

# YPG NEWSLETTER

December 2019

YOUNG PLANNERS GROUP  
THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS



香港規劃師學會  
THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS



臻於至善  
PURSUING PLANNING EXCELLENCE

## COVER STORY

Industrial Revitalization:  
Plight or Opportunity to Creatives?



# CONTENT

- WELCOME MESSAGE
- INTRODUCTION OF YPGC MEMBERS
- COVER STORY
- HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EVENTS



# Welcome Message

## Review of Past Events

It has been a fruitful year for The Young Planners Group (YPG) with committed participation of members, friends and different stakeholders from the community. Following the success of the past years, we have continued to deliver a wide range of activities to extend our invitation to our fellow young planners and hence to enrich their experience, skillset and network.

This year, we have successfully delivered an array of programmes on different fronts. Starting with the kick-off event of the mentorship programme in January, young planners had great opportunities to brush up their insights and networks in a series of professional development and social events, such as the Career Workshop Series and Happy Hour events. Besides, we have explored and initiated various collaborations with NGOs (e.g. St James' Settlement and the Warehouse) to engage the wider community.

## Future Events

We will continue to organise a wide variety of activities and offer professional development opportunities for our fellow members to broaden their horizon and enhance their portfolio. At the same time, we will continue to edge up our efforts in promoting town planning knowledge to different community groups. Last but not least, more socialising events will be coming soon.

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# INTRODUCTION OF YPGC MEMBERS



KEITH WU  
Co-Chairperson  
[ External ]



CLARICE HO  
Co-Chairperson  
[ External ]



FELIX KU  
Co-Chairperson  
[ Internal ]



WILLIAM CHUNG  
Secretary



PEGGY TSUI  
Treasurer



CYRIL CHAN



ROBIN CHAN



CYRUS CHAU



SARA CHIONG



AMY CHONG



IVY FOK



JETHRO FUNG



JANICE HO



ANNIE KONG



SAM KONG



ANSON KUNG



MICHELLE KWAN



LILY LAU



CHARISSA LEUNG



JEFF LEUNG



ZITA LEUNG



RACHEL LO



AMY MAK



MATTHEW TAI



CANON WONG



JANICE WONG



ALICE YEUNG



NATALIE YIM

# COVER STORY

The land supply issue has been a notable town planning topic in Hong Kong. The Government has endeavoured to review every piece of land in the territory in order to achieve better utilisation of the limited land resources.

In the Policy Address 2018, the Chief Executive announced to reactivate the industrial revitalisation initiative that was once introduced in 2010. To have better understanding on this topic, we have interviewed various stakeholders and solicit their views from the developer and user perspectives.



# The Impact of Industrial Revitalisation Initiatives on the Art and Creative Industry

Interview with Mr Paddy NG



To Kwa Wan, an old district with low-rise residential blocks and factory buildings, is adjacent to the ongoing Kai Tak Development. The local characters and neighbourhood connections are maintained under urban renewal projects and the development of mass transit system.

Mr Paddy NG is a social planner, green bicycle inventor, and the founder and lead researcher of a non-profit community fabrication shop located in To Kwa Wan - Wheel Thing Makers.

Paddy works on community projects and social analysis with a belief of improving lives through a socially driven approach. Wheel Thing Makers contributes to the communities with various bodies in different domains including education, environmental protect, place-making and local economy.

YPG is honoured to have invited Paddy to share his experiences in art and cultural industry with a role of local stakeholder operating in an industrial building.

## What do you think about the industrial revitalisation initiatives based on your experience as a tenant of industrial establishment?

I have been renting a unit in an industrial building including the current one in To Kwa Wan for about 6 years already. At the time of considering the location, Kowloon was once my first priority as the first round of industrial building revitalisation scheme triggered active transformation in the area and there were established clusters of creative industry. I first looked for an industrial unit in Kwun Tong area, however it was found that the industrial buildings in Kwun Tong South were in poor condition whereas the rent for those at the core area was too expensive. Besides, industrial units vary from place to place and different operations or users have their own requirements. Those units in Kwun Tong were generally subdivided into smaller ones that do not fit our NGO operation fittings.

