Prologue to Tai Kwun: Commercialism or Community? A case study of the urban struggles regarding the revitalisation of the former Central Police Station Compound in Hong Kong

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Abstract

This paper presents a case study of the conservation and revitalisation project of the former Central Police Station Compound ("the Compound"). By documenting the tug of war between economic development and community benefits that took place from 2003 to 2010, it shows how the value of cultural heritage and residents' lived experience could be affected in the contemporary urban regeneration process. The community's endeavours to resist the undesirable consequences of the initial revitalisation plan are highlighted to discuss how place identity was threatened, established, defended and reinforced throughout, as well as other factors contributing to the successful regeneration outcome.

Examining the evolution and outcome of the two major waves of urban struggles pertaining to the design of the Compound shows that resource mobilisation, social construction and political climate served as vehicles for achieving success, which shape the Tai Kwun we see today as a humanistic focal point for arts and culture. On this basis, this paper aims to shed light on the social, cultural and emotional meanings attached to and evoked by the built environment, which are closely associated with the physical and structural dimensions, in the context of heritage conservation and revitalisation.

Keywords

Tai Kwun, heritage revitalisation, heritage conservation, urban regeneration, place identity

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Introduction

The concept of place is not only physical but also psychological. The physical form, activity and meaning associated with a space are mixed together to form a sense of place that is subjectively perceived by different individuals (Montgomery, 1998). According to Harvey (1976), the process of creating — or recreating — a physical landscape inevitably involves contradictions and tensions, which may make cities less liveable as a result (Domaradzka, 2018) (see also Fainstein and Campbell, 2011). In the context of urban regeneration within traditional settings, Ujang and Zakariya (2015) see diminished place meanings of transformed places such as revitalised heritage, which are often related to place commodification, placelessness and loss of authenticity. In this light, one of the major challenges in urban regeneration is to preserve the identity and memory of places as well as the close relationship between the history of human activities and its spatialisation (Amado and Rodrigues, 2019).

Heritage revitalisation is a common urban regeneration solution. On the one hand it can drive economic development, social cohesion and cultural identity, but on the other conflicts are inevitable given the divergence of views and priorities held by different stakeholders. Although conservation and revitalisation of built heritage has been at the centre of research, the case of the Central Police Station Compound ("the Compound") in Hong Kong has been studied by few. From 2003 to 2010, there had been two major waves of urban conflict pertaining to the redevelopment of the Compound since Mr Tung Chee-hwa, the first Chief Executive of Hong Kong, envisaged turning it into a retail complex. The first wave, which took place from 2003 to 2006, was to frown upon the overemphasis on economic development at the cost of heritage preservation. The process and successful outcome were studied by Ku (2010). Lasting from 2007 to 2010, the second wave aimed to resist the proposal of a 160-metre bamboo scaffolding-like tower ("the bamboo tower") made by The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC). Lau (2012) attempted to detail the evolution of the redevelopment plan from 2003 to 2010; however, the negotiation process from 2008 to 2010 was seemingly not captured in its entirety to present the whole picture.

By delving into the second wave of urban conflict, this paper seeks to, firstly, provide a more elaborate documentation of the community's endeavours in response to the proposed redevelopment plan of the Compound to supplement the existing literature, most of which concentrates on the earlier events. Secondly, it attempts to investigate how the social happenings throughout the tug of war between commercialism and community framed the planning process and outcomes. By so doing, this paper aims to capture the dynamics of place identity in these successful urban struggles, as a part of a broader study of community-based urban development under the principles of social sustainability, especially when it is concerned with built heritage. Despite the focus on the second wave of conflict, the course of the first wave will still be briefly outlined, as it, to a certain extent,

shaped the success of the second one.

Evolution of the Compound

Brewing Conflicts: The rise of heritage tourism as an economic recovery strategy (Before 2003)

Nestled in Mid-Levels Central, Tai Kwun[2] was formerly known as the Central Police Station Compound, which consisted of the former Central Police Station, the Central Magistracy and the Victoria Prison. The construction of the Compound dates back to the mid-19th century. Recognised as a legacy of the British colonial era from 1841 to 1997 that embodies not only architectural aesthetics and rarity but also law and order, it was gazetted as Declared Monuments in 1995 (Ku, 2010; Purcell Miller Tritton, 2008). Alterations to the site are thus subject to approval from the Antiquities Authority.

