

= Edinburgh Place Ferry Pier =

Edinburgh Place Ferry Pier (Chinese : ?????????) , often referred to as the " Star Ferry " Pier , was a pier in Edinburgh Place , Central , Hong Kong , serving the Star Ferry . The pier , with its clock tower , was a prominent waterfront landmark . Built in 1957 at the height of the Modern Movement , it was the third generation of the Star Ferry Pier in Central , and was located near the City Hall and the General Post Office .

The pier was the central flashpoint of the Hong Kong riots in 1966 , and 40 years later became the focus of a confrontation between conservationists and the government , which wanted to demolish the pier to allow for reclamation . The ferry service from the pier was suspended on 11 November 2006 , and moved to piers 7 and 8 of Central Piers . Demolition commenced on 12 December , and was completed in early 2007 .

= = History = =

The entire waterfront where the " third generation " pier was situated was created in the late 1950s following a major land reclamation . The shoreline was shifted from its position at the time , level to the Mandarin Hotel . The pier was built in 1957 in Edinburgh Place , at the height of the Modern Movement , near the City Hall complex which was being planned at the time .

The Star Ferry Pier was designed by a local Chinese architect , Hung Yip Chan (born in 1921) . He worked in the Architectural Office (AO) of the Hong Kong Government from 1952 to 1957 as an assistant architect . He designed the façade of the pier , and the Chief Architect , Michael Wright , added the Clock Tower to make the pier more balanced and practical .

The chimes of the turret clock installed at the pier marked every quarter @-@ hour since the pier 's inauguration in 1957 . The clock was a gift from John Keswick , who had in turn received it from the Prince of Belgium . The mechanism was manufactured by British company Edward John Dent , which also provided the mechanical signature to " Big Ben " of London .

There is a major bus terminus on the Kowloon side , which is conveniently situated close to the Tsim Sha Tsui Ferry Pier . Thousands of residents passed through this principal gateway to Hong Kong Island from the Kowloon Peninsula daily from 1957 until 2006 . However , the inauguration of the Cross Harbour Tunnel in 1972 popularised vehicular travel across the harbour and reduced the flow of passengers . From 1972 to 2006 , the ferry was still used by many as the shortest route from Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) to Central District , and a daily average of 74 @, @ 000 passenger trips were made across the harbour in 2004 .

On the island side , various routes of the NWFB , Citybus , and public light buses connected to many destinations on Hong Kong Island .

= = Relocation = =

The plan to relocate the Central Ferry Piers dates back to July 1999 , when proposed amendments to the draft Central District (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan covering the Central Reclamation III area were published . Both the third generation Star Ferry Pier and Queen 's Pier would be demolished and 16 hectares of land directly in front of the fourth @-@ generation pier reclaimed to make way for a six @-@ lane road and a low @-@ rise shopping centre . The cost was estimated at HK \$ 3 @. @ 5 billion . The Government said that the historical significance of the third @-@ generation pier would be recognised and promised to recreate the landmark on the new waterfront .

In 2001 , an impact assessment for the Central Reclamation recommended the relocation of the Star Ferry Pier , and this was approved by the Antiquities Advisory Board in 2002 .

= = = Demolition = = =

3D Laser Scanning Technology in digital recording of structures was applied to capture three @-@ dimensional images of the pier before the demolition .

Following the pier 's decommissioning on 12 November 2006 , demolition work started amidst protests . The demolition was originally scheduled for the early part of 2007 , but demolition was brought forward by 3 months , to 12 December 2006 . The government ignored a nonbinding motion in September in the Legislative Council of Hong Kong urging it to retain the pier and clock tower .

The demolition crew took control of the site by erecting scaffolding on 6 December 2006 , and demolition commenced on 12 December . Workers took down the clock mechanism and clock face , leaving a gaping hole , and then proceeded to lift the clock tower off in one piece . After the protesters had been dispersed , the remainder of the pier was completely dismantled , away from the glare of publicity .