The rent descended from Kwun Tong to San Po Kong and eventually we managed to find one

in To Kwa Wan meeting our operation needs. The rent in this area was surprisingly affordable due to its distance from the MTR station. And most importantly, the industrial building cluster is at the district centre where we can easily get involved with the community. The larger the unit, the lower the rent per square feet. For economic sustainability, we share the spare space and facilities as a co-working space, and hence rental cost, of the unit with other groups according to their operation nature, frequency of use and space required. This creates a working environment with diversity and synergy among the users in complemented relationship.

### **Does the industrial revitalisation initiatives help?**

Tenants like us working in the creative industry and renting a studio struggle to sustain their business. It is common for them to diversify the source of income to cover the operating cost. However, some of them may provide services which may be a breach of land use restriction. Even though tenants are willing to comply with the relevant policies and regulations, some of them are technically too stringent and become obstacles that small art groups find it costly to do so.

I think there is not much difference between the latest revitalisation scheme and the previous one introduced in 2010. The new scheme may lower the hurdle to incentivise redevelopment, but does little help to small tenants. Indeed there has been increasing support to the art and creative industries from the Government, but they are mainly in the form of official funding. Several industrial buildings have been renovated for art industry use with subsidies, such as the ADC Arts Space Scheme in Wong Chuk Hang. However, it could not help the majority of art groups in a spatial context as the scheme is mainly open for static arts. In fact, only few Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) include “Art Studio” in Column 1 use and the permitted use excludes those involving direct provision of services or goods in industrial buildings, hence, the major problem has not been addressed spatially.

Personally, the scheme attempts to tackle the existing industrial building problems such as

subdivided flats in industrial buildings which potentially poses a threat to the safety of both tenants and the public. I support the relevant departments to conduct a review of industrial buildings to explore opportunities for optimized use of valuable urban floorspaces. However, the Government should carefully evaluate the demand of industrial buildings of various users as the amendment to statutory plans and supplementary initiatives may instead displace those users from the art and culture industry as a result of soaring rental price and market speculations.

### **What are the challenges in sustaining your art business?**

Rent costs us the most. It is not easy to sustain our business under such conditions and To Kwa Wan is likely our last resort. We will have to move out and cease our operation if rent further rises to an unaffordable level. It depends on the progress of the MTR development and urban renewal in the area where the pace of gentrification has already been reflected by the rental price and property value.

Despite the increasing supportive measures, the spectrum of art industry is expanding and evolving swiftly that the measures may not provide sufficient coverage. The types of art work operations are very diverse and some of them may involve industrial activities like welding, which requires industrial unit for operation. Space is thus becoming the key to the development of art and creative industry.

### **How would the art and creative industry change if revitalisation of industrial buildings continues without other supportive measures?**

We will inevitably have to adapt to the market but many of us may not be able to continue with our business. Artists will have to fit into the Government and HKADC’s supportive facilities such as JCCAC and Wong Chuk Hang. To further develop our art and creative industry, land use planning is not the only influential determinant. There are other policy areas requiring more support from the Government to keep this industry healthy and vivid.



# The Story of The Mills

Interview with Miss Sam LOK



Transformed from the former Nan Fung Cotton Mills which significantly contributed to the textile industry and its employment since 1950s, the Mills in Tsuen Wan has revitalised to a cultural landmark showcasing the legacy of textile and manufacturing of Hong Kong. The Mills experienced a series of conservation and revitalisation works from 2014 to 2018, becoming a destination with fashion and textile incubator centre, shops accommodating mainly local designers' brands and non-profit cultural institutions with over 250,000 square feet of floorspace. It is now named as a pioneer example of adaptive reuse of industrial buildings.

YPG is honoured to have invited Miss Sam Lok to share her previous experiences in leading this successful transformation from planning perspective.