In the colonial days, Central — or Victoria City back then — served as a British political and military foothold (Nicolson, 2016). Its function of being a banking and trading hub has also come more and more important, reinforcing its economic role in the city (Lim, 2011). Given the Compound's prime location in the central business district in Hong Kong, its commercial potential had drawn much speculative attention.

After the handover to China in 1997, the ideologies of capitalism and neoliberalism have bred a new discourse of heritage tourism against the backdrop of cultural economy (AlSayyad, 2001; Li and Lo, 2005). Mr Tung Chee-hwa announced to use heritage tourism as a strategy to reinvigorate the economy, which was hit hard by both the political change and the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 (HKSAR Government, 1998; 1999). It was said to be able to resolve the dilemma between heritage preservation and economic development. To promote the new discourse, the government introduced the private-public partnership model, which had been proven successful in overseas urban renewal projects. It is often posited that the model can bring about a win-win situation: the government can ease their financial burden by mobilising private funding to the public sphere (Bovaird, 2004), whilst the private sector can benefit from capital accumulation (Squires, 2011).

In 2001, the government set out to introduce medium- to long-term tourism initiatives in five areas, including Central, as an ongoing approach to revive the economy (HKSAR Government, 2001). Meanwhile, the Compound was rezoned from "Government, Institution or Community" to "Other Specified Uses" annotated "historical site preserved for cultural, recreational and commercial uses" (Ku, 2010), which, apparently, was to support the initiative. To develop it further, in 2002, it was announced in the Policy Address that the Compound would be put into commercial use (HKSAR Government, 2002, p.34):

2 Tai Kwun, which literally translates in Chinese as "Big Station", used to be the colloquial name for the former Central Police Station Compound when it was in use.

A heritage, entertainment and dining area will be developed in the heart of Central, radiating from the site of the existing Central Police Station and covering attractions like Government House, St John's Cathedral, Hollywood Road and Lan Kwai Fong.

First Wave of Urban Conflict: Commercialism under criticism (2003-2006)

In 2003, controversy started to swirl around the redevelopment plan of the Compound proposed by Mr Tung in the Agenda of his Policy Address (HKSAR Government, 2003, p.11):

Relocate departments now occupying the Central Police Station, Victoria Prison and former Magistracy to enable the private sector to convert the compound into a retail, dining, cultural and entertainment area.

The excessive focus on commercial development received immediate public attention. Specifically, the execution of private tender in the pipeline provoked public concern about how the space would be used by private developers for economic interests in the name of heritage (Lo, 2003), which could lead to "a crisis of authenticity" (Zukin, 2009, p.545). Although the Tourism Commission (TC), paradoxically, described the plan as a "heritage-themed development" (TC, 2003, p.1), it was conceived that its strong inclination towards economic development carried a possible implication that the Compound would become a heritage tourism product, with its history commodified. This corroborates the idea that in today's society, "[d]espite critics who argue that the nostalgia industry distorts and commodifies the past, allusions to art and hints of heritage are vital colors in the urban marketer's palette" (Holcomb, 1999, p.65).

In June 2004, the Hotung Group brought forward a non-profit-making counter-proposal, which received public support (Asia Art Archive, 2010; Ku, 2010). This prompted the emergence of several action groups, for instance, the Central Police Station Heritage Taskforce, a coalition of members from different organisations, including The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) and The Conservancy Association (CA) (Ku, 2010) to urge the government to think twice before going ahead. Their voices were heard, and their struggle against commercialism ended in a success. In addition to agreeing to shelve the plan, the government promised to take the Compound's historical value into consideration and provide NGOs with a level playing field, though Hotung's proposal was turned down (Asia Art Archive, 2010).

