



CULTURAL PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY IN CITIES: A CASE OF WEST KOWLOON IN HONG KONG

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the context of cultural planning in Hong Kong with reference to the case of West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). Based on theoretical review and field-based study, the urban form, local characters, culture, and sustainability context of Hong Kong specifically the West Kowloon and its adjoining areas have been discussed extensively. Documentary research and thematic analysis on local culture, identity, urban form and cultural planning are conducted. This study emphasizes on the significance of cultural planning in contemporary urban context, and analyses the need of cultural planning in cities and its contribution towards sustainability. It suggests considering the unique culture, heritage, identity and urban form of Hong Kong in the design of new cultural urban spaces, such as West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). It also highlights on the need of inclusive community participation in the planning, designing and implementation of the urban development projects. This study is novel as it has attempted to connect future developments trends based on historical archives. The study signifies the future cares should be taken for sustainable development with high concern on cultural identity.

Key Words: Cultural Planning; Heritage; Urban Form; Sustainability; Hong Kong

1. Introduction:

Cities are not only the living spaces for people; they are also considered the centers for multicultural society. The notion of cultural planning has received widespread recognition among the city planners in the recent years. Culture is nowadays used as a strategy to provide opportunities for economic growth in the cities. As Harvey (1989) noted that urban governance has shifted from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, the inter-urban competition has also become more intensive and important to the cities. Cities started to use culture as a way to establish them as unique cities achieving economic growth and competitiveness in the global economy (Yeong, 2016). The cultural development in cities uses culture as a catalyst of urban development and considers that integration of culture into urban development would bring socio-economic opportunities. In the post industrial economy, many cities transform the declined industrial space into cultural use and adopted culture as an urban strategy to provide alternative opportunities for economic growth (Yeong, 2016). McCann (2002) stressed that the division between culture and economy is a problematic construct; culture and economy are always intertwined and socially constructed processes rather than naturally separated processes.

Culture in cities includes collective lifestyle, ethnicities, and images (Zukin, 1995). It can be both 'traditional'-which means a whole way of life and 'creative'- which means the arts and learning (Williams, 1958). Zukin (1995) suggested that culture has three dimensions: symbolic meaning, material consequence, and political values. More specifically, culture not only has symbolic meaning but also material consequence and political value, and these three values are intertwined. Cultural planning has become a promising strategy for urban development; many cities have now built mega cultural infrastructure to engage in global competition (Zukin, 1995). Culture therefore has become a catalyst for urban development and the culture-led urban development has shaped the public discussion on the cultural identity of a city (Yeung, 2016). Cultural planning is assumed a tool to promote urban heritage conservation, social cohesiveness, economic vitality, community well-being and urban sustainability. In this regard, considering the case of West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) project, this study aims to explore the context and role of cultural planning in addressing the concerns of sustainable urban form, local characters and culture in Hong Kong. The discussion on cultural planning and associated urban cultural elements is conducted within the framework of sustainable cities.

2. Study Approach and Methods:

This study adopted a qualitative approach to examine the relationship of cultural planning and sustainability in cities with specific reference to the case of West Kowloon Cultural District as proposed by the HKSAR as a centre of cultural activities and tourism development in Hong Kong. This paper is based on the critical review of literatures on culture, urban form, local communities and sustainability in the cities. Documentary research and thematic analysis on local culture, identity, urban form and cultural planning are adopted. The author conducted field visit of West Kowloon Cultural District and adjoining areas in 2014 and 2015. The discussion on the WKCD was conducted extensively within the framework of cultural and sustainable cities. Culture, identity and planning for sustainability were considered for thematic analysis along

with this continuous discussion with planners and engineers have been used during descriptive inference. This is a pragmatic philosophy based case analysis through review and informal discussion. Culture is complexity of relationship which could not be dealt with sufficient without historical perspectives which made the researcher to infer previous archives. The field visit of 2014 to 2015 brought into thoughtful action recently considering the rapid cities development focused to smart and sustainable development in response to society 5.0 where machine and human interacts more like man to man interaction (Pokharel et al, 2021; Mishra and Pokharel, 2023; Mishra and Rai, 2017). The process of making machine function as human as earlier human were tried to be made machine. This paradigm shift draw attention to bring this scientific literature in the world of academicians for further discourse for the goodness of people at large. According to Ananda et al, (2023), society needs serious attention as in web 3.0 every individual will have their own universe where culture would be only glue stick to formally connect the with one another distinguishing with machine.

