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Let's Talk about Public Space

談談公共空間

Hong Kong Green Building Council

香港綠色建築議會



Public Space in Hong Kong

Space is a fast depleting resource in Hong Kong. Although we pride ourselves with the extensive green area in our country parks, having easy access to public open space in the urban areas is increasingly a challenge for many. In the past few years, there has been a growing debate about public space in Hong Kong. According to the Social Indicators of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, the per capita area of public open space in Hong Kong has dropped from 3.10 square metres in 2009 to 2.73 square metres in 2017¹. Civic Exchange in its 2017 report also contended that the distribution of open spaces is inequitable in Hong Kong as it is often linked to income and demographics of the population².

Even if such open space is available, its quality is often questionable. It is not uncommon to find that the spaces are too small for actual utility function, designed in a piecemeal manner, with little or insufficient amenities, and not properly connected with their neighbours or adjoining developments. The lack of a holistic, integrated or sensitive approach to the planning and design of our public spaces is not conducive to promoting wellbeing at all³.

香港的公共空間

在香港，空間是一種極快被枯竭的資源。儘管我們為郊野公園佔地廣闊而感到自豪，對很多人來說，要在鬧市找到一處便捷的公共空間卻越來越困難。過去幾年，香港已有不少有關公共空間的討論。根據香港社會服務聯會所設立的香港社會指標，香港人均公共休憩用地由2009年的3.10平方米減少至2017年的2.73平方米¹。而思匯政策研究所一份2017年的報告指出，香港的休憩用地分佈極不平均，而這與入息和人口分布有很大關係²。

即使有空間，這些空間的質素也成疑問。很多時候，這些空間不但空間太小，而且大都是設計零碎，令其難以用作任何實際用途，而當中只有極少甚至沒有足夠的設施，更缺乏和鄰近發展有合適的連繫。這種對公共空間欠缺整全、綜合和顧及環境的規劃和設計並不有利於推廣大眾健康³。



A well-designed public open space serves more than just a space for physical use and enjoyment. It can be vital to our mental health, too. The stress level of the Hongkongers is among one of the highest in the world. According to an earlier global survey by UBS, our average working hours topped the list of 71 cities, which is equal to about 50.1 hours each week⁴. In another study, it is estimated that around one in six in Hong Kong would develop common mental disorders, like mixed anxiety and depressive disorder⁵. Even younger Hongkongers are battling similar problems. From 2011 to 2016, the number of children or young people seeking treatment of mental problems increased drastically from 20,000 to around 30,000⁶. Researchers are calling for the provision of more quality open spaces in our city to improve the well-being of our local inhabitants, especially green space, as regular exposure to nature can reduce stress and depression, as well as enhance social and brain functions⁷.

一個設計優秀的公共空間不只是提供運動和享樂的場所，對於精神健康也同樣重要。香港人的壓力指標堪稱是世界最高的地方之一，根據早前瑞銀的一份報告指出，香港人平均工作時數冠絕全球 71 個城市，相當於每星期工作 50.1 小時⁴。另一份研究亦估計，平均每 6 個香港人便有 1 人會患上普遍的精神科疾病，例如混合焦慮抑鬱症⁵。就算是年輕一代也在苦戰中，在 2011 年至 2016 年期間，尋求精神科治療的小童或年輕人由 20,000 人升至 30,000 人⁶。有研究指出，經常接觸大自然會減輕壓力和抑鬱的情緒，並有助提升社交和大腦功能。為了市民的身心健康，研究人員呼籲政府務須提供更多和更好的公共空間，尤其綠化空間⁷。



Better public space yields multiple benefits, the Project for Public Spaces⁸ lists out 10 of them:-
改善公共空間帶來很多裨益，Project for Public Spaces⁸ 列出了 10 個好處：

- Support local economies**
支持本土經濟
- Attract business investments**
吸引商業投資
- Attract tourism**
吸引旅遊業
- Provide cultural opportunities**
提供文化機會
- Encourage volunteerism**
鼓勵義工精神
- Reduce crime**
減少罪案
- Improve pedestrian safety**
改善行人安全
- Increase use of public transportation**
增加公共交通使用
- Improve public health**
提升大眾健康
- Improve the environment**
改善環境