**What are the planning implications behind the Mills? What are the benefits and contributions to the local community and the industry?**

The Mills involved a section 16 planning application (A/TW/464) processed between 2014 and 2015, catering for heritage conservation and wholesale conversion to become the currently-seen Fashion and Textile Landmark. The revitalisation of the Mills transformed the three old textile mills industrial buildings for storage, Mill 4 at Chai Wan Kok Street and Mill 5 and 6 at Castle Peak Road into an incubation place for research and development by fashion and design start-ups, commercial shops targeting local designers' brands as well as restaurants.

The planning application process was generally smooth without much local objections as the development proposal demonstrates a good example for establishing heritage preservation, bringing in local vibrancy with a mix of indoor-outdoor, ground-roof social spaces, and nurturing spaces for young local fashion and textile industries to the society. Meanwhile, the revitalisation project adopted a 'minimum intervention' approach to conserve the physical components and heritage values. The scheme achieves a reduction of floor area in Mill 6 to create a sun lit atrium as well.

Technical impacts and feasibility remain as the major concerns in the planning stage. Indeed, the development of Mills does bring improvement to the locality in terms of traffic and pedestrian circulation. For ground level pedestrian circulation in particular, the Mills replaces the vehicular access to Mill 6 in the past with the current 7m wide pedestrian zone. It enhances the connectivity between Castle Peak Road and Pak Tin Par Street.

### **What were the difficulties and challenges faced by the different stakeholders including operators and tenants during the development process?**

The Mills project widely gained positive feedback from the local communities, in particular the support from owners of the industrial buildings in proximity. The major difficulty encountered might not be on the technical aspect, yet the fulfilment of government policy and lease requirements with significant financial implications.

Dated back to 2010, the introduction of Industrial Buildings Revitalisation Scheme encouraged owners of industrial buildings to better utilise the floorspace for more suitable and compatible uses through wholesale conversion with special waivers and land premium incentives granted. One of the conditions shall be obtained is that the application of which should be made jointly by all owners. While Mills 4 and 5 are located on TWTL325 which are solely owned by Nan Fung, Mill 6 however shares the same

lot with, i.e. TWTL313RP, with Cheung Fung industrial Buildings where the latter has multiple ownerships. Special waiver is therefore not possible to be granted for Mill 6.

The premium as required in the lease modification seemed to be one of the major hurdles to the development. To show the dedication to successfully implement the project, the developer, Nan Fung, kickstarted the development process earlier before the confirmation of premium amount and finally settled a premium of HKD 182.46 million.

### **Do you think that the Mills can be a model for revitalizing industrial buildings?**

Yes of course. It is also important to discuss and reflect the role of town planners. For such a comparatively small-scale industrial building revitalisation and retail development project, a bundle of factors is also considered by the property developers or owners including construction and demolition costs, post-project operation costs such as human resources in promotion and marketing, tenancy management and maintenance, market and user trends, potential monetary and non-monetary returns etc..

The role of town planners is to facilitate the communication between community stakeholders and property owners to address technical concerns. To achieve a continuous success of industrial building revitalisation with long-lasting social and cultural values, it is indeed necessary to contemplate a solution for sustaining the business and cost-incurring heritage conservation and operation from adaptive reuse.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EVENTS

The YPGC has achieved another successful year with committed participation of our members. We have organized a wide variety of initiatives striving to promote professional development, community engagement, and social networking with our members, together with different professional institutes. The highlights of past events (Session 2018-19) are provided below.





### **“Cantonese Opera - Beyond the Stage”: Joint Professional Networking Event organized by Young Solicitors’ Group of the Law Society of Hong Kong**

Being one of the supporting organisations alongside young groups under a number of professional bodies, YPG joined the networking event organized by the Young Solicitors’ Group on 13 October 2018. Ms. LI Pui Yan, a young Cantonese opera artist, was invited to share anecdotes and the challenges she faced as being a sheng and dan. Members of YPG got some great insights from the sharing, and also took the opportunity to have networking time with young members from other professions.