Suggested by the Central and Western District Council (C&WDC), HKIA and CA who were keen to enlighten the public on heritage conservation and increase their socio-cultural and socio-historical engagement, a range of public events, such as history talks and open days, had been organised by the TC since 2005 until the Compound was officially decommissioned in March 2006 (HKSAR Government, 2005; Ku, 2010). Due to the previous nature of the Compound, space users were presumably the police force, prisoners and the like, but not the public. Despite its prime location in the heart

of the city, even regular passers-by barely had a chance to pay a visit. In this respect, in contrast to people's relatively minimal place attachment and identity linked to the site in the past (Ku, 2010; Yung and Chan, 2012), its values and meanings were renewed through the formation of collective memory in a series of public activities, cementing the people-place relationship (see Seamon, 2012) between visitors and the Compound. For residents in the vicinity, a sense of community was cultivated, as these place-related experiences gave new meaning to their shared surroundings and everyday encounters (Relph, 1976). Surveys conducted by the three parties saw visitors' overwhelming support for NGO management, preservation and community benefits, and the TC promised to consider participants' feedback when redrafting the tender documents (Asia Art Archive, 2010). In hindsight, the Hotung proposal, albeit rejected in 2004, opened up a new direction of urban development using a community-based approach.

Second Wave of Urban Conflict: Resistance to controversial design (2007-2010)

In October 2007, the HKJC cropped up by making a HK$1.8 billion not-for-profit proposal of a 160m bamboo tower (Figure 1) on the site, which was "accepted in principle" (HKSAR Government, 2007, p.24) by the government as part of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (see Development Bureau [DEVB], 2011)[3]. It would be turned into a future cultural icon, housing amenities like an observation deck, cinemas and theatres. Its height deviated greatly from the building height restriction (BHR) of 77mPD (metres above the Hong Kong Principal Datum) on the Upper Platform Area imposed by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) earlier (AMO, 2004). This kind of blatant attempts at reorganising spatial relations is, indeed, prevalent in economic restructuring (Fainstein and Campbell, 2011). In such instances, the site, as one can imagine, might be replaced by a synthetic version of itself, undermining the place identity that people established historically.

Whilst Mrs Carrie Lam, the former Secretary for Development, endorsed the design which "fully realise[d] the spirit of the adaptive reuse scheme for historic buildings, to transform these buildings into local cultural icons", "with nearby tourist spots … offering tourists a diversified travelling experience" (Information Services Department, 2007), the proposal had sparked different opinions on many sides. Residents nearby, district councillors, architects and conservationists, including some members of the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB), were not in favour of the new design for its incompatibility with the neighbourhood, invading residents' privacy and causing view blockage and environmental problems that would affect their property values (AAB, 2007; DEVB, 2007; Pang,

3 In a meeting with the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) on 20 November 2007, Mr William Yiu, former Executive Director of the HKJC revealed that "planning for the proposed project started two and a half years ago" and "the HKJC conducted a simple public opinion survey in mid-2006 involving a few hundred respondents" (AAB, 2007, p.4).

Figure 1. Artist's impression of the bamboo tower proposed on the site (Courtesy: Herzog & de Meuron)

2007; So, 2008a; So, 2008b). Members of the AAB and Town Planning Board (TPB) at that time emphasised that the guidelines set by the AMO earlier should be strictly followed, and that the design, instead of being vanity, should be in line with the Compound's architectural style and the surrounding environment (So, 2007; see also AAB, 2007).

In response to the dissenting voices, Mrs Lam contended that the BHR of 77mPD set in 2004 was not to be applied to all contexts, "77-meter limit [was] set only for privately-cooperated building projects" (Pang, 2007). In the meantime, from October 2007 to April 2008, apart from carrying out a six-month public consultation, the HKJC held a total of 56 meetings with various stakeholders, including the AAB, C&WDC, Mid-Levels residents and concerned groups to gather diverse views (DEVB, 2008). By the end of the public consultation period, more than 80 residents further expressed their concern about the controversial design by marching from Caine Road to the former Central Government Offices to deliver a petition signed by more than 2,000 to Mrs Lam (Heron, 2008).

Three months later, the government accepted the HKJC's offer but required them to scrap the observation deck; having said that, it was up to the architects whether they would like to keep the scaffolding-like bamboo tower (DEVB, 2008). In this regard, the HKJC showed some gesture of concession by promising that the scale of the new construction would be reduced and that they would co-operate with local architects and conservationists to make sure that the future design would reflect local characteristics (Siu, 2008). However, when defining place identity in the practice of urban design, the thrust usually revolves around physical elements, with little emphasis on place meanings and people-place association (Ujang and Zakariya, 2015). Without direct public participation, the fact that those professionals did not have a great sense of rootedness posed questions about how they would interpret the "sometimes tense and uneasy social dynamics between residents … and the limits of mixing" (Baldwin and King, 2018, p.64; see also Relph, 1976). After all, space cannot be comprehended by mere observation; sensitivity to cultural and social meanings of space is crucial in creating socially sustainable urban design. Nonetheless, their willingness to make concessions was at least a sign of interim success.