About the Urban Experiment

This book is about public space. In late 2016, Hong Kong Green Building Council (HKGBC) and Hong Kong Public Space Initiative (HKPSI) joined hands to carry out a series of urban experiments in Kwun Tong as part of the roll-out programmes of BEAM Plus Neighbourhood (ND), the first rating tool of BEAM Plus with a focus on public realm and community engagement. Our objectives are to raise the awareness of the development industry and general public about the importance of public realm, and to demonstrate ways to analyse and interpret quality public space design, so as to foster more creative and fresh thinking on public realm in Hong Kong. Three experiments were carried out in Kwun Tong in August 2016, with different themes in placemaking and the use of public art and community-related uses, as well as visibility and openness in open space. The experiments attempt to answer important questions such as:

How to enliven the public space? 如何令公共空間更有生氣？

How to create relevant and meaningful public art for local community? 如何創造合適和對社區有意思的公共藝術作品？

How to get acceptance and endorsement by the local community? 如何取得社區接納和認同？

How to handle the conflicting uses of a public space? 如何處理因不同的公共空間用途而產生的矛盾？

關於城市實驗

這本書的主題是公共空間。在 2016 年年底，為推廣香港首個着重公共空間和公眾參與的評估工具——綠建環評社區，香港綠色建築議會聯同拓展公共空間在觀塘進行一系列的城市實驗。實驗目的旨在提高業界和公眾對公共空間的認識和重視，以及展示如何分析和解構優質公共空間的設計，以促進更多對於公共空間的創新想法。我們在 2016 年 8 月於觀塘進行了三個城市實驗，探討不同的主題，包括如何利用公共藝術和社區用途設施去營造空間，以及有關戶外空間的易見度和開放度。這三個城市實驗嘗試解答以下問題：

Why did we choose Kwun Tong?

Kwun Tong was chosen to conduct our urban experiment as the district has undergone rapid transformations in recent years. Kwun Tong is a dynamic district. On one hand, it is one of the districts with the highest concentration of elderly population; on the other, with the initiative of the government to turn Kowloon East into the next Central Business District of Hong Kong, Kwun Tong is now a booming business district, shedding its old face of a district of industrial buildings and warehouses. Two locations were selected for the Experiments, namely the Yuet Wah Street Playground and the Kwun Tong Promenade, which are epitome of the dual-reality of Kwun Tong: The Yuet Wah Street Playground serves as the main local park for its older community, while the Kwun Tong Promenade is a new and hip public space not just for the locals but also people from outside Kwun Tong. Choosing these two locations in Kwun Tong offers an intriguing angle to explore the use of public space of different types of populations.

為何選擇觀塘區？

我們的城市實驗選擇在觀塘進行，正是由於觀塘近年來正面臨巨大的變遷。觀塘是個多元的社區，一方面是一個典型老年化社區，另一方面，因政府發展九龍東成為下一個核心商業區，觀塘已漸漸成為繁盛的商業區，褪去昔日作為工廈和倉庫集中地的舊模樣。城市實驗選址在觀塘兩個地點進行，分別是月華街公園和觀塘海濱，代表觀塘的兩面體：月華街公園作為服務本區年邁居民的公園，而觀塘海濱則是一個全新的公共空間，除了本區居民，還吸引區外市民到訪。在觀塘挑選這兩個地點進行城市實驗可以提供一個有趣的角度的去探索不同對象如何使用公共空間。



About this Book

The topic of public space is such a vast one which cannot be encapsulated in this book. Rather, we would like to take a step back, to recall our journey of creating BEAM Plus ND, the aspiration being to foster the development of a vibrant and sustainable community in Hong Kong, and one that promotes stronger links between human and nature. In the following two chapters, HKPSI would first share with us a new methodology to curate public art for the community and then examine how to use an experimental approach to enhance the design of public space. In Chapter 4, Idy Wong from Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden would enlighten us on promoting a sustainable lifestyle to the community. In Chapter 5, Sandy Duggie from Urbis would offer practical tips and case studies to illustrate how to enhance biodiversity in urban public space; and finally, Iris Hoi from the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects would highlight a few great examples of public space in Hong Kong. We hope this little book will be a precursor for more dialogues on public space in our community.