2.1 Study Area:

The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is a 40-hectare site on Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor. It is envisioned to become a cultural gateway to the Pearl River Delta considering its strategic location and the proposed arts, cultural, entertainment and commercial district (Yeung, 2016). This plan is aimed to construct an integrated arts and cultural facilities with iconic architecture for local residents as well as tourists. The proposed design encompasses provisions for performing arts and visual arts venues, and will establish WKCD as a cultural hub for attracting and nurturing talents, international cultural exchange and co-operation. The WKCD project has undergone several years of negotiations on its design, cultural meaning, development approach and mode of participation (Yeung, 2016). The original planning of WKCD, as proposed by the Architect Sir Norman Foster and Partners, was featured by an iconic Canopy-shaped architecture. Its construction was initially proposed in a public-private partnership with a single package approach. The project received widespread opposition from local communities and suspended in early 2006. It was re-started by the government through the establishment of the statutory body 'West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD)' .The authority encourages widespread community consultation and the project finally started in 2013.

The policy address 1998 of the then Chief Executive Chee-hwa Tung proposed the WKCD site to be developed as a state-of-the-art performance venue (Tung, 1998). The WKCD site became the largest undeveloped waterfront area for few years with a well-developed transport hub near the Victoria Harbor. At the beginning of the planning, the government considered WKCD as a project to boost tourism and economy, specifically to uplift the Hong Kong's economy that was suffered in Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. The WKCD was formulated by the government specifically to implement the development of WKCD and establish it as a 'place of everyone'. Since, the project was financed by the government with provision of land subsidy; the targeted groups are changed from overseas tourists to local citizens.

The development of WKCD was viewed as a tool to enhance the life of local citizens and cultural development of the city. Yeung (2016) pointed that the proposed WKCD is a major initiative to foster organic growth of local cultural and creative industries, attract and nurture talents, promote international exchange and co-operation, enhance the quality of living and make Hong Kong the cultural gateway to the Pearl River Delta. It includes 17 new visual culture and performing arts facilities, open spaces, education, commercial and retail facilities. In addition, there will also be retail, dining and entertainment facilities along with residential, hotel and office developments in the WKCD. As the WKCD lies in the Yau Tsim Mong district; the local culture, urban form, local characters and urban spatial identity are explored extensively. The author is familiar to this area, and has been observing the changes since 2006. The critical discussion on the WKCD will be carried out with regard to the cultural identity, architecture, urban form and local characters of West Kowloon region specifically the Yau Tsim Mong district.

3. Theoretical Review and Analysis:

3.1 Culture, Identity and Sustainable Urban Form:

Culture has been defined in a number of ways by various anthropologists and cultural scholars. According to Tylor (1871), culture is considered as the full range of learned human behavior patterns. Tylor (1871) further stressed that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". UNESCO (2011) also defined "culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". So, culture in its widest sense is about what matters to people and communities. Culture and identity are closely interrelated. Many people believe that culture is their identity and vice-versa. However, individuals' and people's identities are often explained in terms of nationality and this is a multi-faceted concept that encompasses attitudes, values, traditions, heritage and myths. These factors bind individuals together and give them a sense of belonging as members of society so that they can appreciate their place in the contemporary world order' (Smith, 1991; Henderson, 2001). Identity cannot be directly observed and must be inferred from its many different forms of expression whereby culture, urban form and heritage are the important manifestation.