### **Capacity Building Programme for Young Old**

Under the Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project - "We build Age-friendly City in Wan Chai together", our young planners collaborated with St. James’ Settlement Wanchai District Elderly Community Centre to provide ambassador training to local elders on one of the key domains of age-friendly city, i.e. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings. The training sessions were successfully held on 3 November and 11 November 2018 respectively.

Knowledge exchange workshop was conducted on the first day. Our young planners introduced the basic planning concepts to the young-old participants and also some planning examples in Wan Chai, which raised their awareness about the importance of urban planning. Participants also pointed out some planning issues based on their daily experience in the neighbourhood. This workshop was followed by a site visit on 11 November 2018 that our young planners guided participants to walk around Wan Chai to gain deeper understanding of the area.

## YPGC Mentorship Programme

The Mentorship Programme is established to provide our young planners an opportunity to learn from their mentors who possess various knowledge and experience in the town planning profession. The Mentorship Programme creates a platform of learning and interaction for both mentors and mentees. Through this Programme, mentees could brush up interpersonal skills and gain insights on the professional practices. Meanwhile, mentors will be able to connect themselves with young planners and strengthen their ties within HKIP.

A kick-off event was held on 19 January 2019, we are delighted to have around 20 mentors and over 50 mentees joining the mentors-mentees family this year.



## Career Development Workshop 2019 – Explorer Series

Queries on career development in the planning field have always been placed on the list of fellow young planners and the prospective planners who are pursuing planning degrees. As the first event in the career workshop programme, the Explorer Series on 31 January 2019 invited a number of young planners currently working at different organizations in public and private sectors to share their experience of various aspects. More than 40 participants joined the workshop and had a better understanding on the work nature and opportunities available in the field. With the interactive discussion setting, both the guests and participants had some fruitful discussions.







## Young Planners Awards - Sharing Session X Happy Hour

The “Young Planners Awards Sharing Session and Happy Hour” was successfully held on 15 February 2019. We are delighted to have two YPA Awardees of Year 2018, Mr. CHEUNG Ho-wing, Louis and Ms. LOK Hom-ning, Sam to share on their achievements in planning profession and involvements in community affairs. Both speakers and members had fruitful exchanges in an unwinding environment with great drinks and food after a day of work.

## Guided Tour to the Refurbished Avenue of Stars

On 2 March 2019, Members of YPGC visited the reopened Avenue of Stars, a famous tourist attraction at Tsim Sha Tsui in the docent tour offered by Mr. Edwin TANG, Project Manager of Avenue of Stars. The tour started with a brief introduction of the entire redevelopment process. During the tour, members learnt that the refurbished public space has adopted a people-oriented design approach by connecting people with the harbour, local culture and art. Apart from physical enhancement, the overall comfortability and sociability have also been uplifted to benefit both locals and visitors.



## Sharing on “Inclusive Playground” at Tuen Mun Park

On 6 April 2019, YPG members were invited to share our knowledge on general principles and planning considerations for designing quality playgrounds during a site visit to the newly opened inclusive playground in Tuen Mun Park. The site visit is under one of the programmes of the “Central and Western Playground Ambassador Scheme” organised by Caritas Caine Road Social Centre. We have also learnt a lot from the experience of the participating families. We look forward to seeing more innovative and barrier-free playgrounds with diversified facilities in the future.





### **Tour to Legislative Council Complex and Dialogue with Hon. Tony Tse Wai-chuen**

The indispensable role of Legislative Council to the urban development and planning of Hong Kong is unquestioned, despite some common queries regarding the detailed day-to-day operation of the legislature. Therefore a tour was organized on 27 April 2019 for members to visit the Legislative Council Complex Building, including some member's only areas, followed by a dialogue with Hon. Tony Tse, the Legislative Council member of Architectural, Surveying, Planning and Landscape functional constituency. It was a special opportunity for the participating young planners to know more about how the legislative process would take place within the Complex, and also a valuable chance to discuss various planning issues and share their visions with Tony.



