

A Project entitled

Urban Renewal and Gentrification in Hong Kong: A Case Study of the Wan Chai District

Submitted by

Kong Lai Han

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Declaration

I, *Kong Lai Han*, declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of *Lecturer II Dr. Ma Kin Hang*, and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

Signed _____

Kong Lai Han

15th May, 2018

Abstract

This research seeks to understand the relationship between urban renewal and gentrification in Hong Kong. It is argued that the original lower-class community is threatened to leave the original area in the urban transformation process as urban renewal brings in middle-class residential and commercial construction, as well as cultural ethos. This research looks at the economic, social and cultural explanations of gentrification.

From the early 2000s, various urban renewal projects have been implemented in order to revitalize the inner Wan Chai. In the inner area of Wan Chai, there are well-established grassroots community. The establishment of traditional shophouses near the Johnston Road, Queen's Road East, Wan Chai Road and Stone Nullah Lane, with residents and businesses of the lower-class community. These grassroots clusters have experienced enormous changes on its urban landscape in the urban transformation process. Gentrification is witnessed in the market-led redevelopment approach in urban renewal projects initiated by the Urban Renewal Authority, in collaboration with private developers. Involvement of capital investment in the built environment and social upgrading process have led to a physically upgraded urban environment, and hence the displacement of the original working class neighbourhoods. With erection of high-end residential and commercial land uses, and influx of residents with higher socio-economic status, the urban transformation driven by such joint-venture partnership aims to capture the property value in the decaying built environment.

The extensive redevelopment and revitalization in Wan Chai crystalizes the uneven power distribution in the urban process. The authority and private-sector are taking leads in urban renewal, and hence introduced lucrative attempts to alter the built environment. Thus, the original communities are likely to be displaced and excluded.

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Abbreviations

HKAC	Hong Kong Arts Centre
LRO	Land Resumption Ordinance
URA	Urban Renewal Authority
OWRISC	Old Wan Chai Revitalization Initiatives Special Committee
URAO	Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance
URS	Urban Renewal Strategy

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

This study investigates the relationship between urban renewal and gentrification in Hong Kong. In the global context, gentrification has received increasing intellectual calls, however, most of the attention continues to focus on the European and North American cities (Ye, Vojnovic & Chen, 2015). In Hong Kong context, the terminology “gentrification” is yet to have sufficient usage in organizing knowledge about neighbourhood changes (Ley & Teo, 2013), and the research focus of urban redevelopment in Hong Kong lies on the reinvestment of the built environment, but yet to shift to the displacement of populations of the initial community (Ye, Vojnovic & Chen, 2015). Thus, this study seeks to explore the social impacts created in the urban transformation process, in order to discuss the interlinkage between urban renewal and gentrification.

1.2 Literature Review

Theoretically, urban renewal is defined as a process that involves physical modification, change in use, or intensification of use of the buildings or land (Couch, 1990), which encompasses both redevelopment and rehabilitation (Whipple, 1971). Redevelopment involves demolition of old buildings and reconstruction of new buildings (Smith, 1982).

Rehabilitation refers to the re-conditioning of existing buildings (Millward, 1975). Generally, urban renewal proceeds in two ways – the refurbishment or change of use of the existing shabby structures, and the replacement of new structures.

1.2.1 Conceptual Framework of Gentrification and Urban Renewal

In the 1960s, the urban geographer Ruth Glass first coined the term “gentrification” to describe the inhabitation of upper middle-class populations in the traditionally deprived areas at London’s inner neighbourhoods (Glass, 1964). Smith and Williams (1986) defined gentrification as a process of “rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing and the consequent transformation of an area into a middle-class neighbourhood.” (p. 1). Two common traits have been identified in the process of gentrification (Clark, 2005). First, it involves capital investment in the built environment that results in construction of physically upgraded urban environment; second, social upgrading process in the neighborhoods occurs as the initial residents are replaced by residents of higher socio-economic status (Clark, 2005). Therefore, contradiction or conflict between classes has been the central focus on study about gentrification, by indicating the influx of capital and middle-class threatens lower-class to displace. Explanations on the processes and effects of gentrification can be categorized into three aspects: economic, social and cultural.

Economic Aspect

Smith (1979) introduced the Rent Gap Theory to explain intensified capital depreciation and disinvestment in a particular area creates lucrative profit opportunities for developers to reinvest in the neighborhood. As land is considered as a commodity for capital accumulation, the private sectors can capture substantial land values by developing profitable land uses. Since the property value is closely associated with the neighborhood quality (Yau, 2011), and urban renewal is one of the vital methods for neighborhood quality change (Schall, 1971). Hence, this conception creates incentive for the developers to improve the deteriorated or functionally obsolete structures by redeveloping or rehabilitating a decaying area in order to establish high-end urban environment. Meanwhile, the construction of upmarket redevelopment projects for high-end residential and commercial purposes which promotes gentrification and displacement, by reduction of old inner-city buildings that are affordable for the disadvantaged lower-income groups. In the urban renewal process, the lower-class residents are forced to displace, hence the affluent possesses ownership of the urban space for further development, space reproduction and capital accumulation (Lee, Slater & Wyly, 2008). However, after the redevelopment, as rapid growth of the property value is resulted after developing high-end residential and commercial buildings that aiming for middle-class, the lower-class is unable to afford the high land rents. Thus, urban renewal process demonstrates the class polarization by uneven redistribution of urban space (Wang, 2005), exclusion of lower-class is inevitable.

Social Aspect

The implementation of urban renewal projects and the influx of middle-class boost up the land value, property value and consumer prices in the dilapidated areas, leading to an unaffordable living burden to the lower-class dwellers, thus class segregation occurred when the underprivileged are forced to move out (Wang, 2005). Existing research revealed that displacement effect brought by gentrification is obviously witnessed (Atkinson, 2004). For instance, the gentrification process of New York in 1990s affected the living opportunity and residential space of the lower-income inhabitants (Freeman & Braconi, 2004). Chernoff (1980) argued social displacement alters the constitution of community in a gentrified area. Involuntary movement of lower-income dwellers occurs as they no longer capable in affording the land rents in redeveloped residence. Moreover, the social cohesion will be disrupted as the connection between community members is buried by the surge of middle-class residence, and the original community is prone to be expelled under urban renewal.

Cultural Aspect

Gentrification is also a segregation by culture, as the architectural design and built environment represent a middle-class aesthetics and taste (Warde, 1991). Emergence of the middle-class neighborhood takes place in the process of gentrification, which consists of the young urban professionals (yuppies), who are classified as “pioneers gentrifiers” in the social upgrading process, to the urban areas (Macionis & Parrillo, 2007; Hutton, 2016). The middle-

income residents tend to create a unique culture that differs from the initial lower-class community in order to maintain a middle-class character. Influx of yuppies supported and enhanced the renovation of the decaying buildings as a distinctive aesthetic display and exhibition is a way to express a middle-class cultural landscape, thus attracts the opening featured business, especially boutiques, specialty shops, cafés and hotels (Macionis & Parrillo, 2007; Lee, Slater & Wyly, 2008). The aesthetic experience of yuppies triggers and accelerates the process of gentrification, hence creating a middle-class culture. Scholars also criticized incentive for gentrifiers to support historic preservation and conservation of local culture is based upon economic rationality – to valorize housing investment (Zukin, 1987; Kwok, 2011), which further marginalizes the cultural distinctiveness of the old community.

1.2.2 Urban Renewal and Gentrification in Hong Kong

Since May 2001, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is established under the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (URAO) to act as statutory body that undertake, facilitate, encourage and promote urban regeneration in the old urban area (URA, n. d. d). The Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) is the government strategy to adopt a comprehensive and holistic approach in urban renewal process in order to rejuvenate old urban areas by the 4R business strategy – *Redevelopment*, *Rehabilitation*, *pReservation*, and *Revitalization* (Development Bureau, 2011, February). To be concise, the URA's mission is to accelerate urban redevelopment by replacing old buildings with new constructions; to prevent urban decay by

rehabilitation of depilated buildings; to sustain local characteristics by preserving buildings with historical and architectural values; and to revitalize urban communities by enhancing socio-economic and environmental fabrics (URA, n. d. e). Basically, urban renewal is a means to tackle the decaying developed areas by improving the built environment, hence to provide a physically refurbished living environment for residents.

Recent years, gentrification has been resonating in the Hong Kong context regarding the emphasis on displacement and exclusion in the urban transformation process (Slater, Curren & Lees, 2004). According to La Grange and Pretorius (2016), from 2006 to 2016, the term “gentrification” (「仕紳化」) have been mentioned in Hong Kong’s Chinese newspapers for approximately 75 times, focusing on development-led changes on local culture and shops homogenization in older neighborhoods.

Involvement of market force is the crucial element in changing the ecology of the local community. La Grange and Pretorius (2016) explored the actors and factors and their interactions that shaped the process of gentrification in Hong Kong under a state-led urban renewal, especially in redevelopment. The URA as a key protagonist in gentrification, has promoted large redevelopment projects of disinvested inner-city areas by implementing “joint-venture partnership” with the private-sector developers (La Grange & Pretorius, 2016).

This approach gives rise to the dominant role of the private corporations in urban renewal, as

Ng (2002) criticized, the joint-venture with private developers redirects the renewal process to a market-led redevelopment strategy, consequently leading to the alienation of the local community. The surge of private investment on redeveloping or rehabilitating the decaying built environment has been a lucrative attempt to capture the land value in the property market.

The urban renewal projects have been proved as profit-oriented which inviting criticism. Various research revealed the housing rehabilitation generated price premium in housing market (Chau, Leung, Yiu & Wong, 2003; Yiu & Leung, 2005; Hui, Wong & Wan, 2008). The redevelopment projects initiated with public-private partnership illustrated the power of capital changes the domestic property market in an old inner-city district. The Argyle Street/Shanghai Street Redevelopment Project is deemed to be a typical up-market development providing high-end commercial unit (La Grange & Pretorius, 2016), empirical study proved the displacement effect occurred to residents initially living in the project site. The previously derelict buildings have been demolished, by establishment of the Langham Place – a high-rise commercial complex that comprises offices, hotel and shopping mall (La Grange & Pretorius, 2016). This example accounts for the inter-relation between urban redevelopment and gentrification, which capital investment forced disappearance of old community, and thus produces space for consumption and capital accumulation.

1.3 The Research Questions

The research describes and analyzes the causes and effects of the urban renewal projects in the Wan Chai district. The following questions formed the core of the research:

- (I) What are the driving force(s) that accelerate the process of gentrification in the Wan Chai district?
- (II) In what ways have the urban renewal projects linked to the changing rental income of property and the changing pattern of local community?
- (III) To what extent have the renewal projects triggered social upgrading process that produces exclusion to the lower class?

1.4 Problem Statement

Urban renewal is a process to renovate the community by improving the worn-out buildings.

In Hong Kong, the URA has undertaken many of urban renewal projects for decades, which is argued to be gentrifying the original community. Replacement by in-migration of middle- and upper-class residents in the previously low income inner-city districts is witnessed. This phenomenon of social upgrading ultimately leads to displacement of the initial community.

This research seeks to examine how does the process of gentrification results in total exclusion of the disenfranchised and vulnerable groups in urban transformation process.

1.5 Research Methodology & Structure of the Report

The research strategy is based on the use of case study methodology. Hegan (2006) defined case study method as “in-depth, qualitative studies of one or a few illustrative cases” (p. 240).

It seeks to uncover the manifest interaction of noteworthy factors characterized of a single phenomenon, hence enabling to capture various patterns, nuances, and more latent elements in the phenomenon (Berg, 2009). This research implements case study method to provide analysis on processes and impacts of gentrification in urban renewal of the Wan Chai District.

The scope of study will focus on the Lee Tung Street/McGregor Street Redevelopment Project, Wanchai Road/Tai Yuen Street Redevelopment Project, Johnston Road Project Redevelopment Project (including the Woo Cheong Pawn Shop Revitalization Project), Mallory Street/Burrows Street Revitalization Project, and the Blue House Cluster Revitalization Scheme. These projects are initiated by the URA, with partnership of the private sector or non-profit organization. Efforts have put on examining how the processes and outcomes in redevelopment or revitalization projects inter-related to the characteristics of gentrification.

