

“Revitalization of Industrial Buildings”

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To accommodate “six industries where Hong Kong has enjoyed clear advantages” (namely, educational services, medical services, testing and certification, environmental industry, innovation and technology, and cultural and creative industries) a package of measures to facilitate change of use, redevelopment and wholesale conversion of industrial buildings was announced by the Chief Executive in his 2009-10 Policy Address, which includes a three-year “Revitalising Industrial Buildings” scheme.

On 31 January, 2007, a motion on assisting in the transformation of factory buildings was debated in the Legislative Council.¹

On 14 October 2009, plans to revitalise industrial buildings to accommodate the six industries were announced in the Policy Address. Details include:

1. Lower the threshold for compulsory sale for redevelopment of industrial buildings in non-industrial areas to facilitate the consolidation of fragmented ownership;
2. Enable owners to pay additional premiums according to the actual development density after redevelopment based on a “pay for what you build” approach;
3. Allow owners who modify the lease for redevelopment to opt to pay additional premiums by instalments over a period of five years at a fixed interest rate if the premiums payable exceed \$20 million; and
4. Exempt owners who opt for the wholesale conversion of a building instead of redevelopment from paying the waiver fee for change of land use, provided that the requirement on age of property is met and planning permission is obtained.²

On 1 April, 2010, the “Revitalisation of Industrial Buildings” plan was launched.³

Information: (For more detail please refer to the footnote of Chinese version):

- Local newspapers
- Factory Artists Concern Group
<http://www.fac.org.hk/>
- Hong Kong Inmedia
<http://www.inmediahk.net>
- Official Website of the Legislative Council
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/>

– 2011-12 Policy Address

<http://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/11-12/index.html>

Photo provided by Factory Artists Concern Group.

2011/01

• On 8 January

“10 years - Fotan Artists Open Studios 2011” was held for 2 consecutive weekends (8, 9 and 15, 16 January) across 75 studios and with the participation of 260 artists. Thematic exhibition “A Trivial Review of Fotanian Years” was held accompanied by screenings, seminars and artists dialogue.⁴

2011/04

• On 20 April

“Panel on Development” meeting was held and announced its review report “Revitalization of industrial buildings - An update and mid-term review” to the Legislative Council. 2:30pm, Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building.⁵

• On 25 April

The Factory Artists Concern Group held a Press Conference and Afternoon Gathering named “無工廈，無西九” (No Industrial Building, No WKCD). It was the first press conference held by the Concern Group, nearly 30 artist representatives from 6 area were showed up.

Over 4,000 signatures collected by the petition “趕走炒家，留住用家” (Banish the Speculators, Keep the Users!) were presented, the Concern Group announced the following 4 suggestions:

1. Provide tax credit or direct administrative assistance, encourage “Conscience owners” (良心業主) from districts to form foundations, and lease the properties using the format of Fu Tak House;
2. The Government may make a good use of emptied school buildings, contracted to manage by organization like Loft Stage, and lease to artists using a flexible method;
3. Land allocation for developing of a new Artists’ Village is mostly welcome by artists, but in a management method with low intervention;
4. Some studios may located in industrial buildings which were not complying with the lease conditions of the lot with fire safety concern. Leniency and technical supports during the transition period are asked for the safety of the user.

The event was widely reported by local newspapers the day after.

- On 30 April

Wilfred Wong, Chairman of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council responded to the press, he had already contact with 3 entrepreneur, that they were willing to provide more that 100,000 square feet of units in industrial buildings located at Tsuen Wan, Kwun Tong and Wong Chuk Hang, for rent by artists at a rate far below the market price. The project would be organized by the Council.

2011/08

- On 5 August

Wilfred Wong mentioned again to the press that his “friends” approached and discussed about the provision of art space at industrial buildings located at Tsuen Wan and Wong Chuk Hang for art organization and artist, at the rent rate of HK\$5-6 per square feet, the lease planned to be 5 years.

2011/10

- On 10 October

2011-12 Policy Address was launched⁶

The measures of the Revitalising Industrial Buildings would be extends for a further three years.⁷ The Government would also allocate resources to the Hong Kong Arts Development Council for the provision of art space at suitable industrial premises. Such space will be available for rent by artists at concessionary rates.⁸

2011/12

- On 18 December

The Symposium “官僚架構管理藝術村是失敗的” (It is a failure of using bureaucratic structure to rule Artists’ Village) was held at the L7-19, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre.

Organized by the Factory Artists Concern Group, co-organized by “Shek Kip Mei Artists’ Village Association”, host by Ada Wong. Speakers: Wong Ying (JCCAC) and Horace Tse (Loft Stage). Respondents: Chow Yung-ping, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.⁹