

香港特別行政區政府

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

房屋及規劃地政局

香港花園道美利大廈



**Housing, Planning and Lands
Bureau**

Murray Building,
Garden Road, Hong Kong

Tel No : 2848 2947

Fax No : 2845 3489

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27 May 2005

Ms Christine Loh
Chairperson
Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited
Room 602, Hoseinee House, 69 Wyndham Street
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Loh,

**Children's Illustrated Story Book
"The Adventures of Victoria"**

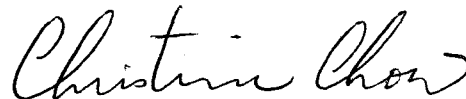
Thank you for your letter of 14 May 2005 addressed to the Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands. I have been authorized to reply.

The Government is committed to protecting the Victoria Harbour and to working with the community in harbour-front enhancement. We should let our younger generation be aware of this commitment. As we have stated in our previous letters to you on 21 and 27 April 2005, while we appreciate your intention in arousing the interest of our younger generation on the need to protect the Victoria Harbour, we are concerned about some of the inaccurate assertion of facts and statements as presented in the story book. Why should we allow a good cause to be faulted by distorted facts that would misguide the readers? We have given our concerns and our responses to your counter arguments in our previous letters. It is regretted that you have chosen to allow the inaccurate statements in the story book to remain.

We notice that the annexes presently attached to your letter contain some further inaccurate information. We are therefore obliged to respond further. Details are set out at Annex.

The Government looks forward to every opportunity of fostering a partnership with your Society in protecting and preserving the Victoria Harbor. However, it is important that such partnership is built upon trust, honesty and sincerity. To get the facts right is an important foundation to building a genuine partnership.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Christine Chow)
for Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

c.c. Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works
Director of Civil Engineering and Development
Director of Environmental Protection
Director of Marine
Director of Planning

With enclosure – Annex

Annex

Government's response to the issues raised by the Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited as per its letter on 14 May 2005

- 1(a) The caption of the photo on the inside cover of the book that: “2004年的維多利亞港 – 無止境的填海”

It is factually wrong to say or imply that there is “endless reclamation”. The Government has repeatedly announced that apart from Central Reclamation Phase III (“CRIII”) and the proposed reclamation schemes at Wan Chai North and Kai Tak, there will be no further reclamation within the limits of Victoria Harbour.

- 1(b) The statement in the book (page 28) that: “根據政府已刊登憲報的填海計劃，香港正面臨失去總面積3,800公頃的海港”

It is factually wrong to say or imply that Hong Kong will, in future, lose 3,800 hectares (“ha”) of the Harbour. As mentioned above, the Government has repeatedly announced that apart from CRIII and the proposed reclamation schemes at Wan Chai North and Kai Tak, there will be no further reclamation within the limits of Victoria Harbour.

As regards the alleged 584 ha of reclamation, again it is factually wrong. The facts are -

- (a) The proposed reclamations at Kowloon Point and Tsim Sha Tsui East have never been included in the Outline Zoning Plan (“OZP”).
- (b) Green Island Reclamation – Deletion of the proposed reclamation from the OZP was gazetted on 19 December 2003.
- (c) Tsuen Wan Bay Further Reclamation – Deletion of the proposed reclamation from the OZP was gazetted on 19 December 2003.

- (d) The reclamation of Kai Tak has already been reduced significantly from 299 to 133 ha in 2001 and that for Wanchai North from 43 to 26 ha in 2002. These two proposed reclamation schemes are being reviewed to ensure full compliance with the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (“PHO”) and the Court of Final Appeal (“CFA”)’s “overriding public need test”. In the Kai Tak review, we are starting with zero reclamation as a basis for public consultation. For Wanchai, the likelihood is that even if reclamation is needed, the extent will be less than what was previously envisaged.

Therefore, instead of the alleged 584 ha of reclamation (i.e. 190 for Green Island, 38 for Central, 300 for Kowloon Bay, 30 for Tsuen Wan and 26 for Wan Chai), the correct figure on reclamation previously planned is 177 ha (i.e. 0 for Green Island, 18 for CR11, 133 for South East Kowloon, 0 for Tsuen Wan Bay and 26 for Wanchai North). In particular, the reclamation proposals on Green Island and Tsuen Wan have been deleted from the respective OZPs.

Moreover, the allegation that the West Kowloon Cultural District (“WKCD”) site of 40 ha was zoned as a park when the land was reclaimed is factually wrong. In fact, the site was mainly zoned for open space, commercial, residential, Government, institution or community, and road uses on the first OZP gazetted in 1992. The site was rezoned to “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Arts, Cultural, Commercial and Entertainment Uses” on 11 July 2003. Apart from the arts and cultural facilities, the level of provision of open space, Government, institution and community facilities, as well as commercial and residential uses in the WKCD is on par with the level of development permitted under the zonings on the previous OZP. In particular, the amount of open space will be about 23 ha (compared with 22.5 ha zoned on the previous OZP), as stipulated in the Invitation For Proposals for the WKCD.