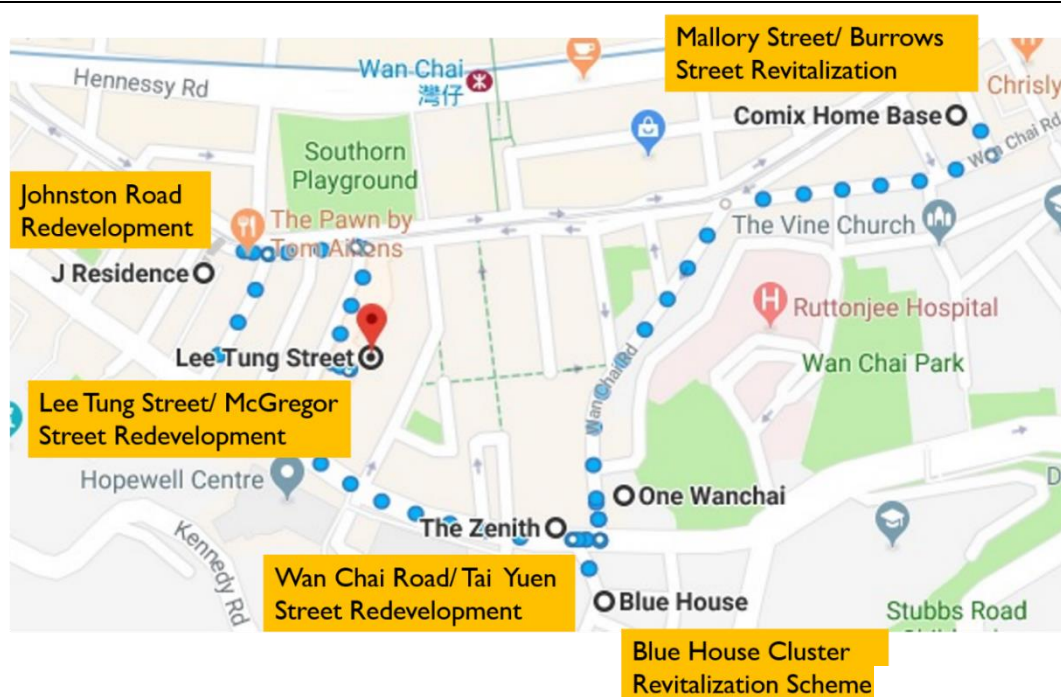


Figure 1.1 The five projects selected for the research

Web source: Google Map

A qualitative research allows the researchers to stay close with the empirical world (Blumer, 1969), thus to ensure a close fit between the data collected and what the people actually do and say, by observing their everyday lives, hearing their thoughts, and looking at documents they produced (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). Thus, field observation, interviews and archival research have also been adopted for data collection, in order to compare and analyze the ecology of the community before and after the neighbourhood revitalization.

Five field visits took place from September 2017 to February 2018 to observe the environment and communal activities of the area. Three interviews have conducted from

January to February 2018. The three key informants included:¹

Informant 1 (W)	Informant 2 (M)	Informant 3 (H)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Wan Chai resident • Lived at the Blue House before • Moved to public housing estate around 10 years ago • Active participation on the communal activities organized by the Hong Kong House of Stories² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Wan Chai resident • Had been forced to move since an urban renewal project • A core member of the H15 Concern Group³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A staff of the Hong Kong House of Stories • Organize various activities and events to promote Wan Chai

Table 1.1 Information of the three key informants

Also, archival research is implemented for collection of government resources, media resources, and oral history conducted by various organizations for analysis.

¹ Personal names are pseudonyms unless they could be read in public records and publications.

² Hong Kong House of Stories is located at the ground floor of Blue House at 72A Stone Nullah Lane and the ground floor of 4 Hing Wan Street. It seeks to promote the cultural distinctiveness of the community by organizing various events, such as community cultural tours, exhibitions and movie screenings. More information about the organization: <http://vivabluehouse.hk/en/>

³ H15 refers to the project number of the Lee Tung Street/McGregor Street Redevelopment Project, the H15 Concern Group composes of affected residents, academics, activists and volunteers, which aims to urge the government to respect the aspiration of the residents and to advocate for a more democratized urban planning process. More information about the organization: <https://h15concerngroup.wordpress.com/>

For the analytical framework in measuring the extent of gentrification, comparison on the built environment before and after completion of urban renewal projects is set as follow:

	Factors measuring the changes
Economic Aspect	(a) Property value i.e. land rent (b) Change of land use (c) Target group(s) of the redeveloped/revitalized site
Social Aspect	(a) Class changes (b) Community cohesion (c) Provision of public space & related amenities
Cultural Aspect	(a) Physical appearance of the buildings (b) Types of shops & customers served (c) Cultural events held

Table 1.2 Analytical framework

This report has the following structure. Chapter 2 develops the theoretical frameworks of the study by highlighting the relationship between urban renewal and gentrification, and exploring the historical development of the Wan Chai district. Chapter 3 addresses the aspects of changes in urban transformation process, and its implications on gentrification. Chapter 4 stresses the power issues involving in the urban renewal process, which figures out how power asymmetry occur and leads to displacement of urban redevelopment. Chapter 5

concludes the study and reviews the potential focus on gentrification in future researches.

1.6 Research Limitations

First, as the research methodology draws on qualitative methods, several sites have been selected for investigations which can represent part of the story of urban renewal in Hong Kong. It has to be admitted the complexity of urban transformation process, but the research seeks to reach a broader context of the urban renewal in Wan Chai. Meanwhile, given the considerable scope of the study and the limited time, some of the discussion may not be as detailed as it should be, especially for the comparison on the changes before and after the urban renewal projects as it is difficult to restore the geographical landscape before implementation.

Second, the discussion on changes of the community relies on the interviews because of the difficulty to reach more original residents as they have moved out of the areas. Nonetheless, the interviews with the three key informants tries to include different stakeholders in order to build a holistic understanding on the urban renewal in Wan Chai.

Chapter 2

The Past and Present of the Wan Chai District

2.1 Historical Development of Wan Chai District

2.1.1 Establishment of grassroots cluster

Enormous changes in Wan Chai in the past hundred years have transformed the previous lower-class cluster into a central business centre.

In the 1840s, the British Hong Kong government started to meditate Wan Chai as a high-level foreign commercial centre and residential cluster for foreigners (Heritage Conservation and Cultural and Leisure Activities Working Group of the Cultural & Leisure Services Committee of the Wan Chai District Council & Community Development Services of the St. James' Settlement, 2006; Siu, 2007). The first change in population occurred in the 1860s when Hong Kong experienced the first financial crisis, most of the foreign enterprises gave up Wan Chai, and only a few numbers of foreigners who had married with Chinese continued to reside at the district (Siu, 2007). Later, people from Macau, various Asian and African countries, with diversified ethnicities, moved to Wan Chai in search of business and occupational opportunities between the 1860s to 1880s (Siu, 2007). In the 1910s, the influx of refugees from China because of the occurrence of warfare resulted in a sharp increase of Chinese population to the district (Siu, 2007). At that time, Wan Chai became a district which

embraced people with diversified ethnicity.

The early 1990s marked the first wave of shophouse clustering in Wan Chai, which established the initial conglomerate of lower-class residential area. As the foreign businessmen established enterprises and investment in the Central and Western District which became prominent driving force for the rapid urbanization in Wan Chai (Wong, 2011). At that time, the refugees from China acted as crucial labour forces, and hence created increasing demand for housing provision which led to the presence of the four-storey shophouses. The grassroots residents clustered at the Wan Chai Road, Queen's Road East and Stone Nullah Lane (the brown line in Figure 2.1) (Siu, 2007; Wong (2011).

In the 1920s, the first reclamation project in Wan Chai implemented, and marked the new coastline along the Johnston Road (the purple line in Figure 2.1). A total of 360 four-storey Chinese-style tenement buildings was built on the large piece of reclaimed land in order to respond to the housing demand of the lower middle-class (Wan Chai District Council, 2007). With another reclamation in the late 1960s, the coastline was further extended to the north of Gloucester Road (the green line in Figure 2.1), the amalgamation of government buildings, the Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC), the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and the skyscrapers all sought to portray for Wan Chai a new and unique identity of high culture and up-market businesses (Wan Chai District Council, 2007). From 1980s, with rapid

urbanization, a surge of urban renewal projects introduced have altered the districts with high-rise commercial buildings (Heritage Conservation and Cultural and Leisure Activities Working Group of the Cultural & Leisure Services Committee of the Wan Chai District Council & Community Development Services of the St. James' Settlement, 2006).

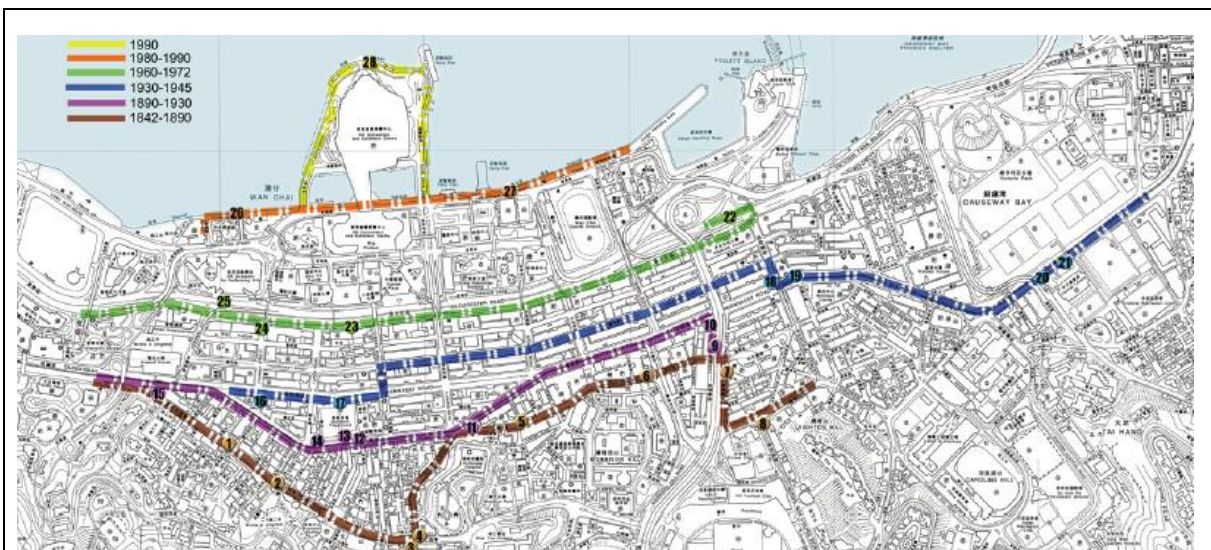


Figure 2.1 Coastline development of Wai Chai

Source: Wan Chai District Council (2007)

The development of grassroots communities in Wan Chai aligns with its history of reclamation, with the reclamation in the 1920s and 1960s, the cluster of the Chinese style tenement buildings and the local residents, further expanded along the Johnston Road and the Gloucester Road.

2.1.2 Defining cultural heritages in Wan Chai

With the historic background as one of the most early developed district in the colonial era, the large number of declared and graded monuments in Wan Chai is a noticeable feature in Wan Chai (Centre for Culture and Development of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2010, March). The Wan Chai old area possesses rich historic relics, which 29 items have been declared as graded heritage by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (Press Releases of the HKSAR, 2007, December 20). These heritages became important representation of Wan Chai's cultural distinctiveness.

In response to the Chief Executive's 2007 Policy Address which aimed at promoting local characteristics and preserving heritage relics, the Development Bureau has established the Old Wan Chai Revitalization Initiatives Special Committee (OWRISC), which comprises the Wan Chai District Council members, professionals and history specialists, with the URA as the secretariat, to propose various revitalization initiatives (URA, n. d. b). One of their major works is the introduction of the Wan Chai Heritage Trail, which consists of the Architectural Trail and the Cultural Trail⁴, which highlighted the distinctive architectural character of the selected buildings and places in Wan Chai in order to present the local culture and history (URA, n. d. b). In an investigation report of the Wan Chai District Council, it is suggested to boost Wan Chai's economic development by introducing heritage tourism through the

⁴ More details about the trails: https://www.ura.org.hk/f/project/308/eng_final.pdf

promotion of the Heritage Trail (Centre for Culture and Development of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2010, March). Thus, the cultural heritages have been positioned as asset to accelerate the economy. Bak (2009) discussed the government's initiative to incorporate cultural tourism, which is often used synonymously with heritage tourism, for the local development plans, but in the process of recognition, the issues of standardization and authenticity remained as crucial questions.

