

The effectiveness of "public participation" in Hong Kong's historic buildings

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ABSTRACT. *Public participation is a characteristic manifestation of Hong Kong's historical architecture in the development of social development. Different from the independent promotion of Western communities and the overall leadership of the mainland government, Hong Kong historical architecture has gradually formed a distinctive collaborative conservation model in practice. This paper will analyze and draw on the effectiveness of public participation in historical buildings in Hong Kong to solve the current problems of the protection and renewal of historical buildings in China, the operational modes, institutional guarantees, and public participation, and promote the preservation and renewal of historical buildings in China.*

KEYWORDS: *public participation; historical buildings in Hong Kong; collaborative conservation*

1. Brief introduction to the development of public awareness

1.1 "Decolonization" drive

In the process of governing Southeast Asian colonies, the United Kingdom has adopted a strategy of not directly intervening in local cultural traditions[1]. Hong Kong is no exception. After returning to the mainland, Hong Kong retained the existing capitalist system and British-style democratic human rights. At the same time, the proportion of the population of more than 90% of the Chinese and the collective identity of the descendants of the Yan and Huang people laid the foundation for the germination of the collective identity of the "Hong Kong people." The dissolution of the colonial status and the formation of the Chinese government in the SAR directly motivated the public to recognize that they have the ability to exercise their civil rights, and then began to decolonize from the psychological level, that is, "de-culture". The process of "deconstruction" has led to the shaping of public awareness.

1.2 Development stage

From the 1976-1997 return to development process, the revised Civil Protection Regulations were promoted. In 1997, the Legislative Council approved the Ordinance as a law, marking the real sprout of public protection of urban awareness[2]. After the reunification, the public demand for self-identity in Hong Kong increased, and realized that urban history and culture are the origin of self-identity formation. The historical architecture, which is characterized by the historical and cultural characteristics of the city, has received special attention from the public. The government has also to pay attention to the public needs of historical building conservation. In early 2007, the public consultation procedure for the "Research on Cultural Heritage Protection Policy Review" was re-launched and held in the Government Public Affairs Forum. Discussions were held with the Legislative Council. The launch of the 2008 'Realization of Historic Buildings Partnership Program' means the public participation in the systematization and normalization of historical building conservation.

2. Public participation in the conservation system

2.1 Hong Kong Historic Building Protection Agency and Legal System

(1) Protection agency. The Development Bureau and the Antiquities and Monuments Office are the major government agencies responsible for protecting Hong Kong's historical heritage. In addition, the statutory bodies involved in the protection of cultural relics include the Antiquities Advisory Board, the Urban Renewal Authority, the Architectural Services Department and the Urban Planning Committee. The historical buildings are generally conducted by the Hong Kong Public Organisations Antiquities Advisory Committee[3]. The Antiquities and Monuments Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will then carry out the relevant decisions, including the determination of Hong Kong statutory monuments and the rating of Hong Kong historic buildings. The office adopts an administrative method to obtain assistance from other government departments, such as the Planning Office, the Lands Department, and the Environmental Protection Agency, to preserve the graded historical buildings. From the perspective of setting up, Hong Kong has unified the protection agencies in one department and can arrange various protection issues. The Antiquities and Monuments Office of Hong Kong and the Antiquities Advisory Committee form a good cooperation and supervision mechanism.

(2) Legal system. The Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance is the only Ordinance in Hong Kong that is directly related to the protection of cultural relics. The details of its sub-laws have not changed much. The Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance is another piece of legislation that protects culturally valuable sites that are under threat of development pressure and coordinates the relationship between urban planning, urban construction and protection. In addition,

the "Regulations of the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust" and the "Regulations on Urban Regulations" also cover the protection of historical buildings. Its protection regulations on rating historical buildings are also being formulated and supplemented[4]. From a holistic perspective, the Hong Kong historical building protection regulations system is relatively complete. Hong Kong uses a similar historical building classification system as the United Kingdom. Statutory monuments and rated historical buildings are two major categories of historical buildings in Hong Kong. All buildings are rated by historical value, building value, combined value, social value and regional value, maintaining their originality and rarity. The legal monuments have the highest rating, and the rated historical buildings are divided into first, second and third grades, and the grades are gradually reduced.