關於本書

公共空間這個議題十分廣泛，實在未能於此書涵蓋。我們嘗試退一步看，想起當初籌備綠建環評社區時，我們的願景是寄望香港有更多生氣勃勃且可持續的社區，而這些社區亦會加強人與自然的聯繫。在接下來的兩章，拓展公共空間會先分享一套嶄新的方式為社區策展公共藝術，再探討如何透過進行實驗去提升公共空間的設計。在第四章，嘉道理農場暨植物園的王麗賢女士會啟發我們如何向社區推廣可持續生活方式。接着在第五章，雅邦規劃設計有限公司的杜琦森先生會指導如何在都市公共空間改善生物多樣性。最後，香港園境師學會的許虹女士會介紹香港出色的公共空間。我們寄望此書能帶動社區有更多關於公共空間的對話。

Creating better public space for all demands aspirations, collaboration and participation from the government, developers, designers, facility managers, and most importantly, the community. To share the lessons learned with the professionals and the community alike, HKGBC would like to publish this book, as a good starting point to stimulate more dialogues and partnerships for more possibilities of better public realm in Hong Kong.

要締造一個更美好的公共空間，需要各方，包括政府、發展商、設計師、設施經理、以及最重要社區的共同理念、合作及參與。香港綠色建築議會將實驗所得結集成書，與業界和公眾分享，寄望此書能引起更多相關的對話和合作，為香港的公共空間創造更多可能性。

Footnote 註釋

- 1 https://www.socialindicators.org.hk/en/indicators/environmental_quality/23.13
- 2 http://civic-exchange.org/cex_reports/20170224POSreport_FINAL.pdf
- 3 <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2118314/will-lack-open-space-damage-generations-hongkongers>
- 4 <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/29/health/mental-health-suicide-hong-kong-asia/index.html>
- 5 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25660760>
- 6 <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2141499/largest-ever-hong-kong-mental-health-survey>
- 7 <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2120163/hong-kong-needs-more-public-open-space-peoples-physical-and>
- 8 <https://www.pps.org/article/10benefits>



What is BEAM Plus?

BEAM Plus assessment is a locally developed assessment scheme of building sustainability performance. BEAM Plus provides building users with a single performance label that demonstrates the overall quality of the building, regardless of whether it is new, refurbished or in use. By setting a high standard, BEAM Plus certification is a proven path for creating safer, healthier, more comfortable, more functional and more energy-efficient buildings.

Recognised and certified by HKGBC, BEAM Plus offers a comprehensive set of performance criteria for a wide range of sustainability issues relating to the planning, design, construction, commissioning, management, operation and maintenance of a building. At present, there are four assessment tools, namely Neighbourhood, New Buildings, Existing Buildings, Interiors, to cover the whole development life cycle.

BEAM Plus assesses projects using criteria under different aspects, namely Site Aspects, Community Aspects, Management, Green Building Attributes, Materials and Waste Aspects, Energy Use, Water Use, Indoor and Outdoor Environmental Quality as well as Innovations and Additions.

Since its launch in 2010, there are more than 1,000 projects that have been registered to undergo BEAM Plus assessments, and more than 500 projects have been assessed.

Watch the video about BEAM Plus



甚麼是綠建環評?

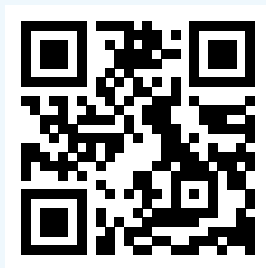
綠建環評是本港一套為建築物可持續發展表現作中立評估的權威工具。綠建環評為樓宇表現提供指標，不論樓宇是新建，正要翻新，或是已入伙使用，都可為用家標示建築物的整體質素。透過這套評估制度，綠建環評認證可令發展商時刻秉持最高標準，從而建造更安全、健康、舒適，亦更物盡其用和節省能源的樓宇。

綠建環評就建築物在規劃、設計、施工、調試、管理、運作及維修中各範疇的可持續性，訂立了一套全面的表現準則，評核結果受香港綠色建築議會認可並發出認證。綠建環評共有四套評估工具，分別為社區、新建建築、既有建築和室內建築，評估涵蓋整個發展的生命週期。