In the interpretation of cultural distinctiveness in Wan Chai, contestation between the officials and the general public is witnessed. The community networks and local businesses lied at the focal point of the community members' perception of Wan Chai culture. In many oral histories conducted by different organizations, the intimate relationship between the neighborhoods and the demonstration of local culture builds their nostalgia in Wan Chai. Lu (2007) emphasized the Lee Tung Street's well-established representation of "Wedding Card Street" acted as important local business cluster, and this cluster was built up because of the residents' mutual help and everyday life which enhanced the community cohesion and collective identity. In the Stone Nullah Lane, the oral history of the Blue House residents focuses on how the cluster develop distinctive cultural activities, cultivation of neighbourhood relationship, and establishment of the local grassroots industries (Heritage Conservation and Cultural and Leisure Activities Working Group of the Cultural & Leisure Services Committee of the Wan Chai District Council & Community Development Services of the St. James'

Settlement, 2006). One of the residents whose family lived in Wan Chai for three generations in the shophouses mentioned that “relationship between the neighborhoods is our important social capital” (Chan, 2007, p.29). Therefore, the local community perceived Wan Chai culture as a part of their everyday life with their long-history of social network and mode of businesses.

2.2 Urban Renewal in the Wan Chai District

The urban renewal projects in Wan Chai have been a significant case that reveals the extent urban transformation can lead to gentrification. The scale and density of urban renewal undertaken in Wan Chai have altered the ecology of the district as four redevelopment projects and five heritage preservation and revitalization projects have been introduced.

According to La Grange and Pretorius (2016), most urban renewal pressure occurs at the dense older inner-city areas; as one of the most densely developed inner-city, the high returns physical structure development and highly accessible transportation in Wan Chai can provide vibrant urban economy. Thus, redevelopment can produce market value to the derelict urban space.

Atkinson (2004) stated the growing concern on public-private partnerships in urban policy and housing regeneration as they aim at embracing middle-class futures of the city, instead of encompassing a broader social base. In Wan Chai, several projects unfolded this tendency in

class transformation in the urban renewal process. For those categorized as public-private partnership, emphasis has put on upgrading the market value of the area. For instance, in the redevelopment of the Lee Tung Street, which was renowned for wedding-related small businesses, has transformed the distinctive local community to high-end residential and commercial land uses (Hong Kong Free Press, 2015, October 26), thus favoured influx of the middle-class residents in the decaying areas.

Another category is the collaboration between the URA and non-profit or non-government organization, which claimed for preservation of historic architectures and sustaining local culture. For instance, the Mallory Street/Burrows Street Revitalization Project and the Blue House Cluster Revitalization Scheme are launched in conjunction with the HKAC and the St. James' Settlement respectively (lwk&partners conservation, 2011, October; URA, n. d. e). The projects refurbished and renovated the worn-out shophouses into cultural amenities, multi-functional complex with residential units and community centres. Preservation of cultural heritage is witnessed; however, it is still debatable on whether the renovation can avoid gentrifying the neighbourhoods (Kwok, 2011).

The redevelopment in Wan Chai represents a typical case of gentrification as the dilapidated areas with distinctive local cultures are replaced by private residential properties that are not affordable to the lower-class, meanwhile privatization of urban space for high-end

development occurred (Kwok, 2011), which creates an unequal redistribution of space in the urban transformation process. In discussion of gentrification, in “Gentrification and the City”, Neil Smith emphasized that the rehabilitation in residential areas formed the most crucial concern in the process of gentrification, regarding to broader changes on economic, social and spatial ecology of the area (as cited in Kwok, 2011). However, Kwok (2011) criticized that the core focus of the concern groups in urban redevelopment merely emphasized on how the projects could be implemented in a way that can maintain the neighbourhood network and local businesses, but neglected to criticize on the displacement effect brought by gentrification. Therefore, this study aims at examining how does the initial lower-class community is excluded in the process of gentrification while undertaking urban renewal.

Chapter 3

Discussions

The aftermath of urban renewal lies at the core discussion of the study on gentrification. In the case of Wan Chai, the renewal projects have been inviting criticisms on the extent they have altered the community, and they are proven to be gentrifying the community from the resources collected.

From the informants, it is concluded that Wan Chai was an old inner area, with rich cultural and communal distinctiveness. H stated an interpretation of the culture of Wan Chai in the sense of historical heritages and population composition:

“.....the neighbourhoods perceived Wan Chai as an old district that was mostly Chinese people (華人), thus the district, including the Blue House and the nearby areas, maintained some Chinese culture such as the over 100 years historic relic Pak Tai Temple (北帝廟) and numbers of “Tong Lau” (唐樓, also called shophouse)⁵ with distinguishing features of different era. In the latter stage, more

⁵ In this dissertation, except the names of people and buildings or part of it could be identified in mandarin pinyin, Cantonese is used in accordance with Sidney Lau, A Practical Cantonese-English Dictionary (HongKong: Government Printer, 1997). Other Cantonese terms and the names of places in China are romanized in mandarin pinyin with reference to, Chinese Talking Syllabary of the Cantonese Dialect: An Electronic Repository: <http://arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Lexis/Canton2>.

foreigners reside and the district becomes more diversified since more residents are of different nationalities, sometimes the District Council positioned Wan Chai as a multi-cultural district.”

W’s response echoed with this description:

“In the past, Wan Chai was an old district. Originally, along the tramway and the Johnston Road, the areas were mostly old buildings, which formed an old city, and we named the types of business there as “Handcrafters” (「手作仔」), including hardware shops, iron material shops and construction companies.”

Therefore, Wan Chai has a long history of its local culture and local economies since its establishment of grassroots community since the early 1900s. However, the informants all agreed that urban renewal has been influential to the district. In this section, the changes brought by urban renewal will be discussed.

3.1 Economic Aspect: Changing Domestic Property Market

A tremendous change on property value in Wan Chai have occurred because of urban renewal. Turning the original buildings into expensive residential and commercial land uses performed as a predominant method to implement lucrative profit-making urban renewal

projects.

It is mentioned that urban renewal led to disappearance of the old residential building and business stores, which ultimately forced the original residents and businesses to leave the affected areas. H concluded that urban renewal resulted enormous influences on the livelihood of original residents:

“There are mainly two ways to develop an old inner city, to revitalize it, or to demolish (the buildings) and reconstruct (new buildings). At the early years, the URA tends to use the traditional one – demolish and reconstruct, this affects the everyday lives of the original residents in certain extent.”

This type of reconstruction is categorized as redevelopment under URA’s 4R strategy, which involves demolition of the existing construction and hence introduction of new buildings. The informants coincidentally mentioned the changes on land rents after implementation of the projects have directly affected the livelihood of the original neighbourhoods. The expensive property prices of both residential and commercial land uses have been one of the vital obstacles for the original residents and businesses to stay in the areas. H mentioned the Lee Tung Street as an obvious case showing how demolition of decaying buildings and reconstruction of new structures affects the everyday lives of the original residents, which

ultimately triggered the H15 Concern Group and the residents to voice out and protect the street.

W described the urban renewal projects as *“plundering the livelihood of the Wan Chai residents”*. She described the changes after renewal projects implemented in Wan Chai as gentrification, and consequently *“forced the residents who have been lived in Wai Chai for decades to leave”*. She expressed the high land rents are heavy financial burden to the residents:

“Most of our income are used for the rents, which is our major consumption. We can see that most of the luxury houses are projects undertaken by the URA, which has taken the lead to upward push the rents in Wan Chai to \$20000 per square foot, then to \$24,000, even \$30,000.”

In addition, M, one of the founding members of the H15 Concern Group, concerned the influences on the local businesses which could not be sustained under the price markup:

“Suffering from the high land rent, many businesses cannot sustain in the Lee Tung Avenue after the renewal. The entire community has been “luxurized”, and the land rent is no longer as cheap as before.”

According to Apple Daily (2015, October 27a), in the Lee Tung Avenue Shopping Centre, the unit price of shops located on 1st floor and basement is \$90 or above per square foot, and those located on ground floor is \$200 to \$300 per square foot, which at least doubled the price while comparing to the surrounding areas. Although the developer, the Sino Land Company Limited, had invited the original businesses back to the Lee Tung Avenue, in total 27 shops affected by the project, only 10 shops agreed. Owner of Hanes Printer & Publisher Limited, which had established business in Lee Tung Street for a half century and planned to restart business at the Lee Tung Avenue, mentioned that the paper products are not as profitable as those selling jewelries, watches and gold accessories, thus (the land rent of the Lee Tung Avenue) really makes other original tenants shrink back (Apple Daily, 2015, October 27b). Meanwhile, most of the new shops are boutiques and cosmetics shops, and around 20% are restaurants (Apple Daily, 2015, October 27b). Thus, the sharp increase in property value after the projects threatens the survival of the original local businesses, and they were unable to stay at the area.

This type of public-private partnership is a common practice of urban renewal projects in Wan Chai, which the URA initiated the project and jointly implemented with the private developers, and mostly resulted in dramatic increase on land price.

Project	Wan Chai Road/ Tai Yuen Street Redevelopment		Johnston Road Redevelopment	Lee Tung Street/ McGregor Street Redevelopment
Private developer	Chinese Estates Holdings Limited		K. Wah International Holdings Limited	Sino Group, Hopewell Holdings Limited
Property	The Zenith	One Wanchai	J Residence	Lee Tung Avenue
Year of completion	2007	2013	2009	2014-15
Average Unit Price of Transactions in 2018 (per square foot)	\$22,954 (7 records) (CentaData, n. d. d)	\$23,055 (3 records) (CentaData, n. d. c)	\$20,320 (12 records) (CentaData, n. d. a)	\$27,936 (24 records) (CentaData, n. d. b)

Table 3.1 Details of the urban renewal projects in Wan Chai

In short, the urban renewal projects unfolded a tendency to be profit-making that upgraded the market value of the land, which construction of luxury residential and commercial land uses that targeted the middle-class, and consequently resulted in displacement of the original residents and businesses as they no longer able to afford the high land rents.

3.2 Social Aspect: Changing Communal Landscape of the Community

When talking about the change on community, the informants expressed the inhabitation of middle-class residents and displacement of the lower-class residents, which the changing population pattern influenced the communal culture. According to H, influx of middle class residents is unescapable after the urban renewal,

“Since the grassroots residents cannot afford the high land rent after urban renewal, they have no choices but move to another place. Consequently, more middle-class and foreign residents moved into this district. However, in the meantime, the new residents may only consider Wan Chai as a place where they live, and they are not concern of the district and are not familiar with the neighbourhoods. Comparing to the past, I feel that the neighbourhood relationship between the residents becomes weaker.”

While talking about community building, W and M both mentioned the helping hands from the neighbours is essential element to build up community cohesion. M said,

“.....community network means the mutual aid between neighbours, it is important that familiar neighbours can lend you a helping hand when you are in need”.

She furthered mentioned that most of the residents who have been forced to move out complained that the worst thing about urban renewal is losing network with the neighbours and they can no longer find anybody to help in the new living environment. W remembered the close relations between the house owner and the tenants in the past,

“We experienced hard times in the past, but the assistance from the neighbours had ease the situation. For example, our house owner was willing to lend the living room for our family to have meal since our room is too small; reciprocally, my mother helped the owner to take care of her children, so she could go out to buy food at the morning.”

This showed that support from the neighbourhood in everyday lives was usual and essential in the grassroots community.

Moreover, W emphasized the use of public area is an unneglectable factor to build up community cohesion,

“In the 1960s, we frequently going out to the street and having some activities. For instance, the kids always having fun together on the street, but I can rarely see this happen nowadays; also, we would put table and chairs on the street and had meals

together; the use of street also aligned with the Chinese traditional culture, such as organizing activities in some festival, including the Mid-Autumn Festival, Seven Sisters Festival, “Petty Person Beating” (「打小人」). If we can use the street more, ways to connect between neighbours becomes diversified, however, I can hardly feel that kind of relations nowadays.”

While requested to explain the reason behind, she lamented the disappearance of public space had created difficulties for communal activities:

“The public areas in Stone Nullah Lane have become car parks and made people difficult to use the street. Nowadays, people do not have spaces for gathering, and they tend to close the doors and stay at home, thus there are less connection between people.”