Urban form is the configuration and spatial characteristics of cities, their nature and density. The arrangement of these features within the urban landscape constitutes the three-dimensional elements of the city (Yeung, 2016). Hence, urban form can be understood as the skin of a city and is the component of morphology that is most visible and capable of greatest transformation (Troy, 2004; Mike, 2006). As defined by Conzen (1968, as cited on Scheer & Scheer, 2002) urban form is a product of the street formation, land use, buildings, and the land subdivision (lots), while Caniggia and Maffei (2001) stressed that urban form derives primarily from building types, which in turn generate the dimensions of lots and streets. The urban form, place and culture are therefore interrelated. The places where collective and public cultural activity occurs have an important and lasting influence of aesthetic, social, economic and symbolic on the form and function of the towns and cities (Evans, 2001). Moreover, “place and culture are persistently intertwined with one another and place is always a locus of dense human interrelationships (out of which culture in part grows), and culture is a phenomenon that tends to have intensely local characteristics thereby helping to differentiate places from one another (Scott, 1997; Evans 2001).

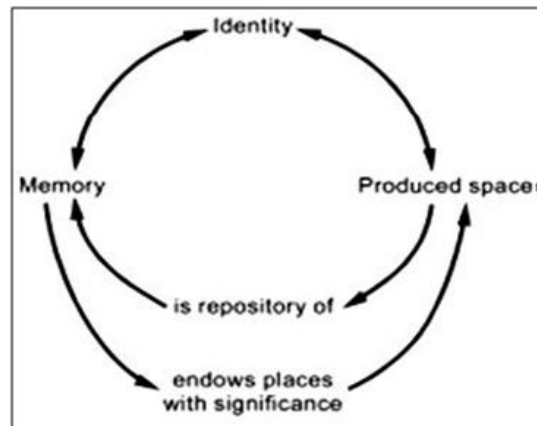


Figure 1: Relationship between Identity, built heritage and Memory. (Source: Teather & Chow, 2003)

Every society shapes a distinctive social space (Lefebvre, 1991). That space, and the discourses associated with it is a vehicle for transmitting cultural values and maintaining cultural identity from one generation to the next. There is a powerful link between places and memory (Casey, 1987; Halbwachs, 1987; Teather & Chow, 2003). On a personal level, people can become deeply attached to places in a way that is critical to their well-being. Whether such places are conserved, transformed or destroyed can be a crucial issue for the maintenance of their memories and sense of identity (Marris, 1986; Nora, 1989; Teather & Chow, 2003). At the level of the each group, certain places are significant because they trigger social memory. Hayden (1995) calls such places ‘storehouses of memory’ and argues that public policies are needed to designate and conserve them in the interests of protecting social memory for the benefit of present and future generations.

Indeed, sustainable urban form is one that can adapt well to the requirements of growth and change without destroying natural resources and traditional culture in the process. It is established that there is not a single model of sustainable urban form that is applicable in all situations (Guy & Marvin, 2000; Scheer & Scheer, 2002). The different urban forms may have different degrees of sustainability (Jenks et.al. 1996; Frey 1999). In fact, there is some controversy regarding even the simplest assumptions about sustainable form, but there are also some widely accepted principles of sustainable urban form that might serve as criteria for evaluating particular urban form alternatives. According to Scheer and Scheer (2002), sustainability in the urban form can be achieved if we (i) create and preserve higher density, compact forms; (ii) preserve the urban region’s agricultural land, water systems, recreational areas, and fragile ecologies; (iii) provide a mix of land uses; (iv) preserve the existing built form; (v) provide open spaces; (vi) encourage moderate parcel sizes; (vii) Limit buildings to a moderate size; (viii) provide a mix of building types, sizes and ages.

Conservation of cultural identity is one of the major approaches to lead cities towards sustainability. The rapid urbanization, modernization and development process has pushed cities losing their authentic identities of their culture and urban form. As such, urban heritage conservation has become a fundamental approach for sustainable urban form. It acknowledges the cultural built heritages as a resource for both current and future generations. Hence, it is argued that the culture, place and urban form are the significant factors to recall memories and create sense of belongings and support to maintain the image of the city as a cultural city. The local characters, urban patterns, urban forms and culture are the resources for present as well as future generations and their conservation and continuity may enhance the sustainability of cities.