2.2 Hong Kong Historic Building Revitalisation Partnership Programme

In the 2007-2008 Policy Address, the Hong Kong Government launched the "Revitalization of Historic Buildings Partnership Project" (hereinafter referred to as the "Revitalization Plan") as a major part of a series of measures for the Government's heritage conservation policy, and in February 2008, 2009. In August, October, 2011 and November 2013, the first, second, third and fourth phases of the plan were launched respectively. The "revitalization plan" relies on the cooperation of the government, social institutions and citizens to explore the historical connotation of historical buildings and to exert its deeper social functions. The advantage is that under the supervision of the government and professionals, the transfer of historical buildings to social institutions can not only reduce the burden on the government, but also effectively ensure that the historical and cultural values of historical buildings are not destroyed during the operation. It can improve the public's attention to the protection and renewal of historical buildings, and it is a win-win historical building protection model.

2.3 Research team participation

The professional research on the protection of historical buildings in Hong Kong includes universities and research institutes such as the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Centre for Architectural Design and Research. In addition to cultivating talents, such academic institutions also hold educational activities, open research results as reference materials for cultural heritage conservation, and hold academic seminars and forums to allow experts and scholars to exchange experiences. Not only that, but also set up a professional team to provide advice on Hong Kong heritage conservation policy with professional knowledge and provide relevant professional services. It also organises education and promotional activities to organise special exhibitions, talks and competitions to expose the public to different areas of heritage conservation knowledge and enhance their awareness of heritage conservation.

2.4 Public participation

The Hong Kong Government attaches great importance to publicity activities and historical building protection education and has established the Hong Kong Heritage Awards to recognize and encourage individuals, schools or organisations to achieve cultural heritage conservation, related education and promotion in Hong Kong. The Development Bureau has also launched a new heritage conservation webpage to enhance the dissemination of information and promote social interaction. It also operated the "Friends of Cultural Relics Program" and the "Friends of Young People's Cultural Relics Program". The "Friends of Heritage Project" is an education programme to enhance their understanding of Hong Kong's historical heritage by recruiting and training people who love cultural relics to participate in volunteer work.

3. Public participation in historical building culture conservation diversity

3.1 Appearance does not change the internal function

The value of protection lies in the appearance of the facade, it can be combined with its own structural system and spatial features to replace the function. For example, the Hong Kong Grade II Historic Building Magistrates Court has a high appearance value. After being revitalized as an art design institute, it basically retains the original appearance of the building and only performs corresponding functional replacement. For example, the first court function is replaced by a lecture hall, and the fourth court is a classroom. The lowest cell was converted into an office, retaining the original cell iron gate. The first to third floors of the college, in addition to the educational space for teaching, also serve as an exhibition area that the public can visit, and there are special guides to lead the tour. The activation of the Magistrates' Court was awarded the "Asia-Pacific Cultural Relics Protection Award" by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2011.

3.2 Partial retention to show the public

The value of protection lies in the local, or due to poor structure, relocation or other factors, can not be retained, you can dismantle a part, retain its value, honestly reflect the old and new traces. The old Tai Po Market Railway Station was decommissioned after the completion of the new station. After the station was restored to its original condition, it was turned into a railway museum for the public to review the history of railway traffic in Hong Kong. Another example is the first generation of public housing Mei Ho Lou, after being revitalized as a youth hostel, retaining its structural features, setting up a cultural display living pavilion, showing and interpreting Hong Kong's public housing policy and its evolution, recording the process of revitalizing Mei Ho Building as a youth hostel, retaining People's "collective memory" of public housing.

3.3 Establishing cultural relics to carry out the theme culture tour

The historical figures of the activities of the historical figures show how the historical value of the venues is fully displayed to the public. In this regard, the Hong Kong Government has launched a “cultural heritage trail” strategy to link buildings or locations with common historical significance to form routes. Features and themes. Hong Kong mainly has the Pingshan Heritage Trail and the Longyuetou Cultural Relics Trail, which show the quaint folk customs, as well as the cultural relics of the Central and Western District reflecting the unique colonial culture. The rest are the Wan Chai Historical Heritage Trail, the St. Stephen's College Heritage Trail, and the Sun Yat-sen Historic Trail. According to their geographical location and specific historical culture, it is convenient for tourists to understand the historical and cultural development of Hong Kong through thematic cultural tour, and also changed the single museum-style display mode.

4. Conclusion

This study analyzes the effectiveness of public participation in historical buildings in Hong Kong. At present, the social awareness and mechanism of protecting historical buildings in the Mainland are still in the exploratory stage. The actual economic considerations and human factors still account for a large proportion. The protection of historical buildings requires not only the guidance of government policies, the dissemination of professional ideas, the popularization of education for all, but also the political, economic and cultural development of the entire society. Therefore, drawing on the experience of conservation and activation of historical buildings in Hong Kong, it has certain reference significance for the protection and renewal of historical buildings in the Mainland.

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