Other than the Stone Nullah Lane, several redevelopments in Wan Chai also destroyed the public spaces. In the Lee Tung Street projects, the developer only provides a rooftop garden as public open space, which is located on the fifth floor of the building, and opens from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. The provision of signage to guide the direction is not enough, and most of the signages are put next to the entrance of the building and the lifts which confusing the visitors whether non-residents can go up to the buildings. Inadequate clear direction signage to guide the

public, and the similar design of the entrance of the rooftop garden and the commercial and residential blocks which may mislead the public (Next Magazine, 2016, October 3). In addition, the public space of the Woo Cheong Pawn Shop also inviting criticisms. After the renovation of the Woo Cheong Pawn Shop, there is a rooftop garden for open spaces, which opens from 11 a.m. to 11 pm., however, it is discovered that The Pawn, which is the restaurant that owned the space, have use the space for profit-making activities (Apple Daily, 2009, April 6); and now the opening hours of the rooftop garden has been reduced, which the public can only access there from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. (HK01, 2016, August 10). Thus, the property-led renewal has increased the difficulties to access the public spaces, the residents are having less spaces for collective activities.



Figure 3.1 Signage of the rooftop garden at the Lee Tung Avenue



Figure 3.2 Signage of the rooftop garden at the Lee Tung Avenue



Figure 3.3 Entrance of rooftop garden at the Woo Cheong Pawn Shop (Red circle)

To conclude, urban renewal is interruptive to community building since the neighborhoods are losing opportunities and spaces for collective activities that are essential to establish intimacy between the residents. With the forced emigration of local residents and erosion of public areas, the connection between the community members is weakened, and hence eradicates the social cohesion.

3.3 Cultural Aspect: Changing Local Culture

As above-mentioned, an influx of middle-class residents is witnessed. In the interview, H stated that a contradiction between the new middle-class residents and the original neighbourhood is unavoidable,

“There are differences between the local culture and the new residents and businesses. Using the Stine Nullah Lane as an example, there were 3 to 4 bars started business last year, and there is a total of 5 bars which owned the Liquor License. Thus, some old residents hesitate these changes and created contradiction in the neighbourhood. Since the new residents and businesses are affecting the everyday life of the old residents, such as the people who got drunk and the noises produced were interruptive. However, an increasing proportion of new residents are foreigners, in addition with the office workers in the Hopewell Centre and nearby areas, their culture is to grab some alcohol when they got off work, so they tend to come here for drinks. This is a cultural difference, and one of the problem we have to settle is how to balance the needs of both old and new neighbours.”



Figure 3.4 Tai Lung Fung, a new bar at the Hing Wan Street

The cultural difference can also be reflected in the architectural way as the appearance of the new construction tends to display the aesthetics of the middle-class. The old and worn-out buildings have been renovated with a more artistic and westernized style.

At the Blue House Cluster, Tai Lung Fung, a new bar, and The Stallery WCH, a new portraiture studio, art gallery and art workshop, have started business in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The two buildings are decorated with westernized architectural design, and nostalgic and exquisite embellishment such as artworks and neon lights. Also, Johnston Road 60-66 revitalization project of a row of four Cantonese verandah shophouses, including the Woo Cheong Pawn Shop, which are four pre-war residential blocks with unique mixture of both Chinese and Western architectural features (URA, n. d. c). After the project, these shophouses revitalized into a more fashionable appearance, and devoted to business and cultural uses.



Figure 3.5 The Stallery WCH, a new portraiture studio, art gallery and art workshop at the Stone Nullah Lane

Similar changes also took place in the Lee Tung Street. Before redevelopment, the buildings were old shophouses and narrow street. After the redevelopment, the Lee Tung Avenue is replaced with the attractive and modernized architectural features and artistic events. The URA initially unveiled plans to create a “Wedding City” which featuring Hong Kong’s first gallery themed wedding traditions and culture after the redevelopment; and Barry Cheung, the then Chairman of the URA, mentioned the idea sought to bring back the local wedding-related characteristics of Lee Tug Street (URA, 2007, December 20). After the project, the new constructions have swept out the old shophouses, and the URA has been accused for adding a clause referring to “first class shopping premises” to lease, and requiring retailers to display only goods deemed “of a design, quality and type in-keeping with the style, ambience and theme”, with no mentions of the previous planned wedding themes (Ming Pao, 2016, February 1).

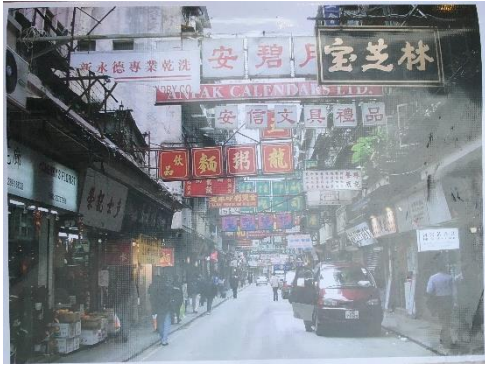


Figure 3.6 Before redevelopment: The Lee Tung Street

Source: H15 Concern Group



Figure 3.7 Before redevelopment: The Lee Tung Street

Source: H15 Concern Group



Figure 3.8 After redevelopment: A construction at the Lee Tung Avenue

First Class Shopping Premises

The Tenant agrees:-

- (a) To fit out, use, manage and otherwise maintain the Premises so as not to prejudice the goodwill and reputation of the Commercial Accommodation as first class shopping premises.
- (b) To keep the shop windows of the Premises dressed and illuminated in a manner appropriate to first class shopping premises to the satisfaction of the Landlord, and in accordance with such style and theme and ambience, whether seasonal, festive or otherwise, as may be determined from time to time by the Landlord.
- (c) To display in the shop windows only those goods and products which in the opinion of the Landlord are of a design, quality and type in keeping with the style ambience and theme of the Commercial Accommodation determined from time to time by the Landlord.
- (d) Not to permit or suffer any goods or wares of any kind to be displayed or exhibited otherwise than from within the Premises, nor block up, darken or obstruct any shop front window or showcase, or any other windows or lights belonging or appurtenant to the Premises which face onto any passageway of the Commercial Accommodation or any public area.

Figure 3.9 Lease between URA and tenants at the Lee Tung Avenue

Source: Ming Pao (2016, February 1)

Also, the events organized in the Lee Tung Avenue aimed to attract the visitors and revealed an aesthetic display. The developers held various thematic events in the Lee Tung Avenue in celebration of different festivals.

Event Photo	Theme	Details
 <p data-bbox="240 595 644 725">Figure 3.10 2018 Chinese New Year event</p> <p data-bbox="240 786 687 824">Source: Lee Tung Avenue (n. d. d)</p>	<p data-bbox="715 282 783 315">2018</p> <p data-bbox="715 376 890 600">Affection for Lee Tung Avenue</p>	<p data-bbox="922 282 1331 696">To celebrate Chinese New Year by putting up Chinese-style decorations and activities, such as red lanterns and lion dance.</p>
 <p data-bbox="240 1200 679 1238">Figure 3.11 2018 Christmas event</p> <p data-bbox="240 1299 687 1337">Source: Lee Tung Avenue (n. d. b)</p>	<p data-bbox="715 887 847 1205">2017 The Greatest Christmas Show</p>	<p data-bbox="922 887 1321 1111">To celebrate Christmas by using giant Christmas tree and illuminations.</p>
 <p data-bbox="240 1816 683 1951">Figure 3.12 Exhibition of a moon-shape sculpture</p>	<p data-bbox="715 1395 868 1619">2017 Museum of the Moon</p>	<p data-bbox="922 1395 1326 1720">To celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival by exhibiting a moon-shape sculpture and organizing the Fire Dragon Fiesta.</p>

 <p>Figure 3.13 2017 Chinese New Year event</p> <p>Source: Lee Tung Avenue (n. d. a)</p>	<p>2017 “Lee Tung Avenue” Chinese New Year Celebrations</p>	<p>To celebrate Chinese New Year by putting up Chinese-style decorations and activities, such as flowers, red lanterns and lion dance.</p>
 <p>Figure 3.14 2017 Valentine's Day event</p> <p>Source: Lee Tung Avenue (n. d. c)</p>	<p>2017 Valentine's Celebrations</p>	<p>To celebrate Valentine's day with Chinese-style decorations, such as red lanterns and sedan chairs.</p>

Table 3.2 List of festival celebrations in Lee Tung Avenue in 2017 and 2018 (In reverse order)

Besides, there were thematic art exhibitions to decorate the street. For instances, from 11 August to 31 October, 2017, the “Butterfly X Street Art” displayed different butterfly-shaped knitting; in March 2018, the “In the Mood for Love” arts installations that created visual spectacle of colours to punctuate the street with abstract symbols of love, such as wedding

rings romance and cultural heritage (Lee Tung Avenue, 2018, March 1).

Event Photo	Theme	Details
 <p>Figure 3.15 In the Mood for Love event</p> <p>Source: Lee Tung Avenue (n. d. e)</p>	<p>2018 In the Mood for Love</p>	<p>To celebrate the Hong Kong art's month by exhibiting art installations in collaboration with international artist.</p>
 <p>Figure 3.16 A piece of urban knitting</p>	<p>Butterfly X Street Art</p>	<p>To display butterfly-themed urban knitting in collaboration with the Green Power and Shell.</p>

Table 3.3 Art installation event in the Lee Tung Avenue

In these festive and thematic events, large-scale arts installations and decorations were placed along or hung up the street, always with a bright-coloured, three-dimensional and touchable paintings and installations. For example, in “Affection for Lee Tung Avenue” a four-metre-large knotted sculpture of a “Fortune Knot Doggie” is made to celebrate the Year of Dog (Lee Tung Avenue, 2018, February 1); a giant silver moon illumination and a 70-foot-long LED fire dragon were introduced to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival (Lee Tung Avenue, 2017, September 29).

Another example is the Mallory Street/Burrows Street Revitalization Scheme, the Green House, which comprises a cluster of ten pre-war Grade 2 historic buildings, has turned into the Comix Home Base after renovation, which implemented features such as studios for comic and animation artists, a resource centre library for printed and digital comic books and magazines collections, educational workshops, exhibition rooms, retail space for comics and food and beverages facilities/outlets (URA, n. d. a). The ageing structures have been transformed into artistic design that aligned with its theme as well as acting like an unique landmark for cultural and creative industries (URA, 2013, October 17).



Figure 3.17 Before revitalization: The Green House

Source: Apple Daily (2011, April 27)



Figure 3.18 After revitalization: The Comix Home Base

Source: Apple Daily (2014, June 11)

In short, the urban renewal in Wan Chai showcase the cultural explanation of gentrification.

The constructions for local residents and businesses have been revitalized into artistic and attractive structures, businesses and events that favour the middle-class and visitors. This

echoes with Lee, Slater and Wyly (2008), the urban place-making led by the middle-class put excessive emphasis on ostentation display and exhibition in order to create an extraordinary

and aesthetic space through their enthusiasm on stressing the cultural characteristics of the buildings; and they perform a tendency on flaunty consumption spaces, such as nostalgic shops and arts and cultural spaces. Thus, the influx of middle-class leads to introduction of new cultural and consumption spaces that corresponding to the taste of people of higher social status.

Chapter 4

Analysis: In Lure of Capitalist Mode of Urban Development

The urban renewal in Wan Chai is an attempt of profit-making urban transformation process.

The development of gentrification is a new form of cultural expression of the middle-class to seek for alternatives to the nuclear family (Savage & Warde, 1993). Influx of the new middle-class in the redeveloped areas is the most significant consequence of gentrification. Warde (1991) concluded the process of gentrification can be expressed in four dimensions:

- (i) the displacement of a group of residents with another group of higher social status entailed by resettlement and social concentration;
- (ii) the exhibition of distinctive aesthetic features and the presence of new local services in the built environment transformation;
- (iii) the conglomeration of persons with a putatively shared lifestyle and culture, or shared class-related consumer preferences;
- (iv) the economic reordering of property values, and usually an expansion of the private ownership system of domestic property.

In the following session, the features of the urban renewal strategy that give rise to the marginalization and exclusion of the original residents and businesses will be discussed.

4.1 Uneven Distribution of Urban Spaces

The displacement effect has found entangled in an extractable relation with urban renewal in Wan Chai. As expressed by the informants, the previous urban spaces for the initial community, especially the grassroots, have been “luxurized”, which targeted at the middle-class. Therefore, the lower-class residents and local business have been forced to displace as they are incapable to afford the expensive land price after renewal. Smith (1979) explained that the rehabilitation of residents consequently brings enormous changes on the redevelopment and operation of economic, social and spatial aspects.