3.2 Cultural Industries, Cultural Planning and Sustainable Development:

The cultural industries as defined by UNESCO are those industries which produce tangible or intangible artistic and creative outputs, and which have a potential for wealth creation and income generation through the exploitation of cultural assets and production of knowledge-based goods and services (both

traditional and contemporary). Cultural industries use creativity, cultural knowledge, and intellectual property to produce products and services with social and cultural meaning. They include advertising, architecture, crafts, fashioned clothing, designed furniture, film, video and other audio-visual production, graphic design, educational and leisure software, live and recorded music, performing arts and entertainment, television, radio and internet broadcasting, visual arts and antiques, and writing and publishing (UNESCO).

The term “cultural industries” is now almost interchangeable with the concept of “creative industries”. The concept of “cultural industries” emphasizes the industries whose inspiration derives from heritage, traditional knowledge, and the artistic elements of creativity whereas the notion of “creative industries” places emphasis on the individual and his or her creativity, innovation, skill and talent in the exploitation of intellectual property (UNESCO). Many cities have emphasized cultural industries as the backbone of economic development and prioritized it as one of the major concerns in cultural and urban planning. The term cultural planning is relatively new, emerging out of Europe in the 1960s and 1970s as cities and towns faced changing economies and demographics. Today, communities around the world are actively engaged in cultural planning and nurturing cultural development (Creative Cities Network, 2010).

Cultural Planning is about the relationships, shared memories, experiences, identity, history and a sense of place (NSW Ministry of Arts, 2004). It is a process of inclusive community consultation and decision making that helps all the stakeholders identify cultural resources and think strategically about how these resources can help a community to achieve civic goals. Hence, it is a strategic approach which directly and indirectly integrates the community’s cultural resources into a wide range of planning activities. It is a way of connecting the present with the past and the future, and a way of looking at all aspects of a community’s cultural life as community assets (ibid). Cultural planning is a sensitive approach to urban policy (Bianchini, 2004). According to Colin Mercer (as cited in Bianchini, 2004), it is the strategic and integral planning using cultural resources in urban and community development process.

The strategic planning integrates cultural policy with other policy processes in an organic way. So, what cultural planning does is to relate cultural resources through a process of two-way interaction to policy (Bianchini, 2004). Cultural resources need to be integrated with tourism, economic policy, educational policy, environmental policy, and social and health policy. Cultural planning therefore has to be a part of larger strategy for urban and community development. It has to make connections with spatial planning objectives by addressing economic and industry development objectives, social justice initiatives, recreational planning, and housing and public works. In this context, cultural planners must make connections between their own interests and activities, and other agencies responsible for planning and development. Mercer (2006) highlighted that cultural planners must influence other types of planners to consider lifestyles, texture and quality of life, the fundamental daily routines and structures of living, shopping, working and playing as crucial elements of culture planning. They must have knowledge about how people live, work, play and relate to their environment.