Some members of the public, especially the residents in the vicinity, did not compromise at these concessions. They demanded the government to impose further restrictions on the HKJC and their architects so as to secure the quality of their lived space. In February 2009, 13 NGOs and community groups submitted an application to the TPB for adopting the BHR of 77mPD set in 2004 for greater certainty and transparency (Ng, 2009). In November of the same year, they had a meeting with the TPB. The public — including residents nearby, C&WDC members, local groups and business operators — were still worried that "a tall tower would contribute to the existing canyon effect, generate excessive traffic, and block air ventilation and views" (TPB, 2009, p.7). On top of these comments,

the applicant representatives pointed out that the BHR of 77mPD already gave adequate flexibility, as it was about 10% taller than the existing buildings on the site. In response, some members of the AMO, DEVB and the Planning Department argued that it was unnecessary and premature to impose a BHR, primarily on the grounds that there was already "adequate planning control over the use, development intensity, building height, disposition and form as well as integration with the surroundings" (TPB, 2009, p.23) and that "there was no technical assessment submitted by the applicant to demonstrate the effect of the proposed BHR on the future design" (TPB, 2009, p.10).

By the same token, members of the TPB made a point that "no assessment … demonstrate[d] that the proposed height limit of 77mPD was appropriate to meet the planning intention and conservation objectives" (TPB, 2009, p.21), justifying what Mrs Lam said in 2007 that the old BHR should not be applied to the new context. Echoing their views, the TPB Committee added that "the planning application system was open and transparent, and included publication of the application for public comments" (TPB, 2009, p.22). In short, the existing mechanism should suffice to control and monitor the turnkey project from inception to completion. As a result, the Committee eventually reached a consensus to turn down the application.

Notwithstanding the TPB's rejection, a new BHR of 80mPD was gazetted in a revised Outline Zoning Plan in May 2010 (DEVB, 2010), which ensured greater certainty and transparency of the project. This was a win-win solution derived from communicative rationality (Innes, 1995) "arrived at by an intersubjective effort at mutual understanding" (Healey, 1992, p.147). Whilst the new BHR would allow sufficient headroom for the new contemporary arts centre, public nerves were more or less soothed, as it is only slightly higher than their proposal of 77mPD. In October 2010, in response to public feedback, the HKJC re-announced a revised design of two 80mPD-tall blocks in place of the futuristic bamboo tower (Information Services Department, 2010; Lee, 2010). Although there was not another round of public consultation regarding the new design, the government welcomed the public to express their views to the TPB later (Lee, 2010).

Community appeased: Revitalisation, reopening and rebirth with new features (After 2010)

The revitalisation work commenced after the TPB's approval of Section 16 application in May 2011 (TPB, 2011). In 2014, the HKJC announced that the Compound would be run by the HKJC Charities Trust, since the selection panel did not manage to pick a winner out of three cultural groups (Lau, 2016). Although some questioned the its ability to operate cultural projects due to its lack of experience, the joint venture with the government seemed to be a fait accompli.

In May 2016, a wall and part of the roof of the former Married Inspectors' Quarters collapsed (Au-yeung and Cheung, 2016). Upon investigation, an independent review panel set up by the HKJC found that it was caused by 18 holes

drilled on the wall which were intended to reinforce it (Chung, 2016). A series of recovery and stabilisation work was then carried out. After repeated postponements, part of the Compound was eventually reopened in May 2018, featuring a wide range of arts and cultural exhibitions, events and performances (Figures 2, 3 and 4).

The Successful Revitalisation Outcome

Considering the people-based outcome achieved in the struggles regarding the conservation and revitalisation of the Compound, the community's endeavours can be seen as a ripple of success. First, the HKJC abolished the observation deck which the residents and concerned groups thought might encourage overtourism. Second, the finalised scheme was devised in compliance with the revised stipulation concerning the BHR. Even though the redevelopment could be a lucrative project, the government and authorities, who possessed the most prominent power in decision-making, acted according to public opinion rather than steamrollering the plan. Their willingness to take public interest into consideration and change plans accordingly was the key to success in terms of formal acceptance and tangible benefits (see Gamson, 1975).