Since the previous dilapidated areas have attracted investment from private developers which is acting as one of the major gentrifiers, by introducing high-end residential and commercial land uses to the areas. The Rent Gap Theory by Neil Smith (1979) has concisely deciphered the occurrence of gentrification from economic explanation, as a district deteriorates, the current rental income obtainable from letting the buildings fall and the value for new development is minimal, thus changing the land uses of the land become profitable in the cycle of decline. Therefore, the potential achievable rental income from the middle-class owners and tenants is attractive to the property developers who attempt to recycle the delated neighborhood. Smith (1979) further explained that the rehabilitation of residents consequently brings enormous changes on the redevelopment and operation of economic, social and spatial aspects.

Kwok (2011) explained that since the remaining small-scale industrial production spaces will be weeding-out in the process of gentrification, hence replaced by high-end office blocks and hotels, in addition with “fashionable” consumption spaces.

In the case of Wan Chai, the process of upgrading the community to a middle-class ethos is witnessed. H mentioned that a number of bars have started business in the Blue House Cluster, which attracted the new middle-class residents and people worked in the nearby office blocks to grab drinks there. Starting from 2009, the first chain store – a convenient store – entered the Stone Nullah Lane, and one after another, the bars, galleries, various chain stores inhabited the street; two hardware stores have been replaced by wine shop and bar (HK01, 2016, May 23). Also, in the Johnston Road Redevelopment Project, the Woo Cheong Pawn shop, a historical and unique Chinese-styled tenement house have been renovated by high-end bar and fine dine restaurant (Apple Daily, 2009, April 6). And the URA expressed the intention to hoping the preservation project “acts as a catalyst to revive economic activities in the neighbourhood” after revitalized the construction for adaptive re-use, (URA, 2008, July 17). By these instances, the urban renewal process intentionally creates exclusion of the lower-class as the grassroots residents, businesses, and cultural distinctiveness are threatened to extinction in the redeveloped areas.



Figure 4.1 The Woo Cheong Pawn Shop before revitalization

Source: K. Wah Real Estates Co. Ltd. (n. d.)



Figure 4.2 The Woo Cheong Pawn Shop after revitalization

Source: K. Wah Real Estates Co. Ltd. (n. d.)

The gentrified enclave is an expression of inequality through segregation (Savage & Warde, 1993). Through segregation, exclusion of the lower-class is witnessed, by extinction of their population and cultural distinctiveness. In such areas, members of the community visibly display some distinctive cultural markers in their daily activities which constitutes the

reproduction of particular social identity as well as a variable degree of social solidarity (Savage & Warde, 1993). A new ethos of the district has been erected in the renovated neighbourhood, which in favour of the middle-class living style and aesthetics. For example, the URA had addressed its willingness to bring back the wedding-related businesses which contributed to the local character of Lee Tung Street as well as to redevelop the area into a newly-established community hub for shopping, leisure and cultural activities, by inviting all wedding card shops previously operating in the street, under the idea of a thematically designed and decorated idea of “Wedding City” (URA, 2007, December 20); however, upon completion of the project, as above-mentioned, a “First Class Shopping Premises” is emphasized in the lease premise. This shows the redevelopment is not in favour to the former local wedding-related business, and the developers seek to attract high value-added businesses into the area.

To sum up, high-end residential and commercial buildings are introduced under the renewal projects, which exclusion of the local residents and businesses is inevitable in the urban transformation. Therefore, the urban spaces have been “luxurized” and acted as tool for profit-making purposes.

4.2 Power Unevenness in Place-making Processes

In the decision-making process, a top-down approach is implemented, thus filed to empower

the community members who were those mostly affected by urban renewal. Carrie Lam, the then Secretary for Development Bureau, mentioned the incentives to implement the “people-centred” practice in the redevelopment of Wan Chai, which showed the intention to include a broader stakeholder in the urban renewal:

“.....emphasis on public participation, and cooperation with the Wan Chai District Council should be adopted...take initiative to engage the District Council to supervise the revitalization of the old inner area...” (Press Releases of the HKSAR, 2007, December 20)

However, various stakeholders expressed that the government has failed to engage the public in the renewal projects. Ada Wong, who was a member of the Wan Chai District Council between 2000 and 2007, criticized the institutional flaws if the district council to participate in urban planning issues, which referring to the Cap. 547 District Councils Ordinance the district planning is not an institutional function of a district council (Wong, 2011). Therefore, the district council cannot have a say in the decision-making. The residents also expressed the same concern. W addressed that the regulation about urban renewal is unjust,

“The URA plays leading role for the earthshaking changes in Wan Chai in this decade since it enjoys the exemption from the government, by making use of the

Lands Resumption Ordinance to force the residents to leave, regardless of their wills. Thus, when a large piece of land, encompassing the whole street or sometimes even several streets, to redevelop together, many land uses have been changed, grabbed and eroded unwittingly.”

The Cap. 124 Land Resumption Ordinance (LRO) give rises to the power of the authority to resume land for public purpose:

“Whenever the Chief Executive in Council decides that the resumption of any land is required for a public purpose, the Chief Executive may order the resumption thereof under this Ordinance.” (Article 3, Cap. 124 LRO) (Hong Kong e-Legislation, 2001, April 4)

Meanwhile, the Cap. 563 Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance give rise to the power of the URA to recommend land resumption:

“The Authority may apply in writing to the Secretary requesting him to recommend to the Chief Executive in Council the resumption, under the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Cap. 124).” (Article 29 (1), Cap. 563 URAO) (Hong Kong e-Legislation, 2007, July 1)

Therefore, the institution of urban planning is in favour of the URA to practice its power on land resumption. The URA can address an application to the Secretary for Development to request the government making recommendation to the Chief Executive in Council for the resumption of land necessitated for the execution of the URA's redevelopment projects pursuant to the LRO (Press Releases of the HKSAR, 2017, June 21). On the other hand, the informants, who have actively participated in the public actions on Wan Chai's urban renewal projects, expressed the failure of the URA to achieve its "people-centred" objective as the local residents and businesses ultimately being swept out of their original locations. The prevailing practice of urban renewal processes in Hong Kong is the joint-venture partnership, which means the URA collaborating with private developers to redevelop the dilapidated areas (Ng, 2002). Ng (2002) argued that financial viability has been the principal focus of the government in the urban renewal process, thus the government tries various means to encourage involvement of private sectors in the renewal projects. That echoes with La Grange and Pretorius (2016), the URA remains the primary institution that give effects to Hong Kong's entrepreneurial activities regarding redevelopment of its land resources, normally in coalition with large and well-capitalized developers. Therefore, the government and the developers are taking leads in urban renewal, and hence voices from the affected communities and public have been neglected in the process.

In Peter Ambrose's *Urban Process and Power*, a prominent question should be considered in

the process of changing the built environment: “So who precisely *are* the individuals, groups and interests who initiate and organize the changes to the built environment?” (Ambrose, 1994, p. 6). He further questioned the “us” versus “they” relation in the urban process – as “we” are those who all live in the built environment, most of us may feel little control over the forces that shape it; and those who are initiators and organizers of the changes, the active modifiers of the built environment, are usually considered as “they”, not “us” (Ambrose, 1994). In the urban transformation of Wan Chai, it is concluded that the local people have been left out as the institution does not perform empowerment.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

This research examines the relations between urban renewal projects and gentrification in the Wan Chai District. It is reflected that the urban transformation process intertwined with the social upgrading process, which the original community, including the residents and businesses, ultimately becomes the victims of the urban renewal.

In the economic explanation, the surge of private investment into the previous derelict areas under the collaboration of the URA and the private developers have created sharp increase on the land price, which forced the local grassroots community to leave. The new construction of high-level residential and commercial land uses targeted at the new middle-class in-migrants to the refurbished areas, such influx of the middle-class population leads to the exclusion of the disenfranchised groups. Thus, the rehabilitation of residential pattern is one of the major phenomenon in urban renewal.

In the social explanation, urban renewal is argued to be a process that interrupt the community cohesion between residents. The urban spaces have been transformed for private development, thus the residents have less public spaces for communal activities. As the connection between individuals is built by everyday contacts, with less opportunities for

interaction as the community members are swept out of the area, the social cohesion cannot exist under urban renewal.

In the cultural explanation, the new development represents the middle-class ethos and aesthetics. As the new construction are businesses that targeted the new residents, namely the middle-class, also the visitors, hence the new businesses concentrated on the value-added and high-end businesses. These “fashionable” businesses, such as galleries, hotels, fine dine restaurants, are displayed in an artistic and attractive appearance and atmosphere in order to attract the new middle-class in the refurbished district.

The features of uneven distribution of urban spaces and power in place-making process are produced along with this social upgrading urban transformation. As the local communities does not possess the power in the decision-making process, the joint-venture strategy implemented by the government and the private developers has been a lucrative attempt to undertake profit-oriented renewal projects. Therefore, the initial communities are always being marginalized and excluded in the urban transformation process.

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Appendix 1: Interview Transcripts

Interview 1

Informant: W

Date: 23 January, 2018

Venue: A communal shop at the Blue House Cluster

問：你在灣仔居住了多少年？在這期間，你看到這區在居住環境、社區生活等方面有何轉變？

答：首先，我在灣仔出生、長大，大約搬離灣仔 10 年。一直看著灣仔的轉變，起初是一些私人發展商單幢式，最主要是 2 至 3 個單位去重建。至近 10 多年很翻天覆地的轉變，就是市區重建局，它可以得到政府的豁免，使用《土地收回條例》去強逼居民就算不願意也一定要搬走，所以在如此大片土地，整條街、甚至幾條街一起重建的時候，不知不覺間，許多土地用途被改變、霸佔、侵蝕。當中，居民被逼離開。這在社會層面上，造成很大的分化，亦牽涉到市民的權益被剝奪。而我們是吾否有發聲渠道呢？甚至是懵然不知，如果你不熟悉土地條例，真的會被市建局欺騙了。

問：你提及到市民的權益被剝奪，那麼過去你是否有接觸過一些政府讓市民表達意見的渠道，例如公眾諮詢？

答：市建局下來第一件事就是凍結戶口，告訴你甚麼時候要搬，獲得的資訊就是你可以獲賠多少錢，或可被編配到哪裡의公屋。但是，日後的發展呢，他們覺得不需要交待，他們的責任就是趕走你，給了你賠償，但這賠償是否合理呢？但沒有人知道當中細節的條例裡市民實質可以獲得甚麼。甚至我知道有許多居民.....在市建局的所謂市區重建隊甚至以威逼利誘、簽一些保密協議書，令街坊間更加猜疑、分化，用這些手段打散市民團結的力量，最終的目的是整條街被發展商重建、發展。以我來看，市建局是最大的發展商，而它是獲得強行趕走市民的權力，而得到大片土地去進行市區重建。它首先在這土地賺了第一桶金，然後再讓發展商去賺第二桶金。最後，市民在市區重建底下，其實是被逼離開。那麼，我們經常會問，市區重建局為了甚麼要市區重建？它的目標是甚麼？為了甚麼人而去市區重建？得益者是誰？受損害、受影的是誰？

問：即是說其實市民在市區重建項目中難以得知有何渠道可以向政府發表意見，你們無法介入重建的過程。

答：對。

問：那麼居民只可以在市區重建局給予的選項——賠償或搬遷中作出選擇。

答：對。

問：那麼會否有一些市民，或自己，會有一些行動主動去發聲？

答：例如利東街的市區重建是比較早期的，由土發轉移到市區重建局的。利東街是比較前期的市區重建，且得到的迴響亦比較大，因為利東街的市民得到一些組織出來發聲，亦有一些學者、專業人士、學生關注這項目，因為都頗大型，是市區重建中早期較大型的項目，牽涉很多的居民。這喚醒了很多關心市區重建和保育，亦成立了H15關注組，經常與街坊開會，在街道証開一些諮詢大會，讓路過的人、周邊的街坊知道市區重建不是與他們無關的，因為除了趕走原本的居民，也令整整一條街道，原本可以行車，也會被方案「吃掉」。這樣的發展令我們住在灣仔的街坊，就算不是此項目的，例如仕紳化帶來的租金上升、樓價更貴、店舖的租金上升令消費物價也隨之上升，是直接影響我們灣仔的生活。我們的生活被這些發展商、業主掠奪了，我們賺取到的東西大部份都變成了租金，我們的消費很大部份花在租金上。其實可以看到灣仔大部份的豪宅都是市區重建局推動，它帶頭將灣仔的呎價推至二萬元一呎，再到二萬四，甚至三萬。二萬四是低樓層、面向較差，但已是現時最低「入場費」，較好的差不多要三萬。那市區重建局將整個灣仔仕紳化地去重建，將原本住了很久的街坊因此被逼離開灣仔。

