for community, institutional or non-profit making uses before the long-term development.

5. The SJS is a social service organisation which has been

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in operation since 1949, providing comprehensive, high quality services to meet the needs of more deprived members of the society, enabling individuals to help themselves and others, and helping build an integrated and harmonious community. The SJS has experience in managing and operating community events in spaces tailored to local community needs. One of our signature projects, Viva Blue House in Wan Chai, is a heritage project committed to delivering Hong Kong's first truly community-led, bottom-up and participatory heritage conservation model. The SJS has an existing partnership with 56 community stakeholders in the Eastern District, including district councilors, local business partners, clinics, schools, NGOs and churches etc.

PROPOSED TEMPORARY USE

6. Our main intention with adopting this site is to help nurture a closer, more sustainable community in the Eastern District. Quarry Bay has a diverse community base consisting of residents, visitors and office workers, and we believe that providing more open space can help forge stronger links between people from different walks of life who make up this community in the Eastern District.

7. In order to strengthen the bonds and connections between community members, this site could be used in a variety of ways. Through a user-centric building design and activities programme, the space could help encourage intergenerational exchange, promote knowledge sharing, nurture personal development through arts and cultural activities, as well as provide a platform for innovation and serving those in need.

HARBOUR PLANNING PRINCIPLES

8. We believe that the proposal aligns with the Harbour Planning Principles in the following aspects –

(a) Preserving Victoria Harbour

Our proposed design is inspired by the history of the site

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over the past 100 years and will allow the general public to learn about the history and development of the harbourfront of Quarry Bay and Eastern District, including transformation from a fishing village and an industrial and maritime centre in the past, to a mixed residential and commercial area nowadays. 'Island East Harbour Tours' will be organized to teach visitors about and retain the history and heritage of this unique area.

(b) Stakeholder Engagement

By providing a common area for community members to meet and connect with one another through activities or events, we can enhance intergenerational exchange between elderly, youth and families; we can promote knowledge sharing to advance community development; and we can foster a sustainable community and nurture positive wellbeing.

Grassroots engagement is crucial to developing strong bonds between community members and groups whilst also helping to improve people's wellbeing. A series of public engagement exercises were launched since March 2020: local residents, frequent visitors, as well as the working and student populations were interviewed. The preliminary questionnaire findings informed our proposed use and design of the site, and an ongoing engagement process will be conducted to communicate the purpose of the project and ensure we are responding to community needs as they evolve.

The Viva Blue House has provided SJS with extensive and rich experience in community engagement under a bottom-up, public participatory approach, and SJS wishes to utilise this approach for the benefit of the Eastern District. Such community engagement and experience in operating the proposed STT would also contribute to the planning of the long-term development of the site under the incremental approach.

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(c) Sustainable Development and Integrated Planning

As the site is currently vacant, we would like to apply for a STT to create a temporary harbourfront open space to cater for the needs of the community as identified during the public engagement exercises conducted since March 2020.

Through regular activities and one-off events on subjects including the environment, history, culture and the arts, members of the community can actively participate and showcase their innovative ideas. This would help to encourage community engagement, create opportunities to try new ideas and bring added value to the entire district.

As well as socio-cultural sustainability, the design of the site (see **Annex B**) would also consider environmental sustainability, such as through the green open areas, vegetation and the building design using natural ventilation and maximising natural light.

(d) Vibrant Harbour and Public Enjoyment

The provision of a safe and comfortable facility can provide much needed additional space to promote, nurture, inspire and enrich community members' interests and wellbeing. This cultural and leisure facility would provide a platform for public events, enabling community members to participate in diverse artistic, cultural, historical and environmental activities.

The site will be opened every day to maximise public enjoyment and we expect to host over 300 sessions of various activities, bringing an expected 200 000 visitors annually. In our proposed design, public space and rooms could be shared with the public for recreation and leisure uses.

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THE DESIGN

9. The site would comprise a pavilion, with a covered performance space and several multipurpose rooms, an open lawn for outdoor activities and events, and a few ancillary outbuildings.