With regard to the public engagement kit for the Envisioning Stage of the "Harbour-front Enhancement Review - Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Adjoining Area" published in January 2005, it should be noted that the “concepts” for building the Trunk Road were far from options or recommendations for the public to choose.

- 2 The statement in the book (page 11) that: “今天的天星碼頭...已成為人們所熟悉的香港地標之一，但卻即將會因填海而被拆毀” and “這碼頭和下面的皇后像廣場很快就因填海要被拆掉，多可惜！”

It is factually wrong to say or imply that the Statue Square will be demolished as a result of the CRIII works.

The existing Statue Square is outside the boundary of the "Comprehensive Development Area" ("CDA") zone and any new development can only take place within the CDA boundary. Sufficient control will be available under the Buildings Ordinance and the future Lease and Development Conditions to safeguard any adverse effect on the Statue Square. The Statue Square will be here to stay and will not be demolished. There is absolutely no ground for your Society to claim that the Statue Square will be demolished due to an adjoining development.

With regard to the opinion given by the engineering experts you have engaged, we would like to thank them for views and note that both Messrs Hardy Lok and Carl Chu are representatives of your Society on the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee. We are advised by professionals in the field that there are readily available solutions for addressing the concerns raised. The professional and construction industry in Hong Kong have met far more demanding challenges than spanning a low-rise building over the width of Connaught Road Central - not to say the possibility of putting building supports, pedestrian walkway and hoarding within the southern-most part of the development footprint. The fundamental point to note is that the future developers are required by law to demonstrate that there will be no encroachment and adverse effect on the Statue Square, and that there is proper pedestrian access and protection of public safety before the Government will approve the development proposal for commencement of construction. In short, the Statue Square will not be demolished as a result.

The Statue Square is zoned as "Open Space" on the approved Central District OZP. The Government has absolutely no plan to change the use of the Statue Square.

As regards the Star Ferry Piers, they will not be lost as a result of reclamation. They will only be decommissioned when the reprovisioned ones are ready, thus ensuring no disruption in the Star Ferry services. The reprovisioned Star Ferry Piers, modeled on their original 1910s design, are being constructed next to the Outlying Island Ferry Piers.

- 3 The statement in the book (page 13) that: “中環3期填海計劃，聲稱為了提供土地興建道路以紓緩交通擠塞，事實上主要目的是為了賣地賺錢。”

We would like to reiterate that CRIII is needed to provide land for essential transport infrastructure including the Central-Wan Chai Bypass (“CWB”), roads connecting CR I and II (the Road P2 network), the extended overrun tunnel of Airport Railway and the reprovisioning of the existing piers and sea-water pumping stations. Land sale is neither the reason nor the justification for CRIII.

CRIII reclamation involves 18 ha. It is the minimum reclamation required for the aforesaid key infrastructure. Of these, the major land use is open space which is about 9 ha. For the remaining 9 ha, there is only a single site for the development of offices and related commercial uses. It is zoned as a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA), half of which is on existing land. As already clearly stated in the Explanatory Statement of the OZP, the potential GFA of the whole CDA site is only about 2 million square feet – definitely not 10 million square feet and definitely will not create five blocks of IFC2 as claimed in your letter. The rest of the reclaimed land will be used for the waterfront related leisure and commercial uses like restaurants, cafes and retail shops, roads and other GIC uses.

As regards Road P2, it is a dual-2 road, not a 6-lane highway.

- 4 The statement in the book (page 20) that: “維港兩岸地區每日產生污水約185萬立方米...維港溶解氧僅餘4.9毫克/升，含量屬於偏低，海洋生物將因而難以維持生命。”

As far as we know, there is no universally adopted "international standard" for dissolved oxygen. In the course of studies to investigate the environmental and engineering feasibility of the HATS proposals, the Government consulted the local academic community and others on the appropriate criteria to ensure adequate protection of marine life. The consensus that emerged was that for the Harbour area, a level of 4mg/L 90% of the time would be sufficient, subject to the proviso that the level should not drop below 2mg/L. Outside the Harbour area, in the southern waters of Hong Kong, it was agreed that an appropriate criterion would be an average of 5mg/L to protect the more sensitive living resources there.

The dissolved oxygen level of 4mg/L is considered sufficient to provide the necessary basic level of protection commensurate with the Harbour's current and likely future uses.

- 5 The statement of the book (page 25) that: “填海工程...令航道變窄, 造成波浪...導致維港倍加危險...曾發生天星小輪撞碼頭事件...”

We have pointed out that the accident is not caused by reclamation in our previous letter and will not therefore repeat the causes here.

May 2005