問：你剛剛提及灣仔居民的生活有很大轉變，那麼你如何理解灣仔的生活特色？

答：除了灣仔居民的生活有轉變，其實在此工作的人也有影響，因為租金貴了必定會令消費更高。

那麼，何謂「灣仔人」呢？以前灣仔是舊城區，原本電車路、莊士敦道打後有很多舊樓，都是一些舊城區，很多時我們會稱之為「手作仔」，即是五金鋪、鐵器鋪、裝修工程公司。而茶樓、酒樓也是一般市民可以消費，但很多家市民常去的都已倒閉了，亦可看到很多其他店舖也加租。以前灣仔很多小食肆、商店，稱之為「家爺仔嚟」，即是一家人一手一腳去做，老闆和街坊、顧客的關係很親切、熟絡，互相認識。但因為租金增加，換成了很多連鎖商店，許多「家爺仔嚟」生活也無法繼續做。所以從前在街道上可以與相熟街坊親切地聊天、問好的氣氛已難以找回，只有大型連鎖商店，甚至乎高消費的商店、食肆。例如現時利東街的店舖，我從來也未光顧過，雖然有一家叫「雙囍樓」，但跟從前的「雙囍樓」已不同，是相當高消費的，我們都不敢去吃。但以前的「雙囍酒樓」我們可以自行斟水、知道哪個位置是哪位街坊慣常坐的，大家有一種日常習慣的規律，或親切的關係。但這種灣仔的消費、生活模式是很親切，不會有現在仕紳化後令人卻步，沒有了親切感的情況。我常常覺得灣仔是一塊「肥豬肉」，不斷被侵蝕、搶奪。

問：你覺得除了消費上不同之外，例如你從前居於藍屋，居民的生活模式、生活面貌有否改變？

答：視乎甚麼年代吧。在六十年代，在「落街」、使用街道上，是十分頻密的。例如我們從前小朋友經常一起在街上玩耍，現時已不再有；大人一起在街上開桌子吃飯，節日，如中秋節、七姐誕、「打小人」……街道的使用是很切合中國傳統，或可配合、解決我們住唐樓的擠逼生活。加上如果大家可以經常使用街道，大家的街坊鄰里間聯繫的形式也會多了，那種街坊間的情誼現時已找不回。

問：有何原因令你覺得現時的街坊比較陌生，沒有從前可以聚在一起玩的機會？

答：因為街道……例如石水渠街可以變成停車場，三行泊車，以前沒有這麼多車輛，大家可以隨意使用街道。這現時大家沒有可以聚在一起的空間，大家也關起門，少了聯繫。更可能是現時的生活不同，我們從前生活較艱苦，很多時靠鄰舍支援，互相幫助。例如以前住的地方狹小，「包租婆」會借出客廳給我們吃飯，而我的母親沒有工作，會在早上幫她照顧小朋友，讓她可外出買菜。現時的租金、消費貴了，令一些基層市民不敢外出消費，因此與社會的接觸少了。而且，從前大家較少被逼遷，頂多住得擠逼一點，共用廚房、廁所。但現時隨時會被趕走，生活更徬徨。因此，市區重建令居民生活更水深火熱。市區重建令舊城區愈來愈少，由以前電車路、莊士敦道打後，但現時只剩下大道東向內這幾條內街的舊樓、唐樓。其實租金較低的舊城區可以令到基層街坊或行業有生存空間。

問：那麼可以看到灣仔有不同類型的市區重建，例如利東街變成了一些較高檔的住宅、商鋪，但藍屋這裡則成功活化，也可以較低租金出租。那麼你認為藍屋可否保留過去的生活模式或社區文化？

答：剛才提及舊城區可是基層市民的喘息空間。但是，除了市區重建局，我們還要認識城市規劃委員會，在城市規劃裡沒有保育舊城區這回事，但政府經常叫口號要保育舊城區。其實，灣仔和中環只有皇后大道才是一個舊城區，匠麼我們還剩下多少舊城區呢？保育舊城區是為了保育甚麼呢？如何去做呢？一個藍屋是否足夠呢？藍屋只有 9 棟樓，留下的只有 8 戶居民，但是，如果當初藍屋沒有留下，這裡的仕紳化會更大。如囿這裡拆了，或進行一些仕紳化的項目，會令周邊更快……整個舊城區磨滅了。我們保育的不只留下來的 8 戶，所以我現在很少說「留屋留人」。這計劃再深化一點……「留屋留人」只是其中一樣，我們當初要做的是甚麼呢？原本這裡景星街的項目是市區重建局負責的，要將景星街變成步行街，拆了橙屋，連同景星街作一個藝墟。那麼，那兒的車房、五金工程的商鋪會自然流失。不要說甚麼補償，他們根本沒有被諮詢。但是，慶雲街這邊……在城市規劃委員會……這邊廂是藍屋，一級歷史建築物、三級歷史建築物，但它已差不多 100 年，可否去到 150 年、200 年呢？我們的舊城區已

是一個斷層，因為一條這麼短的街道，城市規劃委員會最早是在街角批准興建 26 層高的酒店，再在對面興建 20 多層高的酒店，這兩個項目最終由同一家公司買了地盤。再加上《強拍條例》，是政府想出來的一張刀，可以隨時殺死你。所以，市區重建不只市區重建局，也可能是城市規劃委員會批予私人發展作市區重建。在市區重建上，城規會沒有劃分舊城區要如何保留，或保育，只是儘量將地撥給發展商起樓、起酒店。為何一條如此短的街道可以批准興建兩棟酒店呢？政府的城市規劃是如何的呢？又或者是否要保留藍屋做有特色的地標，配合酒店作旅遊發展的項目呢？所以我們要思考保育要如何進行才不會加劇社區的仕紳化，真正為本土的住屋文化、社區的生活模式或鄰里關係可持續發展下去。

問：有何例子反映了你剛剛提及商業化發展？

答：除了酒店進駐外……其實，在發展局裡，大道中稱之為「歷史文物徑」，石水渠街則是「生活氣息徑」，我們的生活氣息是否包括……酒吧多數是外國人，是否外國人來消遣、消費的生活氣息呢？我們的生活被人影響著的時候，有否為市民發聲呢？我們曾成立了一些關注組，與區議會會面，但他們沒有做過任何事為市民發聲。但是，在發展局裡，這裡叫「生活氣息徑」，是沒有人……只是告訴你這是舊城區，是「歷史文物徑」中的「生活氣息徑」，我們的生活被破壞、影響，沒有人為我們發聲，那麼這些所謂「文物徑」、「生活氣息徑」是否政府的策略，定立一些地標去配合旅遊的策略呢？

問：可以看到居民也有運用一些方式去保留基層的生活面貌，例如香港故事館、這裡的經濟互助小組，你認為效果如何，可否加強鄰里間的凝聚力？

答：鄰里關係上，暫時只可做到留在藍屋的居民，附近的鄰里許多認識的也搬走了，那麼……也可以連結他們，例如叫他們過來這邊坐坐、聊天、參與活動。我們也在努力當中，起碼在石水渠街、藍屋附近加強鄰里組織的關係，令社區生活面貌皇現。我們社區的鄰里關係不需要依靠很豪華式的聯歡，是以前那種街坊地道的，如中秋晚會。我們嘗試不只在藍屋，也有周邊街坊上嘗試做一些事建立鄰里關係。

問：你作為灣仔居民，亦有受到市區重建影響，那麼你認為市區重建時最需要關注地方是甚麼？

答：我們不應該剝奪居民原有的利益，因為在市區重建中，居民有很多方案，如「可走可留」，利東街是最早提出這方案的，仍被逼趕走。因為提出 7 年樓齡時，他們根本無法購買同樓使用率、環境……最主要是社區網絡被打散。很多……以利東街的營商環境，政府經常說營商環境，但只是大商店的，小商戶的營商環境從來沒被注意，因為利東街盛名是長久以來大家打拼，但他們只可搬到橫街窄巷做熟客生意，不同以往整條街「成行成市」，可以輕易繼續營運的「薈帖街」。他們很多商戶也說是被逼做不

了生意，賠償亦不足。市區重建令整個網絡打散，局民住了在灣仔數十年，就算是業主也好，金錢也不足以再在灣仔買樓。灣仔的樓 1 年已升 100 萬，何況 7 年。所以得到的賠償要不買很細小的，要不在其他區買，所以我們認識利東街的多數選擇搬到另一區。如果市區重建沒有在利東街一次過拆 5 條街，他們可以安穩地在灣仔舒適地生活，這就是仕紳化的過程，令原本的人被趕走。

問：你認為市區重建「以人為本」的目標有否做到？

答：當然沒有，因為在保留社區特色、保留社區網絡也沒有做到，而且有很多公共空間被「吃掉」，可以看到政府推動市區重建時保育和發展是失衡的。

問：最後，你認為藍屋的例子能否作為一個很好的例子推動日後的保育？

答：早前藍屋獲得教科文組織的保育獎時，我也有參與。可以看到評審過程不是著眼於保育技術，而是整個由下而上，基層、工人階級的參與，主要得獎原因是爭取保留基層社區。這是一個很好的例子說明市區重建要關注基層局民。相反，和昌大押那邊則是一種仕紳化，保留下來但趕走了基層，變成夜夜笙歌。

問：謝謝你接受訪問。

Interview 2

Informant: M

Date: 13 February, 2018

Venue: Public space at the Blue House

受訪者先簡介利東項目過去的行動及發展：

30 年代開始，便有利東街 Lee Tung Street，至 2013 年，就只剩下大道漫步。現在雖然仍有利東街，但已變成 Lee Tung Avenue，是不一樣的。由於重建把舊街道「吃」了，整個項目在起樓時會把街道「吃掉」，但街道的樓面面積的數字放在不同的樓層上加高。例如原本 30 層高可加至 50 層高。而且，街道是被私人發展商「吃掉」。

由最初 2003 年 10 月公佈重建時，街坊其後在 1 月已封街行動。我自己除了是 H15 關注組的組員，也是和昌大押項目的小業主，所以我可看到市建局強搶樓宇的行為，而且賠償金額不足以重置同區大小的樓宇。那麼，我將我的經驗告訴他們，因為和昌大押項目是在 2001 年，而利東街項目是 2003 年 10 月，在幾年間可以看到自己住的地方、深水埗、筲箕灣的街坊的賠償金額也是不能按同區 7 年樓齡的價值重置。所以我告訴他們，因此有一浪接一浪的街頭行動，希望市建局正視，如此賠償金額對他們而言是一個剝削。

我們那時亦嘗試在立法會抗議。

亦有提倡「樓換樓，鋪換鋪」，要求同區 7 年樓齡價值的賠償，覺得這是一個無理扣減。原來當一個業主擁有 2 個單位時，第一個單位可賠足，但第二個單位則扣減 3 成，因此連正價賠償也沒有。

當年我們也在街頭派發濃縮版的「啞鈴方案」。在 2005 年，由於「啞鈴方案」獲得規劃師學會的銀獎，亦相信是認為方案是較可取。我們向城規會提交「啞鈴方案」，要求「樓換樓，鋪換鋪」、「部份重建，部份保育」。如何「部份重建，部份保育」呢？我們要求街頭的中段可以保留；而街坊要求「樓換樓，鋪換鋪」，則是不要錢。但是，最終今天的利東街是豪宅。不脛而走，在過程中，我們得到不同媒體介紹及刊登「啞鈴方案」的資料，原因是為了一件事——「可走可留有選擇」，且不要錢，「樓換樓，鋪換鋪」。

我們會在七一做街站，每次也會由街坊開會決定橫額寫甚麼訴求，儘量呼籲人人參與。亦有大約 3 次封街論壇和發佈會，但是在 2003 年至 2007 年 12 月，市區重建只跟 H15 關注組開過 3 次會，那麼他們會有多清楚我們的「啞鈴方案」？或者資訊是靠記者的資訊，如當中有錯誤會如何呢？我不知道。