### **YPG X St.James' Settlement present: Wan Chai Kai Fong Planners Programme**

The "Wan Chai Kai Fong Planners Programme" co-organized by YPG and the St. James' Settlement Continuing Care Wanchai District Centre has been successfully completed.

On 8 June 2019, YPG members delivered an introductory seminar on basic planning knowledge and concepts to the young old participants from the Centre. Followed by a street interview session on 22 June 2019, our young planners and the participants interviewed Wan Chai kai-fongs to collect their views on local planning issues and listen to their end-users experience on local facilities.

On 6 July 2019, the participants attended a design workshop and came up with an improvement scheme on Wan Chai Park by incorporating some elderly-friendly design principles. At the end of the programme, the participants gave an impressive final presentation on their views on the planning issues of Wan Chai as well as the programme.

The young old participants are now trained as Wan Chai Kai Fong Planners. YPG, the Centre and the Kai Fong Planners will continue to explore the planning issues of Wan Chai District in the future.





## YPG Kayaking

The YPG has organized the Sea Kayaking Experience at Lower Cheung Sha Beach on 7 July 2019. The whole day was full of fun and laughters, participants enjoyed paddling and the beautiful south Lantau's coastline viewing from the water. It was a wonderful opportunity to beat the scorching heat this summer with some water sports



## YPG Career Development Workshop – Enrichment Series

On 11 July 2019, the YPG organized the “YPG Career Development Workshop – Enrichment Series”. We are grateful to have experienced planners who are currently working in the public and private sectors to share their work experience and insights to students, graduates and young professionals.

The workshop consisted of a short practical experience sharing forum, which served as a dialogue for guest speakers with related working backgrounds to outline their work experience, followed by an interactive round-table discussion. It was a precious opportunity for students and young planners to get the inspiring messages from the experts in the field on preparing our career development.



## Exclusive Tree Tour to Art Park, West Kowloon Cultural District

On 3 August 2019, the YPG and Young Landscape Architects' Group (YLAG) co-organised an exclusive tree tour to the Art Park in WKCD to enhance member's understanding on the value of the Art Park and species of trees and plants inside, and explore the story behind its design and management. Members had a chance to know the landscape design of the green heart of WKCD - Art Park.





### **Route to Full HKIP Membership: Experience-sharing session by the Membership Board and Full Members of HKIP**

We are delighted to have Members from the Membership Board to share their valuable advice and answer questions about the accreditation process. Some chartered young planners have also shared their interview tips.

The event was successfully held on 28 August 2019. The interactive sharing session has provided great insights on professional development for our fellow young planners to better prepared for their HKIP Full Membership interview.



### **YSG x YPG Tram Party**

On 5 September 2019, the YPG and Young Surveyor Group (YSG) co-organized the “YPG x YSG Tram Party”. We are grateful to have YSG from different surveying professions to join and share their working experience. The party kick-started with a self-introduction session followed by a short ice-breaking game in order to let everyone get warmed-up. The participants were free to enjoy the food and beverage provided and socialize with each other afterwards. It was a great opportunity and experience to allow the our members to make new friends and connections with people from different domains with professional knowledge, which may help in the future career development.

## **Publicity**

The focus of the publicity secretaries this year was on the management of publicity means of YPG events in particular the Facebook page. We promoted our activities and events through the Facebook page and spread messages to our members on a regular basis. Posters, news sharing, videos and photos were also posted on the page for members to get a glimpse of our activities. We are glad that the young planners find it interactive and informative.

## **Way Forward**

The YPGC would like to express our sincere gratitude to our fellow young planners for their contribution and support in the past year. We will endeavour to continue offering a wide range of events and activities to foster professional development, social awareness and networking of our fellow members. We look forward to members' continuous support to the YPGC in the future.