4 LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This section analyses the existing landscape and open space character and then outlines the landscape planning and landscape design proposals that have been applied to the Study Area.

The proposals are two fold in character:

- landscape planning proposals and treatments for potential development sites, inclusive of public and private open spaces and recreational areas within the sites;
- landscape treatments and enhancement proposals for the public realm, inclusive of the waterfront promenade, public open spaces and principal public roads.

4.2 Current Landscape Character and Open Space Framework

Key landscape issues, current open space provision and landscape treatments within the Study Area are analysed below.

4.2.1 Study Area Key Landscape and Open Space Issues

In general the principal key issues are as follows:

- the linkage between areas is poor and involves vertical as well as horizontal separation;
- hard and soft landscape treatments are inconsistent across the Study Area, mirroring the poor integration of land uses between sub districts;
- the open space pattern lacks coherency as a number of designated open spaces are currently undeveloped, are presently works areas, or, are being used for transportation purposes;
- there is a high level of spatial ‘compartmentalisation’ associated with the high rise private enclaves; and
- there are substantial physical separators in terms of wide, and occasionally grade-separated, road corridors; and the generally poor interface between private and public areas.

The existing landscape and open space character of the Study Area sub districts is as follows.

4.2.2 Sub-District A

The area is largely comprised of a large Station area podium with featureless landscape. Planting measures are limited to raised planters along the edge of the Coliseum podium and amenity areas on the raised podia and along the driveway of the Metropolis development. At-grade areas adjacent to the waterfront are hard spaces occupied by transport and freight infrastructure with virtually no distinctive landscape character. There is some planting along the footpath that connects the TST East promenade to the IMC and Coliseum podium.

4.2.3 Sub-District B

This Sub-District contains two sites that have been designated as public open space but not yet implemented. The two sites are located to the east of the sub-district. Each is either fallow or is occupied by site offices and storage facilities. The sites are currently covered with scrub and have no landscape character. A large part of Sub-District B is committed to roads. Several of the roads have elevated alignments. Soft landscaping has been implemented within amenity areas along and underneath the network of flyovers and on at-grade roads consisting of the Hung Hom Bypass, Princess Margaret Road link and Cheong Tung Road South. Along other streets such as Hung Lok Road, Hung Luen Road and Oi King Street, the density of planting is generally limited and warrants enhancement. The newly completed Harbourview Horizon development has a number of hard landscape treatments but limited soft landscape. Immediately to the south the large pumping station facility is set in a visually prominent fenced site with no landscape planting.

4.2.4 Sub-District C

The Sub-District is principally occupied by Harbourfront Horizon, an area reserved for open space development that extends to the waterfront, and a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) that is abutted at its southern edge by a twenty metre strip of land designated for development as a waterfront promenade. The latter is fenced off and is
currently barren with no landscape character. The adjacent open space is cut off from the waterfront by Kin Wan Street. This road provides access to the southern edge of Harbourfront Horizon but has the formal effect of creating a physical barrier at the northern edge of the proposed waterfront promenade. The area of open space located between the CDA site and Harbourfront Horizon is currently occupied by site offices and is used for open storage. Formal landscape treatments are entirely absent. At the present time the responsibility for designing and implementing the promenade has not been formally defined (it has been suggested that the developers of adjacent properties should be encouraged to develop and possibly maintain the promenade). Harbourfront Horizon has recently been completed and landscape designs have been implemented within the curtilage of the hotel site, which are generally of a high standard. The southern edge of the site adjacent to the proposed promenade has been walled eliminating any immediate landscape interaction.

The eastern portion of the Sub-District is presently occupied by a PTI. This is to be relocated within the CDA site upon its disposal. The existing site will then be developed (possibly by LCSD) as a public park abutting the waterfront. The present PTI is currently a large featureless hard space, save for a measure of planting to the north west of the site.

4.2.5 Sub-District D

The Sub-District is principally occupied by three large commercial developments (the Harbourfront, Harbour Plaza Hotel and the Harbourfront Landmark). These are large landmark developments that have been developed with high standard finishes. Landscape measures have principally concentrated on hardscape (paving etc). Softscape is limited to planting within planters. The adjacent promenade has been implemented by the developers of the adjacent developments and is finished to a good standard.

4.2.6 Sub-District E

The Sub-District is currently occupied by a swimming pool complex and Tai Wan Shan Park. The periphery of the swimming pool complex is delineated by a boundary wall that has been painted powder blue. The colour of the wall contrasts sharply with the colour of the beige and brown paving that has been applied to the promenade producing an extremely negative chromatic interface. Wan Hoi Street, along the western edge of the swimming pool and park, has very limited tree planting, with the exception of a row of trees in movable planters within the Tai Wan Shan Park car park.