在 2005 年 9 月 10 日，有一群「民間博物館」的朋友，做了利東街的照片，向全世界展示。

2005 年亦有一位韓國藝術家在得知事件後，前來表演默劇。同一天，我們在廈門街，當時還是公共空間，現在是行車的，去做一個發佈會。

街坊亦有提出「賤價收樓，高價勾地」。而我們每次開會，也會現場投票。而在 2006 年皇后碼頭要清拆時，H15 關注組和天星皇后關注組也合作發聲。可以看到我們在不同時期也就著民間方案如何可多做一些而出力。我們亦曾就著市建局不理會「啞鈴方案」而作出申訴，為甚麼他們一直不聞不問？甚至沒有清楚解釋為何「啞鈴方案」不合格？我們想得到清晰回應。

我們也曾將「啞鈴方案」的紙樣搬到皇后碼頭展示一星期。搬到也有不同藝術家做了「愛街」行動，讓我們作展覽。

其後，市建局在媒體上提及會按「啞鈴方案」的方式，但，第一，他們沒有與我們溝通；第二，他們沒有徵求我們的同意，那如何算得上是採納了「啞鈴方案」，或有它的神緒呢？在 12 月 1 日，我們便在媒體上回信是「雀巢鳩佔」。其後，市建局便不再理會我們，開始拆樓。在 12 月 23 日，我便開始絕食，因為當時已開始拆天台，而我們已沒有其他方法。

但 12 月 27 日，竟然媒體報導藍屋可「留屋留人」。這是另外一個問題。

另外，還有和昌大押，雖然旅遊發展局說是保育，不拆外牆但裡面拆了，做了鋼筋、水泥架構，將 4 個單位變成 1 個單位，但這是重建行為，將高空展權轉至旁邊的嘉薈軒。如同利東街，將樓面面積放在新建的幾棟樓。

問：市區重建在不同層面的影響？

答：重建是賺錢大於對社區貢獻，是「假保育」。例如蘇慶和作為市建局的「話事人」，但竟然默認它是地產商。在 2001 年，市建局成立，它獲得了 3 樣東西，第一，100 億營運資金；第二，它所有起樓的地盤也可免補地價；第二，可以在公佈重建後的 12 至 18 個月內無條件使用《土地收回條例》，因此，市建局曾提出「若你覺得不滿意便不要賣」，其實暗地裡是指可以《土收》提告。地產商也不可以胡亂「吃掉」街道，為何市建局有這麼大的權力？而且，很多舊商鋪說利東街租金太貴，已沒法繼續營運。整個社區已是「豪宅型」，不像從前租金便宜。

問：當時不同持份者，包括受重建影響的居民或大眾有何反應？

答：由於「啞鈴方案」遞交了給城規會，當中收到 100 多份意見書，有 9 成是支持「啞鈴方案」的。居民反對的主要不是重建，而是不能做到不要錢，「樓換樓，鋪換鋪」。而且，市建局《重建策略》一書中，清楚指出重建時應保留社區網絡，但如何保留呢？現時利東街踢走了舊的網絡，變成豪宅網絡，我們看不到。這是最重要的問題。

問：從你的角度，政府可如何改善？

答：我看不到政府有想改善的意向。另外，就著重建是對是錯，我明白社會有更新，但不是用「一刀切」的方式。

問：你剛剛提及市區重建對於社區網絡有很大影響，可否再說明在居民生活、公共空間的提供有何改變？

答：社區網絡是街坊鄰里的互助，有熟悉的街坊鄰里扶你一把，這才是社區網絡存在的重要性。我看到不同形式.....在現在周邊，利東街、藍屋周邊的租金也很貴，因此社區網絡得以保留的好處，或放慢一些步向「豪宅化」對生活是十分重要的。

問：可以看到你與其他居民有密切聯繫，那麼你會否知道他們的去向，或生活受到多大影響？

答：我們曾做過電話追蹤，聽到他們很不滿市建局，說「最糟糕的就是把我趕走」。而且，他們從前最需要「隔離左右」幫幫忙，例如順便幫忙買些東西，現在搬去了另一區，已找不到熟人協助。在藍屋，當年原本橙屋和這空地會重建，街坊認為那麼便要搬到公屋。當中，有一位老伯（匿名）住在橙屋，他是長期病患者，而藍屋有一位女士（匿名）不時會照顧他，與他聊天、飲茶，但他說搬到筲箕灣後公屋沒有人探望他及幫忙，大約半年後便去世了。這可以看到社區網絡得以維持的重要性。

問：另一方面，那麼你們在文化保育時，如何理解利東街或灣仔的文化，實質是要保育甚麼？

答：保育和網絡整體是同樣的，拆了便沒有了。甚麼是保育.....所以提及和昌大押是「假保育」，只是沒有拆外殼，但內裡全部拆了。而利東街也同樣，而我們當初要求保留中段，做 6 層樓宇的復修，復修後街坊不要錢，要求「樓換樓，鋪換鋪」，可以回去，因為我們常說「可走可留有選擇」，不可以令想不走的人沒法留下。

問：那麼想留下的人，最大的原來是甚麼？

答：我們常聽到的是他們已住了三代人，但不是要求市建局賠 4000 元一呎，他們不反

對重建，但要求以業權換回來，「樓換樓，鋪換鋪」為何不行？居民認為是被逼搬走，是無情的剝奪。

問：你認為市區重建是否將原區居民或基層市民的需要邊緣化？

答：在對基層，即那些租客則更加是，對他們的態度更加惡化，第一句就說若不走便是霸佔官地，那麼便「打官司」。這是恐嚇，基層生活朝不保夕，但被這樣趕走是不公義。

問：你認為日後是否有一些實質的方式可以改善市建居的態度，更願意接納不同持份者，如受影響的居民、關注組的聲音？

答：我們從一些渠道聽到市建局打算賠償金額不接 7 年，改為按 15 年，因為賠得太多了。但是，看看現時的賠償已經不足以在同區買樓，那麼我看不到……尤其是對基層而言則更慘，更被邊緣化。

問：所有問題到此完結，感謝你接受訪問。

Interview 3

Informant: H

Date: 13 February, 2018

Venue: Public space at the Blue House

問：你所屬的組織何時開始參與灣仔的社區活動？如何參與？

答：香港故事館於 2006 年成立，至今已有 11 年有多。早期叫做「灣仔民間生活館」，主要做一些公眾展覽，希望讓附近街坊或公眾人士認識早期的生活狀態，後期會有文化導賞，去讓大家認識到灣仔其實有許多不同類型的，具有歷史價值或文化價值的一些生活狀態，例如我們會舉辦保育團、都市更新團，或者比較生活層面的飲食團，甚至鬼故團。去到再後期，我們除了做展覽、文化導賞外，也會有一些恆常活動，希望可以連結到附近灣仔的街坊，所以會有一些放映會、音樂會，甚至現時有每月的定期飯聚，與附近的街坊或樓上的鄰居一起下來吃飯。

問：可以看到你們的活動著眼於灣仔的文化保育，那麼你們如何理解甚麼稱之為「灣仔的文化特色」？

答：你是指從那一角度出發，我個人的角度，抑或……

問：或者從你們組織的角度，即是當你們提出要保育灣仔的文化特色，當中包含了甚麼？

答：不如我用街坊的口吻敘述，他們通常會說灣仔是一個舊城區來的，亦是一個華人集中的地方，所以其實過往一直保存著一些華人的文化，包括藍屋這一帶，對上亦有北帝廟，有過百年歷史，藍屋亦是 1922 年的建築，甚至整個建築群有不同年代的唐樓。到後期亦有很多外國人來到，變得更多元，因為有很多不同的外國人在此生活，所以其實現時例如區議會的層面會定位灣仔叫「多元文化」的地區。

問：那麼你認為推動市區重建後，對於延續你所述的文化有何影響？

答：其實會有一定的影響，始終一個舊城區要發展，無可避免從兩個渠道進行，一種是將其活化，或將其拆除再重新興建。早期的市區重建局用傳統的方式——拆卸重建的方式，其實某程度上也會影響到本身原有的居民的生活狀況。例如利東街是一個很好的例子，所以會見到 H15 關注組及居民走出來去保衛自己的利東街。

問：那麼你提及你們有一些街坊活動，希望可以凝聚居民，那麼他們的參與是否積極？成效大嗎？

答：這是一個好問題，在早期的層面，當街坊很關心……尤其是……例如以一名 H15 關注組的成員（匿名）的例子，她很關心自己的地方，因為快將被拆，所以她會嘗試組織許多不同的方式去守住自己的家，所以他們在那時候會有很高度的參與，亦可以連結到不同的店舖或附近的街坊去參與不同類型的活動，甚至一些社會行動。去到後期，灣仔的市區重建項目其實已愈來愈少，因為市建局已不再「搞」這個地方，去「搞」其他地方，所以開始有一些街坊回復過往的生活狀態，當然亦不是全然回復到，因為其實租金愈來愈貴，那麼基層街坊面對租金貴便要逼遷到其他地方。而進駐的可能是一些包括中產人士、剛才提及的外國人士，那麼其實他們某程度並不熟悉對面的街坊，因為可能本身言語不通，或者新的居民本身與這個地區無關，不關心這個地方，純粹是住在灣仔，覺得不錯這樣。所以去到現時的層面，街坊其實少了一些自己的鄰里關係，這是我們現時面對的情況。

問：即是你們覺得你們在凝聚街坊時，也是主要凝聚一些比較基層、原本已在此居住較長時間的市民？

答：其實是在轉變中，由過往很基層的街坊，因為比較多集中在此，至現時也迎合一些中產街坊，始終不可以排除他們，因為我要照顧基層街坊而不迎合新街坊，對吧？那麼無可避免就是隔壁都有一些豪宅，而這些中產街坊我們難道不服務他們嗎？我們也希望他們認識灣仔的，可以認識到這裡附近有很有人情味的街坊，所以我們也會 **engage** 到一些中產街坊。所以整個本身由早期，至結構轉型，受社會環境影響，所以也要迎合一些中產街坊，或者是一些就算出了不同區的基層街坊，他們也會回來，我們亦會與他們一起做一些活動。

問：那麼中間會否可能有一些挑戰或矛盾，因為討論市區重建時始終會影響到一些原區居民，但新豪宅或酒吧進駐，是與原本的地區文化有一些衝突，但同時又要迎合新街坊，那麼舊街坊會否覺得中間可能有一些衝突？

答：其實不多不少都一定有，以這個石水渠街作例子，我去年已接觸過，一次過大概有 3、4 間酒吧進來，總共石水渠街有 5 間可以有酒牌的酒吧，那麼對一些舊街坊當然會不喜歡，因為一來他們不是會下來 **social**、喝酒的街坊，當然不排除會有，但他們最身同感受的就是，酒吧無可避免會有些人可能飲醉酒，會熱熱鬧鬧，會影響樓上在睡覺、或有一些人要工作，所以他們某程度上都不太喜歡這些狀態。那麼，當然新街坊來的愈來愈多是外國人，他們的生活文化就是，譬如下班會去喝酒，或者可能在合和那邊上班的人士，他們下班後就是會過來喝酒。所以就會有這些文化差異，所如如何平衡新舊街坊其實也是我們處理的問題。

問：那麼你們會否有一些行動是可以組織到居民去保留，去 **engage** 他們在生活上維持到原有的社區文化，因為始終展覽、導賞團等是較單向的模式？

答：應該這樣去思考，在街坊或者我們的層面，很難去維持到整個街區的狀態，即是……外面可能會再出租，無可避免可能會有更多食肆轉做酒吧，或者轉做 SOHO 區，這些是不同的方式也很難去令到這個街區不轉變。反而我們應該去考慮，既然他們已經進來了，我們應如何令他們轉變，令他們認知到原來一些舊有的街坊其實是不喜歡你們的，或者你們某程度上在影響樓上，因為有噪音。那麼，如何令他們融入這個舊有的生活和地方呢？我認為這更加重要。所以我們也會與附近的酒吧，或者一些食肆，會與他們說一聲，起碼他們明白來到這個地方，希望他們不要太嘈雜，勸喻或者令他們融入我們這個生活……即是可能本身街坊很有人情味，我們也會介紹這些街坊讓他們認識。另外，亦有一些溫馨提示，會看到有一些酒吧會貼著不要太嘈、11 時後就回到室內的告示。

