The Secret Life of Streets in Hong Kong

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Photo exhibition by Kevin Mak

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Two reasons the city is the way it is

Five negative effects of vanishing streetscapes

Eight ways to bring back the street in our city
I. Urban typology in Hong Kong has drastically changed over the years. From traditional mixed use low rise street blocks to homogenous high rise residential estates.
II. In a developer dominated competitive real estate market like Hong Kong the underlying reason for the disappearing streetscape is largely a financial one.
The street is disappearing
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
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HK’s unique urban identity is getting lost at a time when the city needs it most.
#3 unhealthy city

While quality of life improves for residents, the street level becomes a less healthy and more hostile urban environment for the public.
#2 loss of public space

Loss of accessible public space and loss of public control over the city
#3 economic loss

Short term financial gain for developers and governments but long term economic loss for the residents.
#5 inequality
New large scale residential developments divide the city up into islands of inequality, increasing the divide and the street forms an infrastructural barrier rather than being a connective urban tissue.
negative effects of disappearing streetscapes

#1. loss of identity
#2. unhealthy city
#3. loss of public space
#4. economic loss
#5. equality
Two reasons the city is the way it is

Five negative effects of vanishing streetscapes

Eight ways to bring back the street in our city
#1 city policies
Embrace New Urban Agenda: not national but city specific policies
#2 culture & heritage planning

Heritage is no longer solely in the domain of cultural bodies, but has become a shared responsibility of today’s city planners, developers, designers and marketers.
#3 area-based planning
The future will need to see more area-based regeneration in addition to incidental adaptive re-use projects.
#4 Incorporation of existing fabric
New development gives an opportunity to design according to the NUA, and to better connect to the existing building stock.
#5 bring back the human dimension in master plans

The government should take its role in planning the city. Both in planning at a neighborhood scale, and as the city’s largest developer, to innovate in the city planning.
In land tenders the decisive factor is the height of the bid. Design should become part of the considerations too.
#7 social landlord

with a mandate to favour longer term economic impact over short term financial viability
#8 capitalise on community initiatives
8 ways to bring back the street in our city

#1. city policies
#2. cultural heritage planning
#3. area based planning
#4. incorporation of existing fabric
#5. bring back the human scale
#6. reward quality design
#7. social landlord
#8. community initiatives
The Secret Life of the Streets of Hong Kong

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