10. The low-slung linear pavilion draws inspiration from Quarry Bay district's maritime/industrial past in both geometries and materiality. To activate the vacant and under-utilized site, the pavilion is an addition to the district's on-going evolution. The building's anchoring location pays homage to the site's original underlying topography, where there was a pier protruding from the shoreline. See **Annex B** for indicative illustrations of the proposed design.

WAY FORWARD

11. Subject to Members' comments and comments from the Eastern District Council on the proposed idea, we will complete the detailed design and commence construction of the proposed project once Lands Department approves the STT application. The open space is targeted to operate from end-2021 to mid-2024 tentatively and quarterly renewal thereafter.

12. The site is zoned "Open Space" under the approved Quarry Bay Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H21/28 and we note that the long term development of the site will be implemented in a holistic manner together with the adjacent sites currently used by the Government as a temporary vehicle compound and a vehicle depot respectively. The adjacent sites could only be released after reprovisioning of the said facilities to a permanent government complex-cum-vehicle depot in Chai Wan. As mentioned above, the SJS is willing to operate the site until the reprovisioning and contribute to the Government's planning of the long term development of the site.

ADVICE SOUGHT

13. Members are cordially invited to comment on the proposed project.

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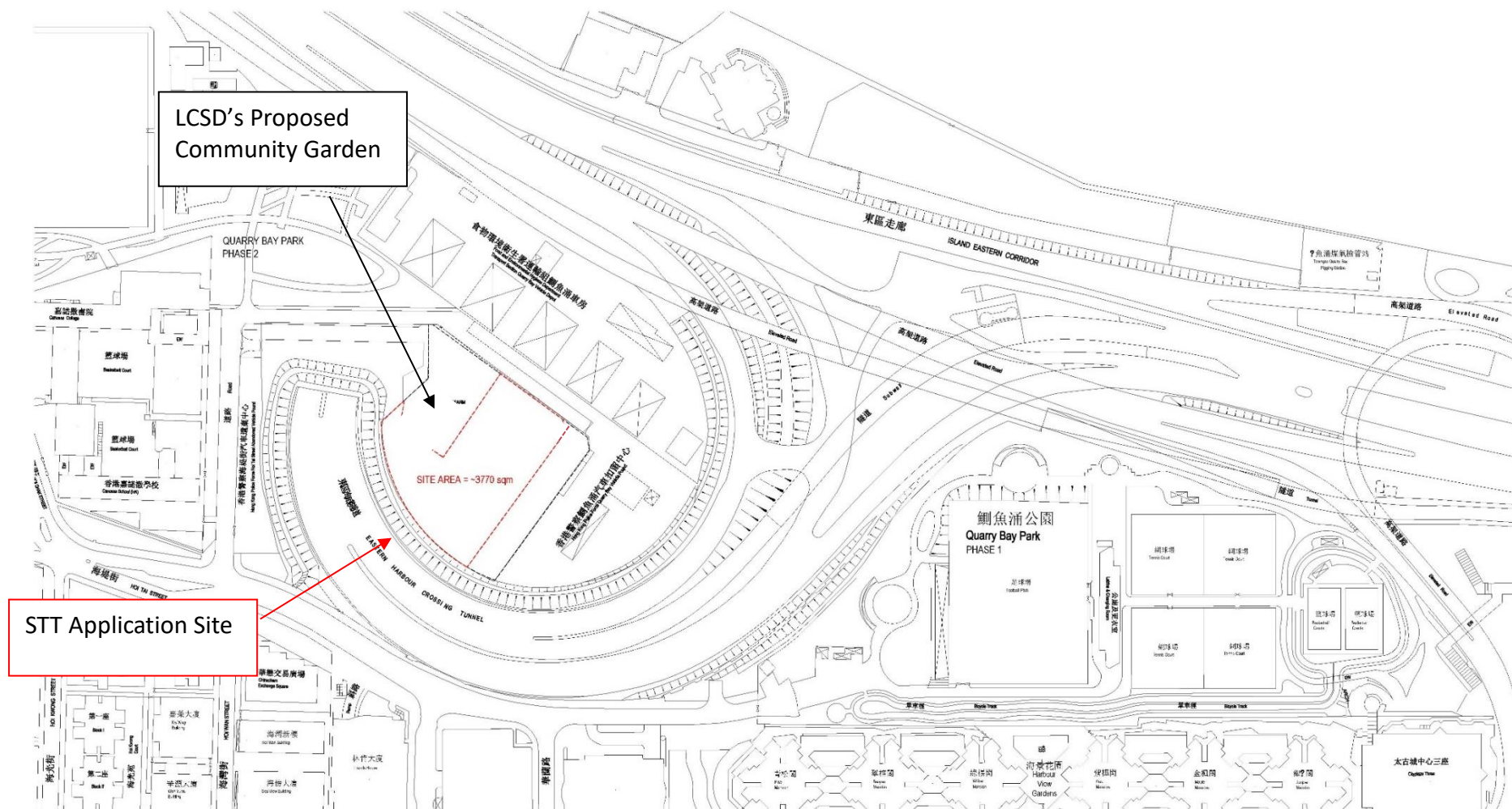
ATTACHMENT