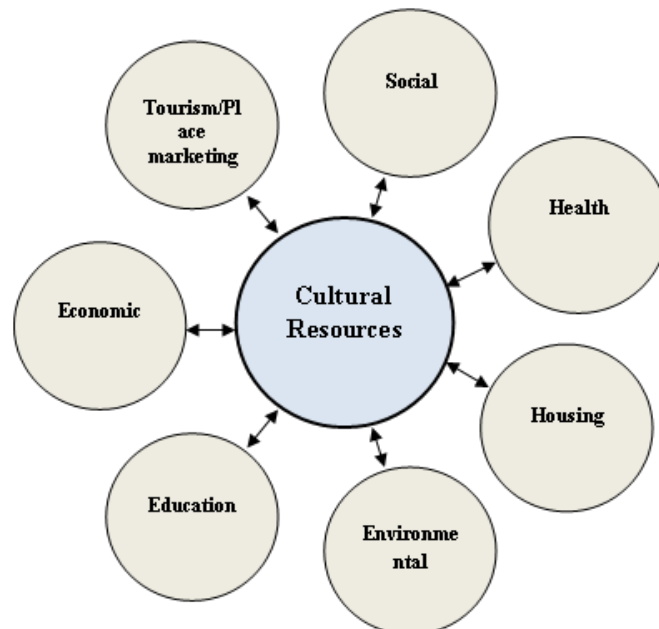


Figure 2: Cultural resources and policy interaction (Source: Bianchini, 2004)

Achieving sustainability and sustainable development has become the most important goals of cities and towns. According to Brundtland Commission (WECD, 1987), sustainable development is the “development that meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. It is defined by several other scholars and institutions as a process of achieving economic, social and

environmental sustainability in the development whereby community participation is considered as fundamental approach to achieve its goals. The fundamental presumption of Agenda 21 has also emphasized sustainable development is possible if it is built by, through and with the commitment of local communities (Imon, 2006; Chan & Bhatta, 2013; Bhatta, 2014). Hence, the local government, organizations and community has a crucial role to plan, implement and address the local issues of culture, identity, economy and built form within planning and development process.

3.3 Cultural Identity and Cultural Planning in Hong Kong: An Overview:

Colonial cities are recognized as distinctive cultural landscapes which illustrate social, political and economic processes in operation during the periods of colonization and decolonization (Henderson, 2001). The identity of Hong Kong is known as a unique cultural place suffered from colonization and decolonization stages. It has been transformed from a small fishing village to one of the most important financial centers in Asia (Chui & Tsoi, 2003). Scholars have traced the origin of the heightened awareness of identity back to the 1960s and 1970s with the beginning of civil society, when local residents began to take pride in their Hong Kong-ness. Hong Kong society, no doubt, was strongly Chinese, yet it was also uniquely Hong Kong (Ip, 1997; Henderson, 2001). Hong Kong was a part of imperial China, then a British colony and is now under communist Chinese sovereignty. Henderson (2001) stressed that decolonization has not been accompanied by independence of Hong Kong. Henderson (2001) further argued that Hong Kong people have acquired Chinese nationality; however interest persists in formulating and asserting a cultural identity that is related to but separate from that of China. Hong Kong was once known as “borrowed time, borrowed place” (Ho, 2000). The preservation conservation of cultural heritages has long been neglected in Hong Kong. Such precious heritages include tangible and intangibles such as arts, architecture, festivals, dramas, films, and performing arts which are very important to recognize the identity of Hong Kong to the international arena. The Hong Kong society embodies not just economic success but also some important intangible assets which are the source of social cohesion and collective confidence (The Conservancy Association, 2003). As cities are known as the source of collective memory of people (Aldo, 1982; Ho, 2000) and memory is the basis of self identity (Lynch, 1972); Hong Kong is not only a collection of modern buildings but also includes a strong authentic identity in terms of historical, archeological and cultural heritages. Hong Kong is also believed as a cultural city where ‘East meet West’. The experience of Hong Kong provides the complex relationship between cultural identity, heritage and tourism within the context of decolonization (Henderson, 2001). The government is investing huge amount of money in developing world class cultural facilities; however cultural planning in Hong Kong is mostly focused in achieving economic benefits with the promotion of tourism and commercialization of culture.

The Hong Kong Government did not have much role in Hong Kong’s arts and culture before 1960s; although many opera groups were commercially run and flourished in 1950s. This situation was changed when Hong Kong City Hall, the first large- scale multi-purpose cultural performance venue was completed in 1962. With rapid growth in Hong Kong’s economy, more cultural facilities are realized to be constructed and consequently many performing art groups were set up. The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra became the first professional orchestra in 1974 whereas the Hong Kong Arts Centre, the Music Office, the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre and the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra were established in 1977. The Hong Kong Ballet, the City Contemporary Dance Company and Chung Ying Theatre were set up in 1979. The civil service establishment was expanded rapidly and institutionalization of the provision of cultural services was started specifically after 1970s (Lai, 2006).