問：可以看到你們比較抱持一種開放的態度，那麼你們整體而言對於灣仔的市區重建有何看法？

答：無可避免市建局作為一個官商機構，以賺錢為目標已是很不恰當的。在我個人層面而言，如何去令他們有……即是當然我覺得他們有沒有一種他們經常所說的口號式的狀態，是否真的應用到在社區上？或是否真的做到呢？而不是辜負本身對發展，或對原有希望有新環境的街坊，而令他們可以安居。往往問題就是，市建局經常有很多口頭承諾，給予許多「甜頭」，但只是聲稱，結果卻不是這回事，或者可能用一些很「鬼鼠」的方法，要簽保密協議，不可以將事件告訴其他街坊，或者更「鬼鼠」的，原來租戶是不計入某些部份，或者劏房戶又不計入某些部份。那麼這些就是令到一些本身想安居、想有新環境，或者想原區有更好的將來的人，某程度上幻想破滅。即是街坊不是不同意發展，他們也想有一個更好的安居的地方，始終唐樓住久了有一些破爛，他們也會擔心。但是，一談重建、發展，反而變成一種擔憂的狀態，要處理這些擔憂，其實政府有否思考過他們說的東西是否真的有做到呢，而不是「空口講白話」。

問：對比起其他市區重建項目，如利東街，可以看到藍屋的項目上，政府的態度似乎有轉向，用「留屋留人」的方式，你認為有何因素令政府願意在藍屋的保育上作改變？

答：藍屋不是一個單一事件，在早期的狀態是因為天星、皇后、利東街，而令藍屋可以稱之為「倖存」，即是那一連串的社會事件，一路林鄭「拆唔掂」、「拆唔掂」、「拆唔掂」，直至這個地方可以有一絲希望，算是「拆掂咗」，那麼……我無法準確地回答你這是否可稱之為成功，因為經過很多不同的失敗，在政府層面的失敗，而勉強藍屋可以成功。當然，我覺得他們也有一些政治考量，即是當年林鄭他們可以依然「企硬」，將這裡變做「茶藝博物館」、「中醫博物館」，但是我們也無法得知為何他們會突然有想保留藍屋的心態。當然，我們坊間有許多不同的力量去爭取，去做行動，但始終擁有「話事權」的是一位高官，是林鄭。

問：那麼你認為現時藍屋的狀態是否可以維持到原有的社區網絡，或居民的生活方式？成效有多大？

答：其實，基本上這裡有舊鄰居，有新鄰居，我們沒有任何大改動，希望儘量如舊。當然有一些生活上的層面我們會提供，例如早期藍屋沒有廚房、廁所，但對現時的生活環境而言，他們很難去生活。當然可以鼓勵舊街坊繼續做用公廁、可以繼續做其他事，但對新融入的街坊而言，很難沒有廁所而去用公廁，這是不可能的。所以整個藍屋建築群也有對應一些生活層面的需要，如廚房、廁所。另外有一個很好的連接橋，將3個建築物，即藍屋、黃屋和橙屋串連，希望有連接橋令新舊街坊可以享用出面的公共空間，可以聊天、吃飯、有其他娛樂。

問：那麼你認為藍屋居民參與你們的社區活動，例如一些放映會、聚會的積極性高嗎？

答：很幸運地，進來的新鄰居都是真心喜歡這個地方的。他們有參與許多不同類型的活動，因為新鄰居也是多才多藝的，也來自不同背景、職業，包括：老師、銀行、設計、upcycling等，所以他們有很多不同的玩意，亦很幸運我們的活動也合他們的口味。甚至他們有一些自發的活動發生，例如媒體上有報導街貓「藍藍」，是自發共養的計劃；以及樓上這棵聖誕樹，是居民自發提議、動手砌，甚至有不同的設計師一起思考如何實行。

問：最後，你認為在市區重建的過程中，基層市民的需要是否被邊緣化？

答：被邊緣化.....

問：即是他們的聲音、或需求，是否被市建局忽略？例如市建局提出「以人為本」為目標，你認為是否有做到？

答：我認為那種口頭承諾，「以人為本」、「無縫交接」之類的口頭承諾是否真正可以應用到每一個受影響的居民或商鋪呢？這個是在目前的階段，我相信大部份人都不太 buy 的一套，當然希望他們會好好改善，有很大的進步空間，也可更「貼地」去了解不同人，包括業主、租戶、劏房戶、地鋪，他們要搬出去、原區安置、或者有新的考慮，他們也可以理解到，才叫做「以人為本」。而不是以將來的人，即是將來的豪宅價，即是繳得起二萬多呎價的人為本，為賺錢而「以人為本」，抑或其他方式的「以人為本」。而你提及的本身基層的街坊，我相信他們完全不接受這種事。

問：我的訪問到此完畢，謝謝你接受訪問。

Appendix 2: Transaction Records of the Selected Properties

Transaction Records of The Zenith in 2018: (the red frame)

Transaction Records				Transaction Details		Last Transaction	16 years transaction		
Address	B. Age △▽	Reg. Date △▽	Consider. △▽	Area		Unit Price		[Last Hold △▽]	Gain/Loss △▽
				Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽	Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽		
<u>FLAT A 18/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	12	08/05/18	\$10.45M	479s.f.	626s.f.	\$21816	\$16693	[2519 days	↑46%]
<u>FLAT F 12/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	12	26/04/18	\$10.86M	485s.f.	650s.f.	\$22392	\$16708	[1191 days	↑23%]
<u>FLAT D 36/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	12	10/04/18	\$10.98M	498s.f.	669s.f.	\$22048	\$16413	[2149 days	↑41%]
<u>FLAT E 45/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	12	06/04/18	\$17.19M	659s.f.	865s.f.	\$26082	\$19871	[3791 days	↑134%]
<u>FLAT E 49/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>1 (with roof)</u>	12	29/03/18	\$12.80M	523s.f.	683s.f.	\$24474	\$18741	[1890 days	↑28%]
<u>FLAT C 16/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	12	12/02/18	\$10.42M	489s.f.	662s.f.	\$21309	\$15740	[3267 days	↑157%]
<u>FLAT D 22/F</u> <u>TOWER 1 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	12	30/01/18	\$13.00M	607s.f.	847s.f.	\$21417	\$15348	[3849 days	↑117%]

Transaction Records of the One Wanchai in 2018: (the red frame)

Transaction Records				Transaction Details		Last Transaction	16 years transaction		
Address	B. Age △▽	Reg. Date △▽	Consider. △▽	Area		Unit Price		[Last Hold △▽]	Gain/Loss △▽
				Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽	Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽		
<u>FLAT F 31/F ONE</u> <u>WANCHAI</u>	6	02/03/18	\$7.35M	320s.f.	416s.f.	\$22969	\$17668	[2065 days	↑8%]
<u>FLAT E 8/F ONE</u> <u>WANCHAI</u>	6	13/02/18	\$9.40M	461s.f.	614s.f.	\$20390	\$15309	[2144 days	↑15%]
<u>FLAT C 38/F ONE</u> <u>WANCHAI</u>	6	30/01/18	\$12.00M	465s.f.	614s.f.	\$25806	\$19544	[2148 days	↑17%]

Transaction Records of the J Residence in 2018: (the red frame)

Transaction Records				Transaction Details		Last Transaction	16 years transaction		
Address	B. Age △▽	Reg. Date △▽	Consider. △▽	Area		Unit Price		[Last Hold △▽]	Gain/Loss △▽
				Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽	Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽		
<u>FLAT 12 20/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	04/05/18	\$9.08M	482s.f.	650s.f.	\$18838	\$13969	[3913 days	↑102%
<u>FLAT 5 40/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	06/04/18	\$33.80M	1127s.f.	1495s.f.	\$29991	\$22609	[4012 days	↑85%
<u>FLAT 7 21/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	28/03/18	\$11.00M	592s.f.	814s.f.	\$18581	\$13514	[2835 days	↑8%
<u>FLAT 10 28/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	26/03/18	\$13.80M	608s.f.	826s.f.	\$22697	\$16707	[4249 days	↑135%
<u>FLAT 1 26/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	01/03/18	\$13.20M	645s.f.	877s.f.	\$20465	\$15051	[4228 days	↑106%
<u>FLAT 6 21/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	01/03/18	\$6.00M	397s.f.	535s.f.	\$15113	\$11215	[4215 days	↑75%
<u>FLAT 8 23/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	08/02/18	\$8.58M	438s.f.	585s.f.	\$19589	\$14667	[3584 days	↑32%
<u>FLAT 3 23/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	30/01/18	\$9.10M	439s.f.	585s.f.	\$20729	\$15556	[2914 days	↑17%
<u>FLAT 3 9/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	30/01/18	\$8.45M	439s.f.	585s.f.	\$19248	\$14444	[2832 days	↑19%
<u>FLAT 5 38/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	30/01/18	\$8.50M	408s.f.	542s.f.	\$20833	\$15683	[4187 days	↑102%
<u>FLAT 15 29/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	24/01/18	\$6.98M	350s.f.	449s.f.	\$19943	\$15546	[2829 days	↑28%
<u>FLAT 8 15/F J RESIDENCE</u>	11	12/01/18	\$7.80M	438s.f.	585s.f.	\$17808	\$13333	[4173 days	↑126%

Transaction Records of the Lee Tung Avenue in 2018: (the red frame)

Transaction Records				Transaction Details		Last Transaction	16 years transaction		
Address	B. Age △▽	Reg. Date △▽	Consider. △▽	Area		Unit Price		[Last Hold △▽]	Gain/Loss △▽
				Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽	Saleable Area △▽	Gross Area △▽		
<u>FLAT A 19/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	04/05/18	\$16.30M	591s.f.	-	\$27580	-	[1596 days	↑35%]
<u>FLAT C 39/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	03/05/18	\$14.00M	443s.f.	-	\$31603	-	[1537 days	↑37%]
<u>FLAT G 12/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	25/04/18	\$15.20M	584s.f.	-	\$26027	-	[1574 days	↑23%]
<u>FLAT G 39/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	12/04/18	\$8.88M	346s.f.	-	\$25665	-	[1556 days	↑13%]
<u>FLAT B 19/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	11/04/18	\$15.28M	519s.f.	-	\$29441	-	[1567 days	↑49%]
<u>FLAT M 30/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	06/04/18	\$14.88M	515s.f.	-	\$28893	-	[1555 days	↑31%]
<u>FLAT R 33/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	26/03/18	\$8.68M	340s.f.	-	\$25529	-	[1543 days	↑14%]
<u>FLAT B 43/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	16/03/18	\$41.00M	871s.f.	-	\$47072	-	[1515 days	↑74%]
<u>FLAT A 17/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	15/03/18	\$21.60M	761s.f.	-	\$28384	-	[1545 days	↑43%]
<u>FLAT J 16/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	12/03/18	\$15.18M	602s.f.	-	\$25216	-	[1532 days	↑11%]

<u>FLAT B 21/F</u> <u>TOWER 5 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	4	26/02/18	\$15.30M	576s.f.	-	\$26563	-	[1338 days ↑37%]
<u>FLAT K 12/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	26/02/18	\$12.38M	432s.f.	-	\$28657	-	[1526 days ↑40%]
<u>FLAT B 18/F</u> <u>TOWER 5 PHASE</u> <u>1</u>	4	26/02/18	\$12.68M	576s.f.	-	\$22014	-	[1315 days ↑15%]
<u>FLAT J 29/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	23/02/18	\$13.88M	532s.f.	-	\$26090	-	[1513 days ↑24%]
<u>FLAT C 27/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	20/02/18	\$12.00M	443s.f.	-	\$27088	-	[1519 days ↑29%]
<u>FLAT G 29/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	13/02/18	\$16.80M	584s.f.	-	\$28767	-	[1515 days ↑20%]
<u>FLAT F 23/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	13/02/18	\$12.68M	431s.f.	-	\$29420	-	[1521 days ↑55%]
<u>FLAT K 10/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	06/02/18	\$13.36M	521s.f.	-	\$25643	-	[1506 days ↑21%]
<u>FLAT L 10/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	31/01/18	\$7.98M	329s.f.	-	\$24255	-	[1511 days ↑27%]
<u>FLAT E 37/F</u> <u>TOWER 1 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	23/01/18	\$12.90M	447s.f.	-	\$28859	-	[1450 days ↑26%]
<u>FLAT D 40/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	05/01/18	\$8.79M	339s.f.	-	\$25920	-	[1406 days ↑12%]
<u>FLAT C 41/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	04/01/18	\$12.89M	443s.f.	-	\$29097	-	[1438 days ↑28%]
<u>FLAT E 35/F</u> <u>TOWER 3 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	03/01/18	\$12.75M	440s.f.	-	\$28977	-	[1461 days ↑23%]
<u>FLAT N 20/F</u> <u>TOWER 2 PHASE</u> <u>2</u>	3	03/01/18	\$8.25M	348s.f.	-	\$23707	-	[1465 days ↑21%]