Streetscapes & Place Making

By Dr. Ester van Steekelenburg . Founder & Director iDiscover .
1. Hong Kong’s Urban Identity

2. Preserving Amsterdam’s Streetscape; a short history Lesson

3. Old Hong Kong; a place making asset?
Cities across Asia are starting to look increasingly the same. Little regard for heritage and urban identity is getting lost.
If you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are.

-Wallace Stegner
If you can’t differentiate one city from another, you have no competitive advantage

- Ed Mcmahon
By 2050 more than two thirds of us will live in cities.

- United Nations 2014. World Urbanisation Prospects
"Hong Kong, our home, is suffering from quite a serious divisiveness."

- Carrie Lam, Hong Kong Chief Executive-elect
It is no secret, during the last two decades, Hong Kong has been undergoing somewhat of an identity crisis.

— Bernard Lim, Founder HK Institute of Urban Design
Conclusion I.

Hong Kong is searching for a new urban identity
PRESERVING AMSTERDAM’S STREETSCAPE

a short history lesson
STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
POOR LIVING CONDITIONS
MEANWHILE IN HEAVILY BOMBELED ROTTERDAM ...
TRIGGERED THE CREATION OF A MODERN CITY CENTRE
IN RESPONSE, AMSTERDAM’S CITY PLANNERS
PROPOSED TO FILL IN THE CANALS
AND TURN THEM INTO MOTORWAYS
PLANS PROGRESSED
UNTIL THEY GOT TO THE ‘NIEUWMARKT’
There protests broke out.
Demonstratie
Tegen de slop in de Nieuwmarkt
Vanavond Halfacht
Westermarkt

Vandaag Wij
Morgen Jullie

Wij laten ons 25 jaar
Na de oorlog
Niet deporteren

Geen metro
Geen snelweg
Door onze buurt
COMMUNITY PROTESTS
UNPRECEDENTED IN FORCE
PLAN REJECTED IN CITY COUNCIL .. WITH 1 VOTE
A PRIVATE CLUB OF LEADING BUSINESSPEOPLE
FOUNDED CITY RESTORATION COMPANY
**OBJECTIVES**

- Save the cityscape, so typical of Amsterdam.
- Maintain the residential function in the inner city
CITY RESTORATION COMPANY

- Initial capital from founders/shareholders: EUR 5 million
- Non-profit enterprise
- Acquire, renovate, reconfigure & lease out
STRATEGY: BUY WHERE OTHERS WOULD NOT

- Buildings threatened by government development plans
- Corner buildings
- Poor constructional state
ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

★ Property portfolio: 1,000 housing units & 200 commercial units
★ Close to 100% occupancy rate
★ Current capital value est. EUR 180 million
★ In 1970 the municipality became a shareholder
NOW AMSTERDAM’S MAIN UNIQUE SELLING POINT

- Attracts over 10 million tourists a year
- Commands highest psqm real estate value in the country
- Largely residential neighbourhood + 15,000 boats
- Inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage List in 2010
Conclusion II.

Historic streetscape is a valuable asset for urban identity.
OLD HONG KONG

STREETSCAPE AS PLACE MAKING ASSET?
STAR FERRY PIER . CENTRAL
MURRAY HOUSE . STANLEY
PEI HO STREET 北河街．SHAM SHUI PO
THE AVENUE 嬉匯．WANCHAI
STREET LIFE

DAI PAI DONGS 大排檔
ONLY 24 LEFT
REPLACED BY FOOD TRUCKS?
TAI NAN STREET 大南街. SHAM SHUI PO
NATHAN ROAD 彌敦道．TST 1970
Hong Kong’s unique streetscape and street life is slowly disappearing
Conclusion I.

Hong Kong is searching for a new urban identity

Conclusion II.

Historic streetscape is a valuable asset for urban identity

Conclusion III.

Hong Kong’s unique streetscape and street life is slowly disappearing
A PLACE THAT IS EASY TO ACCESS

A SOCIABLE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE MEET EACH OTHER

A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN DO THEIR OWN THING

A COMFORTABLE PLACE THAT PEOPLE CAN RELATE TO
PLACE MAKING QUALITIES

Hong Kong’s streetscapes & street life

★ INTERESTING; personality & character @ eyelevel
★ ACCESSIBLE; inclusive & walkable
★ HARMONIOUS; across different generations
★ MULTI FUNCTIONAL; day & night
THANK YOU

www.urbandiscovery.asia

EXPLORE

LEARN

CELEBRATE