Emphasizing on the performance venues, construction of various major venues was started including Hong Kong Coliseum and Ko Shan Theatre in 1983, the Sha Tin Town Hall and Tuen Mun Town Hall in 1987, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in 1989, and four Civic Centers in Tai Po, Ngau Chi Wan, Sheung Wan and Sai Wan Ho. Scholars argued that the 1980s was a period when the government began to allow public participation in the area of arts and culture on one hand and introduced a more executive-led approach to tighten up control over the delivery of services on the other (Lai, 2006). The Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) started operation in April 1994 as a non-statutory body, later become statutory in June 1995 with its own executive powers, funding and staff (Lai, 2006; Yeung, 2016). The policy emphasis in the colonial era was on Western, mainstream “high arts” such as classical music, drama and dance. Traditional home-groomed art forms like Cantonese opera were seriously neglected, even though they had a considerable and faithful audience base. In addition, cultural sector demanded more public consultation and cultural policy was criticized for being heavily tilted towards performing arts (Lai, 2006).

The Working Paper No 20 (Planning Department, 2002) has emphasized culture and arts as an important symbol for social development. This paper identified heritage preservation and its promotion as important cultural activities. The policy objectives as delivered in 2000 by Home Affairs Bureau also emphasized for promoting development of arts, culture, sports and recreation along with heritage preservation. However, there is lack of clear-cut cultural policy in Hong Kong. The role of Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) can be considered significant because it has responsibility to advice on overall cultural policy and funding priorities for culture and arts. The Hong Kong’s long-term goal of cultural development as mentioned

by CHC is to “expand Hong Kong’s global cultural vision on the foundation of Chinese culture, drawing on the essence of other cultures to develop Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis known for its openness and pluralism” (Planning Department, 2002). So, it is worth to promote locally rooted and globally accepted cultural development; however with regard to cultural assimilation, specific attention needs to be given towards preserving cultural identity and authenticity. The recommendations with regard to culture and arts for HK 2030 are praiseworthy as it has stressed on Hong Kong’s cultural uniqueness, and making Hong Kong as an international cultural metropolis.

The integration of culture and land use in a planning system is essential for sustainable development. The suggestions of HKADC about planning implications were also significant. They include (i) incorporate arts as an essential element in planning; (ii) introduce plot ratio concession for provision of arts facilities; (iii) review the policy on provision of public space so as to increase the number of public space and introduce the concept of arts piazza; (iv) relax the regulation to allow more arts performance in public area and on streets; (v) set up arts exhibits at prominent locations in the Airport; (vi) set up a sculpture corridor at the access road to the Airport; and (vii) develop arts village (Planning Department, 2002). Built upon the foundation of HK2030, the planning department has recently promulgated the strategic study ‘HK2030+’, that has also envisioned Hong Kong to develop into a livable, competitive and sustainable ‘Asia World City’. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of integrated comprehensive policy for sustainable cultural development in Hong Kong. The government often advocates for heritage conservation and public participation in cultural activities through publicity, education and provision of subsidies; however the cultural policies in Hong Kong are mostly tourism-led and economic-driven. In this context, the historical and cultural settings with its local culture, economy and identity should be promoted and managed through integrated approach to cultural policy and planning that would help achieving sustainability and upholding Hong Kong’s image as an Asia’s world city.