4.2.7 Sub-District F

The Sub-District is predominantly occupied by the Laguna Verde and Fisherman’s Wharf development. These are respectively residential and commercial developments. The former has its own internalised landscape treatments. The developer has also taken the responsibility of developing the promenade. The quality of materials used is of a good standard. There is a deliberate level change between the promenade and Laguna Verde development which discourages the general public from entering into the private realm within the Laguna Verde site.

4.2.8 Private and Public Realm Open Space in Adjacent Areas

In addition to the above, local open spaces are provided within the Whampoa Garden Development. This is specifically allocated to local residents and is managed by the development’s management company. The remaining major open space within the environs of the Study Area is Hutchison Park. This is a popular park that has been in use for over 15 years.

4.3 Proposed Open Space and Landscape Framework: Design Approach

This section outlines improvements to the public realm and landscape strategies that could be applied to the individual development sites within the Study Area. The overall landscape strategy seeks to create a consistent and readable series of open space and destinations as well as suggesting specific improvements to the public realm.

4.3.1 Landscape Design Objectives

Principal design objectives that have been applied and adopted for the landscape proposals are as follows:

- to provide an approach to landscape design and implementation that ensures consistency in the quality and treatment of the public realm;
to establish a strong sense of place through the promotion of locally distinctive character, the incorporation of special streetscapes, landscape themes and sympathetic design that should come to symbolise local identity;

• to visually consolidate and demarcate street blocks and building edges in defining a sense of proportion and comfort to public streets and spaces, consistent with the human scale;

• to ensure that the variety of type, character and scales of open space can accommodate different levels of use for young and old alike;

• to maximise greenery and trees along streets and spaces in keeping with the overall landscape framework;

• to provide a sanctuary from the existing high density residential developments within the hinterland with large areas of soft landscape areas for passive or informal recreation;

• to enhance visual and physical connectivity;

• to establish a high level of pedestrian permeability throughout the area, ensuring that all facilities, spaces, waterfront areas and amenities are easily accessible;

• to introduce tangible design references related to the pedestrian level of activity which can act as points of identity and help to articulate specific urban conditions e.g. landmark corners, gateways, landscape focal points, lighting and signage; and

• to maintain, reinforce and extend existing views from the hinterland to the harbour and also to provide visual interest and character along the waterfront.

Each of the above has been applied to the design of the public and private realms where relevant.

4.4 Design of Principal Open Spaces

Open space is envisaged to provide areas for both passive or informal and active recreation activities as well as conduits for pedestrian circulation. A number of open spaces within the Study Area will promote pedestrian movement from the existing hinterland to the waterfront. Landscape treatments applied to each open space link will help to reinforce visual and functional integration between the existing hinterland and the new waterfront. The larger spaces are designated as District Open Spaces as they are being developed for the benefit of all while the smaller spaces are designated as Local Open Space, developed for the benefit of the adjoining residential areas.

A set of principals has been applied to the design of the major open spaces within the Study Area. These seek:

• to encourage diversity wherever possible. This can include such things as specially designed kiosks to meet the local needs;

• to enrich the public realm and the open spaces and park through the integration of elements which widen the urban sensory experience through the use of purposeful decoration, artworks, landmarks, special landscape treatment, street furniture and material selection within the open spaces and the proposed urban park;

• to promote interactive spaces: Wherever possible amenities for seating, people watching & contemplation will be provided within the public domain to encourage social interaction;

• to ensure that edges to major spaces are not be treated as blank facades but as an opportunity to provide an animated and exciting edge to the development; and

• to create focal open spaces for lively outdoor activities and as viewpoints at intervals along waterfront.

The following sections outline how the above have been applied to the overall open space framework and the specific development sites located within the Study Area.

4.4.1 Open Space Landscape Design Proposals

A number of selected modifications have been suggested to enhance the disposition and arrangement of development and to encourage the creation of new activity nodes. The broad concepts that have been applied to the treatment of open space are described below. In all a total of about 38,500 sq.m of land zoned ‘O’ will be provided within the Study Area (this excludes the area of Tai Wan Shan Park, the future and existing promenades as well as private open space).
4.4.2 Park between CDA site and Harbourfront Horizon

The park will be developed subsequent to the removal of temporary uses that are currently located upon it. It is proposed that Kin Wan Street is realigned at its southern extent to remove the direct interface of the road with the waterfront promenade. Treatments applied to the promenade will be extended to the southern edge of the road. The treatment of the road and adjacent pavements will adopt similar paving to downplay the presence of the road and to give it the visual appearance of being an integrated component of the park. The edge of the pedestrian circulation space will be delineated by low level bollards.