On the one hand, the government and the HKJC had perpetually made concessions from 2007 to 2010, striving to offer a solution close to the expectations of the public and concerned groups. On the other, without the obstruction of the bamboo tower, Mid-Levels residents, especially those living in the immediate vicinity of the Compound, have their subjective sense of

Figure 2. Revitalised Tai Kwun and its neighbourhood (Courtesy: Herzog & de Meuron © Iwan Baan)

Figure 3. Revitalised Tai Kwun (Courtesy: Herzog & de Meuron © Iwan Baan)

Figure 4. Revitalised Tai Kwun (Courtesy: Herzog & de Meuron © Iwan Baan)

well-being assured. The Compound has been reborn as Tai Kwun, a cultural hub where the general public can immerse themselves in arts and heritage when revisiting the past. In the following, the success in the second wave of urban conflict pertaining to the controversial bamboo tower will be illuminated through the lenses of resource mobilisation, social construction and political climate.

Resource mobilisation

Adherents of the resource mobilisation theory believe that resources can foster the emergence and development of an urban conflict, hence its success (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Using the communal mode of resource acquisition (see Ho, 2000), the second wave of struggle in this case focused on a narrowly defined goal in a particular locale. This made it easier to obtain and mobilise support, commitment and involvement of those who were under the direct influence of the bamboo tower or any structures built on the site. The corollary is exemplified by the small-scale march and petition held in April 2008.

Besides, the civic activities held in the Compound in 2005-2006 served as an educational channel to develop public understanding of the site and awareness of heritage conservation. Along the way, intimate interaction with the Compound buttressed participants' place identity by generating a greater degree of familiarity and attachment. But it did not just stop there. As Mueller (1987) argues, the experience gained from one conflict event can be recycled as a resource for the next one. The social capital built in the first wave of conflict came in useful when encountering the threat of the bamboo tower. Whilst more members of the public were mobilised to join the cause, the pre-existing action groups, which sprang up during the first wave of conflict, continued to assume a monitoring and liaising role to communicate local voices to the government and authorities.

The alliance of support groups played an important part in legitimising the voices of dissent that resonated in the public sphere. Throughout, public views were backed up by professional knowledge and expertise exercised by the intelligentsia. Many members of the authorities, such as the AAB and TPB, were in favour of, thus adding credibility to, the notion of anti-commercialism. Likewise, the leadership and legitimacy of representatives of the district council and NGOs, who were well-informed about the urban landscape of the area and residents' concerns, were vital for organising collective social actions and formulating strategies. All these gave impetus to the evolution and success of the struggle.

Social construction

In essence, central to the social construction model is the idea of framing — that is, how an issue is framed to attribute meanings and how the meanings are interpreted subjectively by groups rather than by individuals — and its impacts on identity formation (Haines, 1996; Ho, 2000; Marwell and Oliver, 1984; Snow and Benford, 1992). In the micro-mobilisation context (see McAdam et al., 1988), many prolific writers (e.g. Friedman and McAdam, 1992; Gam-

son, 1975; Melucci, 1985; Tilly, 1978), writing separately, believe that preexisting social relationships are the foundation of the construction of collective identity, which can induce "identity incentives" (Friedman and McAdam, 1992, p.162) that motivate participation. Remarkably, Tilly (1978) terms them catnets — a portmanteau word combining category and network, which refer to recognised commonalities and interpersonal linkages respectively (Hanagan et al., 1998) — to underline their importance[4].

Throughout the second wave of conflict, the media framed the 160m bamboo tower as an unreasonable design by extensively reporting how the professionals and district representatives questioned the necessity of the over-sophisticated high-rise, and its social and architectural compatibility with the neighbourhood (see, e.g., So, 2007; 2008a; 2008b). Understanding that their living environment and property values were under direct threat of the bamboo tower, residents of the area interpreted the proposal as a shared disadvantage. The preexisting social connections and the ease of informal interaction concentrated within the locale catalysed the dispersal of their senses of "weness" and shared fate. Solidarity and synergy were thus forged among community members to safeguard their common interests by engaging in quality-of-life-oriented collective actions. Likewise, the Compound, as colonial remnants, was constantly framed as a symbol of British Hong Kong. This symbolic meaning of place equated the bamboo tower to erosion of cultural identity. Those who had strong attachment to the colonial past were therefore mobilised to champion the cause to defend their collective identity. As Haines (1996) observes, skilful framing activities as such can create a consensus on the need for change and a willingness to contribute to it.