3.4 Sustainable Urban Form, Culture and Local Characters: A Case of West Kowloon in Hong Kong:

It seems that cultural policy of Hong Kong is aimed to create world class cultural facilities for economic benefits by attracting international performers and tourists, even though there exist many opportunities and potentials in the local culture and arts (Ho, 2000; Yeung, 2016). Kowloon, a major tourist hub of Hong Kong, is prominent for its unique history, traditional Chinese lifestyle and culture. The West Kowloon, with its boundary at south of Cherry market and west of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) line lies within the Yau Tsim Mong district which is composed of different areas of tourism importance such as Yau Ma Tei, Mong Kok, Tsim Sha Tsui and Jordon (Kwun Chung). Most of these areas are characterized by unique Chinese cultures and traditional urban characters that give a strong sense of place and identity. Yau Tsim Mong is the focal point of many arterial transport routes in Hong Kong including KCR lines, Mass Transit Railway (MTR) lines, Star Ferry, China Ferry Terminal, Western Harbor Crossings and the major road of Nathan Road and the west Kowloon highway. Tsim Sha Tsui, a major tourist hub in the Hong Kong, is known as leisure and entertainment area. It is a home to a variety of restaurants offering a huge range of international cuisine, plenty of large modern shopping malls, hotels, unique historic buildings, fascinating museums and Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The major historical, cultural, tourism and heritage sites include Avenues of Stars, Waterfront Promenade, Clock Tower, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Space Museum, Former Marine Police Headquarter, Former Kowloon British School, St Andrew’s Church, Signal Tower, Signal Hill, Fook Tak Temple, Knutsford Terrace, Kowloon Mosque, Islamic Centre and many others. Yau Ma Tei, Jordon and Mong Kok are still known as the traditional Chinese settlements with old heritage buildings, vibrant local markets, street food stalls, Chinese opera performances, Temples, open spaces and other activities. These old, busy, crowded and colorful areas of Hong Kong give the very Chinese urban feeling. The public space, market areas and different activities enlighten the vibrancy and rich urban culture. Examples of such urban spaces are: Bowring Street, the Jade Market at Kansu Street, Flower Market at Flower Market Road, Goldfish Market and Ladies Market at Tung Choi Street. These urban characters represent the collective memory of the local people, and considered as unique cultural heritages. The other important cultural and built structures are Tin Hau Temple, Kowloon Union Church, Yau Ma Tei Cinema Hall, Public Square, Typhoon shelters, old urban settlements and other structures.

Tin Hau temple, dedicated to the Goddess of Seafarers, is located in the Yau Ma Tei, which features the historical and cultural faces of Temple Street, situated at the north side of the street. Its very existence shows that this area is a typical Chinese residential district with an ordered pattern of settlement. Today, it is still closely related to the local people and formed an element of their social life. It has been listed as the second-class historical buildings and located just beside the “Old Tree” and the Public Square so that it is also a part of the public gathering place in Temple Street. Temple Street is especially vibrant and busy at night, as there are many different activities. Moreover, it does not only cater different local business activities, but also a number of local residential uses. Mixed use in Temple Street is also one of the characters that help to sustain the vitality and diversity of the local area. The street is fully pedestrianised with two to three alignments of street stalls and sells old and popular records, watches, toys, and novelties attracting different people bringing the street with vitality and diversity at night. Two other specific activities in the Temple Street are fortune telling and Chinese

Opera performance. They represent the local character and help to vitalise urban life. The Chinese Opera performance, which attracts the gathering of the local old people in the Public Square helps to enable more interaction and communication in the local community. Similarly there are other street markets and spaces that form the major components of the urban life of people in West Kowloon. Jade market, Typhoon shelter, Ladies market and other local markets, with their cheap price, variety of items and their distinctive function have made unique identity that gives the sense of place and vibrancy around the areas.