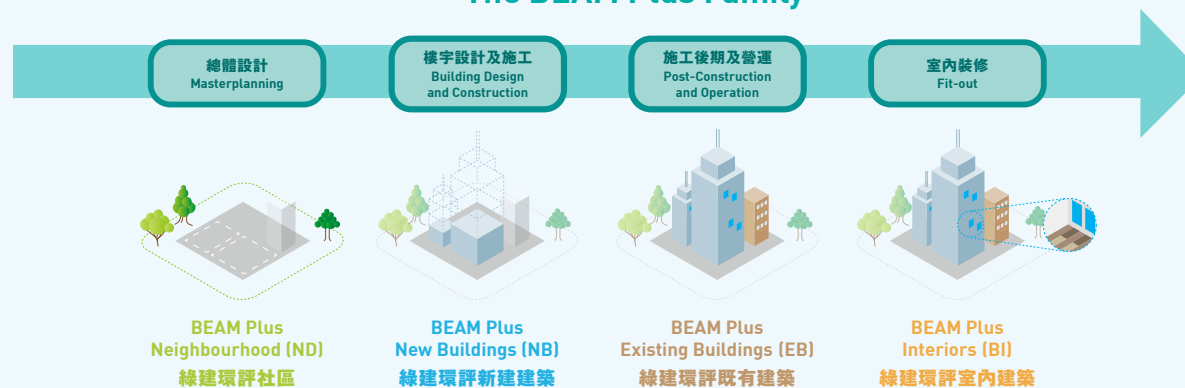
綠建環評採用不同範疇的表現指標去評估項目，包括用地與室外環境、社區、管理、綠建特性、用材及廢物管理、能源使用、用水、室內及室外環境質素和創新範疇。

自 2010 年推出以來，已有超過 1,000 個項目登記參與綠建環評的評估，現時已有超過 500 個項目已進行評估。

觀看綠建環評介紹短片



綠建環評評估工具 The BEAM Plus Family



10個評估範疇 10 Assessment Aspects



What is BEAM Plus Neighbourhood?

In recent years, there has been a growing attention to development projects when buildings are developed as a cluster or formed in the scale of a neighbourhood. As the saying goes, "a whole is greater than the sum of its parts". A sustainable community is not merely a collection of green buildings. The space between buildings, where the public life happens and communities mingle, is indispensable for a thriving and liveable city. This calls for an approach beyond building scale plus the attempt to embrace cultural and socio-economic elements into the sustainability equation. With this in mind, HKGBC saw the need to develop a long-term framework that does not only act as a benchmarking tool for projects at "neighbourhood level", but also one that can take account of the city's dense and compact urban environment, its particular statutory framework and local practice. The tool was launched in late 2016.

As the first tool in Hong Kong to assess urban sustainability, BEAM Plus Neighbourhood (ND) is designed to assess sustainability performance at the inception or masterplanning stage of a development project. It helps lay down a broader framework of urban sustainability for a smoother implementation of the principles at subsequent development stages. The tool concerns the design of space between buildings and places an emphasis on the socio-economic elements of a development.

甚麼是綠建環評社區？

近年來，大眾對於組成不同建築群或具社區規模的發展項目日益關注。俗語有云，整體往往大於局部的總和，一個可持續的社區並非純粹由多幢綠色建築組成。樓宇之間亦是公共活動發生以及社群相聚的地方，正是一個活躍和宜居的城市所不可或缺的。由此引申，對可持續發展的考慮不能囿於樓宇的層面，還需要顧及文化和社會經濟的因素，從對整體的可持續性作出考慮。由於當時的評估工具未有可檢討公共空間或鄰舍元素的可行方法，香港綠色建築議會認為有必要發展一套長遠框架，不只是作為鄰舍發展的基準工具，同時亦需顧及到香港稠密擠迫的市區環境，及其法律框架和本土的行業實際狀況。綠建環評社區在 2016 年年底正式推出。

綠建環評社區作為香港首個於發展項目初期進行評估的工具，在總體規劃階段評估時，從整體的角度審視項目的可持續性，並為城市的可持續發展訂下綱領，令隨後各發展階段事半功倍。評估工具顧及樓宇之間空間的設計規劃，並着重發展項目涉及的社會經濟元素。

What does a BEAM Plus Neighbourhood development look like? 綠建環評社區有什麼特色？



Emphasis on "Space between Buildings" 強調「樓宇之間」的空間

To enable the start of "public realm" planning and design at the beginning of a development process. In development project initial phase, design and planning of public space, which includes basic facilities, is emphasized.



Embrace Socio-economic Elements 顧及社會經濟元素

To embrace different socio-economic elements and to encourage a holistic view to developments. Thus a new aspect, Community Aspects, is created. The new community scope covers different socio-economic elements, encouraging development to consider all aspects.



Be a Good Neighbour 成為「好鄰居」

To encourage development to bring positive impact to its own occupants as well as its immediate neighbours.

Encourage development to bring positive impact to its own occupants as well as its immediate neighbours.