The conceptual layout of the park adopts an interplay of bold curvilinear lines that provides a strong form that can be reinforced by low level shrub planting and shade tree planting. Paving textures will adopt soft browns and beige colours that will be highlighted by edge pavers. A water feature will be located central to the park to promote a sense of activity and movement. In normal circumstances the park would be implemented by government. Nevertheless given its proximity to the CDA, it is possible that the CDA developer might, subject to the formulation of a suitable arrangement, take responsibility for implementation. This may be done with the assistance of the owner of Harbourfront Horizon.

4.4.3 Parks along Hung Lok Road and Hung Luen Road/Oi King Street

It is envisioned that these parks will primarily serve local residents of the adjacent residential developments (Harbourview Horizon, Harbour Place and future R(A)2 development). As such they should incorporate appropriate sitting-out areas and small-scale recreational facilities appropriate for these users. The parks are also part of the open space chain that connects to the waterfront and should thus incorporate continuous paths for pedestrian circulation. There is an existing walkway and associated amenity area underneath the Hung Hom Bypass that connects these two parks. This should be improved and connected to the pedestrian crossing of Hung Luen Road, which links to the waterfront promenade and CDA.

4.4.4 Park on Former PTI Site

The site of the current PTI enjoys a waterfront location and is of sufficient size that it can be developed as an urban park that attracts users from the hinterland of Hung Hom. It will be integrated with the waterfront promenade and is adjacent to activity generators and transport interchanges, so it will have higher numbers of visitors and daily users than other open spaces in the vicinity. Gardens, landscape features and passive recreation facilities should be designed in accordance with its role as a significant waterfront leisure space. Incorporation of pedestrian circulation routes between Whampoa Garden and the CDA, PTI and Ferry Pier will need to be considered in the park layout.

The park will be developed subsequent to the removal of the PTI and ancillary roads (a short stretch of Wah Shun Street will be retained to provide access to the future PTI) that are currently located upon the site. The eastern edge of the retained section of Wah Shun Street will have a wall introduced at the back of the footpath to limit the visual and noise impacts of buses upon park users. Dense shade tree planting should be aligned along the edge of the CDA site to screen the outside wall of the PTI. The southern park edge will be designed in accordance with the promenade’s hard and soft treatments so that a seamless transition between the two is achievable. As with the park on the western side of the CDA site, an arrangement for private sector implementation by the CDA developer may be feasible.

4.5 Promenade Design and Development

The existing form and facilities of Hung Hom’s waterfront open spaces and promenades tend to be lacking in amenities that create a destination space and promote a variety of leisure activities. Facilities are mainly limited to the walkway and parapet, with some associated planting. Comfortable seating and sufficient shading is only sporadically provided to allow visitors to rest and enjoy the view.

It is recommended that future promenades should be designed to include amenities that facilitate enjoyment of the space, such as areas to sit, vantage points, café and dining areas, and kiosks to provide tourist items and necessities. It is also suggested that some existing waterfront areas could be adapted to incorporate a number of these landscape treatments and facilities. Harbour cruise facilities may be provided at major activity nodes (e.g. future waterfront development at Hung Hom station) to allow visitors a fuller experience of the harbour and its setting.

Appropriate landscaping should be provided as part of an overall framework to enhance promenade areas. Planting to provide shade is particularly important. To this extent dense planting along the back edge of the promenade (leaving clear space for circulation, maintenance and emergency access) is proposed. It is suggested that tree canopies should be interlocking. This will require the spacing of trees at 6.0 metre centres. Salt resistant shade trees such as Hibiscus
tiliacus should be uniformly adopted. Where space permits, double rows of trees should be provided. This will further enhance shade and produce a cooling effect.

Where utility structures, such as water intake facilities, are necessary along the promenade, they should be designed as far as possible to fit in with the character of the waterfront.