The local characters, culture and urban form of the West Kowloon are the living memory of people which enhance the sustainability of the urban form. Although there are some illegal activities (such as prostitution and gambling) in the Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok area but we can argue that West Kowloon urban area is sustainable such as (i) old urban forms are preserving the sense of place and cultural continuity that is important for a quality of life, (ii) these urban forms has mixed use of land that promotes integration, social cohesiveness and attachments to the place; (iii) the presence of open spaces, multifunctional streets, green parks and low rise development enhances the sustainability. The traditional urban built form has promoted the social cohesion, walking, local economic interaction and the good response to environment. Hence, the sense of place, cultural identity and spirit of urban form should be maintained by giving continuity to the space, urban form and authentic characters. As some of the built forms are very old and decaying, improvements in the built structure, built environment and community facilities are necessary for the sustainable development. The prostitution and gambling should be either completely prohibited or managed properly. Hence, for the new urban development, the lessons of sustainability that the old urban form teaches us must be understood in the context of their applicability to modern conditions.

4. The WKCD: A Centre of Arts and Cultural Development in Hong Kong:

The WKCD, although located near to Kowloon MTR station, West Harbor Cross Tunnel and other transportation networks, is actually separated with the surrounding urban activities and areas by existing transportation routes. The linkage of the site with the Old Ya Mau Tei and the whole Hong Kong is not well designed and integrated. Since, the area is strategically located at the south west harbor of Kowloon; it has provided one of the most panoramic views of Hong Kong harbor. The WKCD, as located within the tourist hub i.e. Yau Tsim Mong district, and having a remarkable location of site, might have potential to develop as a Cultural district encompassing arts and cultural facilities. In WKCD area, the land was subsidized for culturally-rooted urban development and land subsidy provision was provided for privatization of cultural facilities. Yeung (2016) pointed that the planning of space and the framing of culture are inextricably intertwined, as cultural elements are prioritized in the use of space. The space would be shaped through the framing of culture; and the culture was framed through shaping the space (Yeung, 2016).

The WKCD is one of the largest privatization of cultural facilities initiated by the Hong Kong government so far. It was initially promoted as a cultural icon primarily for tourism and economic returns. Later, the WKCD was established to protect the public interest in this culturally-rooted urban development project. The meaning of culture with regard to the project changed from the 'city's icon' to 'a place for leisure'; culture is changing along with the changing production of space. The single package approach under public-private partnership was criticized to be unfair, and the proposed subsidies on land resources to the large private developers specifically to build real estate project rather than a cultural project was condemned mostly (Yeung, 2016). The uneven opportunities to participate in the project between large developers and small developers, and between well-established cultural groups and small independent cultural groups, made them negotiate the development approach of the district to protect 'public interest' (Yeung, 2016). It is crucial to focus on multiple criteria for achieving the best approach in design and planning of WKCD; the development should be climate responsive as well as sustainable. It should promote (i) local culture, economy, identity and characters; (ii) continue the spirit of urban form; and (iii) meet the demands of the local community as well as tourists. It should take care of local people and local culture to maintain social cohesiveness, harmony and vibrancy. There should not be permitted high rise and high density built form rather allow low rise built form with pedestrian friendly spaces integrating proper use of beautiful harbor-front. It will indeed encourage local people to use the space and create sense of identity and feeling of ownership. The issues of clustering effect (i.e. forming a chain linkage) with other arts and cultural facilities of Yau Tsim Mong district and Hong Kong should be performed; otherwise, the slogans of Cultural district will have no meaning. There should be integration of local culture, arts, crafts and activities into the WKCD design and development.

5. Conclusion:

The urban culture, local characters and built form are the essential elements in cultural planning. Their conservation and continuity may lead to sustainable development. The sense of place and identity need to be preserved and its spirit should be maintained by giving the continuity of space, urban form and authentic characters in new development around WKCD. To achieve the sustainable urban form in the old area, the improvements in the built structure, built environment and community facilities are necessary and the prevailing prostitution and gambling should be prohibited or managed properly. The new development of the reclaimed site should be responsive to the local characters, culture and urban form. The WKCD should be developed as a

centre for arts and cultural facilities integrating the historical and cultural environment of neighbouring areas in the site. The participation of local people in the development and planning process would support ensuring sustainability. It is recommended that the WKCD should be the ideal project so that it would be the inspiration to all to learn from the Chinese rooted and diversified culture of Hong Kong.

6. Acknowledgements:

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