Annex A Location Plan

Annex B Concept Design

**St. James' Settlement
September 2020**

Location Plan



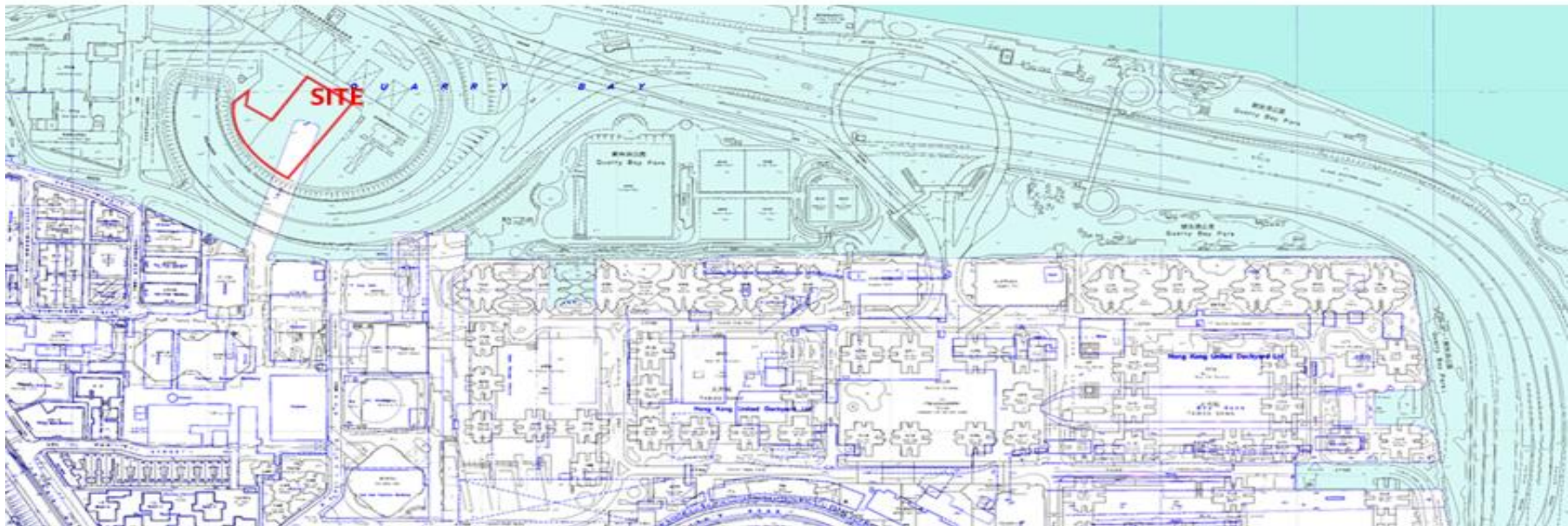
Concept Design of the Site (1)

CONTEXT

Evolution of Quarry Bay



Quarry Bay 1975 - 2020



Concept Design of the Site (2)