Political climate

From 2007 to 2010, changes in political will and public attitude laid the foundations for the withdrawal of the bamboo tower proposal. Mr Donald Tsang, the second Chief Executive of Hong Kong, advocated "Progressive Development" as the leitmotiv of governance in his 2007-08 Policy Address, proclaiming that the government would strive to forge a consensus in the community (HKSAR Government, 2007, p.3-4):

In pursuing further development, we must attach importance to environmental protection and heritage conservation. . . . We should also seek to revitalise these buildings in order that they may become an integral and lively part of the local community, which in turn will generate wider social and economic benefits.

To realise his manifesto, Mr Tsang put forward several revitalisation projects under the "Conserving Central" section in the 2009-10 Policy Address (HKSAR Government, 2009, p.23-25):

"Progressive Development" … emphasises the

4 The term sets a conceptual basis for future discussions on the organisation of collective identity and actions (see, e.g. Ho, 2000; Marwell and Oliver, 1984; Wolfsfeld, 1984).

need to strike a balance between economic development and cultural conservation. . . . To make the best use of the precious assets of Central, we must create attractions in the district for public enjoyment. Therefore, while conserving Central, we should enhance visitor flow and generate new commercial vibrancy.

Although Progressive Development and Conserving Central were, to some extent, introduced within the framework of economic expansion, it drew the government's attention to the socio-cultural and socio-economic values of heritage and underpinned its willingness to revisit the proposal and make concessions based on public concerns.

In conjunction with these just-in-time policies, the general public also experienced changes in their attitude towards heritage conservation. Contrary to their laissez-faire mindset in the past, a series of controversial urban redevelopment projects made them conscious of the discourses of heritage conservation and collective memory (Ku, 2010). The knocking down of the Queen's Pier in 2007 is a case in point (see Henderson, 2008; Ng et al., 2010). Since then, the public has become more informed and experienced about urban issues, and more concerned about how the city is planned. These events, undoubtedly, consolidated their strength in the struggle against the bamboo tower.

Conclusion

In an attempt to fill the lacuna in past studies of the Compound, this paper has chronicled the urban struggles between commercial development and community benefits regarding the revitalisation of the site — mainly between 2007 and 2010 — where socio-cultural sustainability is embodied in the heart of the revitalisation outcome. Echoing the proposition of Proshansky et al. (1983) that place identity oscillates over time subject to physical and social settings, this paper has also highlighted how place identity was threatened, established, defended and reinforced along the community negotiation process, as well as other factors contributing to the success.

In the mantra of heritage tourism, the proposals — in both waves of conflict — were apparently geared towards the private sector and consumers. The insufficient sensitivity to social needs once put residents' well-being and place identity at stake. Then, place identity began to sprout as community events were held on the site, because such intimate interaction with the Compound adds to the value of the place (see Seamon, 2012; Tuan, 1977). Concurrently, public awareness of heritage issues was kindled by a series of controversies over urban redevelopment projects in Hong Kong. As the bamboo tower proposal posed another threat to people's place identity associated with the Compound, the collective strength and solidarity of the wider coalition between residents, the general public, professionals and the like greased the wheels for the negotiating and legitimating processes. Clearly, with cultural and social contexts taken into consideration, the Tai Kwun we see today neighbourhood, thereby enhancing the social capital and cohesion in the community.

Admittedly, when solidifying their claim to the the neighbourhood, thereby enhancing the so-

right to the city, the not-in-my-backyard mentality of Mid-Levels residents played a certain role in their resistance to the bamboo tower. Nevertheless, the case of the Compound is a paradigm of the community's bid to (re)shape the physical landscape in a way that is aligned to their liking. It appears that there is a potent force pushing Hong Kong towards the trajectory of economic-centric urban development. That being the case, to reconcile the demands for local needs and capital accumulation in the urban regeneration and redevelopment process, it is incumbent on the government and authorities to adopt an integrated approach — in collaboration with built environment professionals and the general public — by, for example, devolving power downwards and establishing a more comprehensive dialogic mechanism, to aggregate diverse views and interests. Such collaborative ideation processes can help sustain communities as well as opening up new opportunities.

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