4.5.1 Promenade Enhancement and Design

There is sufficient waterfront area to accommodate activities that can be enjoyed by all sectors of the community and suit all tastes. At present, most promenades only offer opportunities for walking. Comfortable seating is rarely provided. A waterfront is an ideal location for a range of other activities, especially outdoor dining, informal entertainment, and “fun” amusements. Some of these depend on the availability of suitable locations such as piazzas or waterfront buildings that can offer terraces and platforms. Others may require a more relaxed regulatory regime and a somewhat greater integration of management and maintenance arrangements than occurs at present. It is suggested that the following general parameters be applied to the design of promenade spaces:

- improved lighting, planting and connections will be promoted at the waterfront to enhance safety and shelter;
- to design public space facing the waterfront wherever possible to provide a waterfront view. This will help to increase the value of the development as well as provide an important source of amenity;
- to give tourism/recreation uses which can benefit from waterfront access priority in the Inner Harbour, while balancing the needs of other uses;
- group tourist attractions in clusters;
- improve pedestrian accessibility to the waterfront from public transport access points;
- provide continuity of waterfront promenades to link tourism clusters from Tsim Sha Shui;
- integrate hinterland areas with the public waterfront, through improved visual, landscape and pedestrian linkages; and
- to create strong visual links to waterfront from hinterland activity centres (e.g. parks and shopping, employment and residential areas).

Hung Hom has good examples of the private sector successfully implementing good quality promenades (albeit that elements to activate the water’s edge are largely missing). It is suggested that where practicable the private sector should also intervene and implement and maintain the remaining promenade areas within the Study Area.

4.6 Potential Development Sites

The landscape approach to each of the development site is described briefly below. Each proposal has sought to incorporate the design principles that have been outlined above. Each proposal is depicted in the Master Urban Design and Landscape Framework plan.

4.6.1 Hung Hom Station Area and Waterfront Development

The development proposed at Hung Hom is set out in a series of curvilinear layers. The proposed landscape treatments follow the line of these layers to accentuate the built form. Paving textures and colours should be incorporated into the new waterfront open space and promenade to create an interesting plaza space. Shade planting is recommended to enhance and soften the physical environment at the waters edge and in proximity to the abutments of the Hung Hom Bypass to visually screen this structure. At the same time shade planting and low level shrubs are introduced at podium level to soften the podium edge, removing the emptiness and lack of colour that exists at present. Other visual elements in the vicinity such as the existing car park structure can be improved by façade treatments (see ‘Interventions in the Public Realm’ below).

Due to the complexity of the scheme, it is suggested that the scheme should be implemented by a single developer to ensure consistency in design and implementation. In any event and prior to the formation of the site it is suggested that detailed landscape and urban design parameters be prepared for the site (these would also enable subdivision of the site to separate developers).
4.6.2 Comprehensive Development Area (CDA)

The CDA site layout and design has been designed to respond to its environs and to encourage through movement. A large circulation space and plaza are located at the core of the CDA. These allow circulation to retail elements within the site. The circulation spaces are largely hard paved. Granite pavers with a range of colours will be used to accentuate and define circulation space. Two additional pedestrian spaces dissect the CDA to facilitate movement to and from the hinterland and extending to the waterfront promenade. Points of entry from the promenade to the development can be defined by paving elements and accentuated by carefully positioned tree planting. Landscape elements need to be carefully coordinated with the adjacent promenade, parks and streetscapes.

Treatments at podium level are related to leisure amenities associated with the proposed hotel development. Shade planting is introduced to act as a cooling element and to produce a comfortable recreational environment. Where practicable it is suggested that green roof technology and vertical greening be introduced. This is in line with current government recommendations and would have marked environmental advantages.

4.6.3 Tai Wan Shan Park

The park will be enhanced with tree planting and low and medium level shrub planting. It is proposed to better integrate the park with the promenade by redesigning the park frontage. The current wall separating the park and promenade should be pulled back a few metres to allow for the incorporation of seating, shelters and tree planting along the promenade. This will also create a small semi-plaza that can break up the monotony of the straight promenade and provide amenity for its users. Redesigning the small set of stairs between the promenade and park to create a visual gateway between the spaces will also improve their functional integration. These enhancements will require relatively little space allowing all of the playground facilities and promenade to be retained, albeit some re-design of the playground area will be required.

Suggested enhancement of façade treatments to the Tai Wan Shan Swimming Pool perimeter wall are described below.

4.6.4 R(A)2 Site

The development will comprise residential blocks on top of a retail podium. Ground level circulation areas around the podium edge should be planted with shade trees to provide shade and shelter and to enhance the adjacent streetscapes. The podium level will include private recreational open space. Rooftop softscape, incorporating planting of small trees complimented by low level shrubs planting, can create shaded areas for rest and recreation whilst enhancing the micro-climate.

4.7 General Enhancement Measures

4.7.1 Landscape Palette

To improve the street character and enjoyment of the pedestrian linkages and general streetscape within the Study Area, landscape design palettes have been devised to respond to separate conditions. One palette is specifically orientated to treatments within the development sites whilst the remaining palette is specifically geared for wider use within the district. The main emphasis behind devising the palettes is to institute a formal set of design parameters governing the design of street furniture, amenity features, seating etc. The key components of the palettes are summarised below.

- to promote street trees and structural planting along streets as well as the waterfront promenade to link spaces and to create a generous height and form for proposed landscape treatments (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Care will be taken in the selection of plant species to suit local light intensity and micro-climatic conditions;
- it is essential to provide a public realm that is functional. Seating will be used to encourage people to spend more time in the open areas. Advertising, bus shelters, litter bins and lighting columns will be planned and incorporated into the public realm. Care will be taken to avoid clutter, especially along the main thoroughfares. The design of street furniture will assist in the creation of a distinct identity;
- paving materials will be of cohesive design, linking the streets and spaces through the use of common elements within the development itself as well as the general streetscape. Different paving materials will be used to create the hierarchy of the street and to address the development sites. Paving materials will
identify the private space, semi-private space as well as the public space. Development access routes and pedestrian walkways, most notably the waterfront promenade will be more intimate in scale and be marked by a change in paving, a diverse range of planting approaches and the provision of seating and public art; and

- public art will be used to animate the public realm and provide a focus to public spaces. Consideration will be given to the use of art within paving, furniture and elevational treatments. There is an opportunity to encouraging local artists, designers and craftspeople to embellish the public realm. Such elements can serve to enhance the baseline design palette.

The application of the palettes can help to engender an identity and a sense of place if implemented in a considered manner. They can also serve to enhance the readability of spaces and define specific area functions. Thus, their use and application as an urban tool can prove a positive guiding reference source.

4.7.2 Lighting

Lighting treatments are at the core of creating quality spaces. The proposed use of lighting is described below:

- lighting will be utilised in response to issues of safety, security, pedestrian flow and traffic management. Lighting will also be used creatively to add drama by lighting important elevations and public buildings/structures;
- the provision of a general standard of lighting required to create a safe night-time environment;
- the use of a lighting strategy should contribute not only functionally, but aesthetically to create various lighting moods across the property relating to activity;
- the use of a combination of lighting types and possibly light colour to enhance the ambiance of the scheme; and
- the provision of lighting in relation to CCTV requirements.

Lighting will also be introduced into the landscape elements of the new open spaces and public realm of the PDS. The combination of treatments will serve to engender quality spaces and a distinctive character for the Study Area.

4.7.3 Signage

Signage, like other types of landscape treatments, is important in assisting wayfinding and in establishing a high-quality district identity. Wayfinding signage is especially important due to the general lack of connectivity within the Study Area. It should be implemented in conjunction with general improvement of key pedestrian routes and streetscape enhancements. Pedestrian routes from the hinterland to the waterfront should be clearly indicated through strategically placed directional signage. Routes between public transport and activity nodes should also be clearly indicated.

New signage should be coordinated with existing signage to avoid redundancy and confusion. Government-accepted forms of signage for tourism and other directional purposes shall be utilised.

4.8 Interventions in the public realm

Three specific interventions are proposed to enhance the landscape and physical environment within the Study Area. These in brief are as follows:

- the introduction of public art or treatments to the swimming pool wall adjacent to Tai Wan Shan Park to produce a sympathetic interface between the wall and the current promenade paving (see Figures 4.3 to 4.4); and
- renovation and recladding of the façade of the multi-storey car park adjacent to Hung Hom Station (see Figure 4.5). This will improve the visual appearance of the structure making it more consistent with the architectural character of the Foster designed railway station and more sympathetic to possible future development at the IMC and MTRC Freight Yard.

The preceding proposals will complement other interventions proposed in the private and public realms. A suggestion was made early in the Study that the perimeter cladding to the Marine Police facility at the promenade fronting Tai Wan Shan Park be upgraded and enhanced. This was subsequently implemented during the course of the Study.
4.9 Overview - Urban Design and Landscape Strategy

The urban design and landscape strategy has addressed both the public and private realms and has set out the means through which specific enhancements of the Study Area can be designed and implemented. The final recommended landscape proposals are shown in the Landscape Structure Plan, and the combined landscape and urban design proposals are shown in the Master Urban Design and Landscape Framework, both of which are included in Section 6 of the report.

The initial proposals described above in Sections 2 - 4 are developed into final proposals based on the Stage 2 PEP results, which are outlined in the following section.
The Existing Swimming Pool Boundary Wall provides a Stark Edge to Waterfront Promenade and conflicts with chromatic treatments applied to the promenade.

The Use of Public Art can add Visual Interest and Enhance the Quality of Negative Features.
Possible Upgrading of Swimming Pool Wall and Environs