= = Controversy = =

Although the scale of the phase 3 reclamation in Central was cut back from 32 to 18 hectares , the fate of the piers was sealed by the reclamation . The pier became the centre of a bitter struggle between the Government and conservationists , who opposed either further destruction of the harbour or the further loss of historical buildings .

Consultants who prepared the Environmental Impact Assessment report in 2001 for the Central reclamation noted the pier 's significant role in Hong Kong 's transport history . The Government was warned that a public backlash could be expected when the full implications of the reclamation were known .

The Pier , especially its clock tower , is a visually important landmark in Hong Kong . It is an eye @-@ catching icon within the beautiful Hong Kong Harbour particularly for tourists and locals crossing it via Star Ferries from Tsim Sha Tsui . It is a must on their itinerary . No other ferry pier along the harbour could possibly perform such a symbolic function as this clocktower pier . The removal of the Star Ferry Pier to Piers 4 @-@ 7 leading to its destruction would likely raise public objection and dismay .

However , the Government had maintained that the Pier and its tower was not old enough to be classified as " historical " and that people were not necessarily " concerned about the building itself " . To some extent , it was not wrong , since the activists were mainly fighting for the preservation of a public place and against the methods and urban planning policies of its government , perceived to favour business interests over the public interest . The struggle to preserve the Star Ferry and , later , the Queen 's Pier , was the occasion to raise questions on Hong Kong 's history , the question of colonialism , and that of democracy in the HKSAR .

The Government had grossly underestimated the very strong public sentiment about this 49 @-@ year @-@ old landmark in the " collective memory " of Hong Kong residents . By its own retrospective admission , it lacked legitimacy : a Government spokesman conceded that the it had failed to gain the moral high ground .

= = = Loss of convenience = = =

Ferry passengers would face a lengthier trek to reach the new pier . By relocating the new piers 300 m away , it is estimated that the Star Ferry could lose perhaps 13 percent or more of passengers due to its inconvenience . On the Tsim Sha Tsui side of the harbour , the proposed relocation of the bus terminus which acts as a feeder for the ferry is forecast to further reduce passenger numbers by one @-@ fifth .

This loss , totalling one @-@ third of its passengers , would translate into revenue loss of some HK \$ 17 million per annum for Star Ferry .

= = = Architectural importance = = =

Architects and conservationists argued that the pier was architecturally significant to Hong Kong as one of the last remaining examples of a Streamline Moderne public building (along with the Central Market and Wan Chai Market which have been earmarked for demolition) ; culturally the pier was

widely recognised as a part of local collective memory . The Hong Kong Institute of Architects warned against the destruction of Hong Kong 's heritage , saying it would be an irreversible mistake . Public opinion has resulted in alternatives put forward to preserve the clock tower , including moving the proposed six @-@ lane road or relocating the clock tower to the front of the new pier as a memorial .

= = = State of the clock = = =

One reason cited by the Government against the relocation of the turret clock and tower was that an expert feasibility study advised that there was " no guarantee the clock and chimes would continue to work after relocation , due to their age and obsolete components " . However , Neil Brennon Wright of Thwaites & Reed , the world 's longest operating clockmaking firm , who arrived from England on 18 December 2006 to examine the clock , said that his firm had restored far worse

. The Government promised that it would " rebuild " the chimes of the clock , complete with the restitution of the original clock faces and mechanism at some nearby location .

= = Public sentiment = =

The public outcry , anticipated by the consultancy report for the Antiquities and Monuments Office , was to become reality . With the imminent threat of demolition , the local community rallied to save pier , to widespread media coverage . In the weeks running up to the cessation of service from the pier , thousands of Hong Kong residents arrived to post banners and other messages in support of retention .

There were some 150 @, @ 000 nostalgic visitors to the Pier and harbour crossing on the night of 11 November 2006 . To mark the special occasion , Star Ferry hosted a " last ride " before the pier was closed @-@ down , with the last four ferries leaving this pier on the stroke of midnight . Eighteen hundred Hongkongers willingly paid up \$ 88 (40 times the normal fare) for the last ride , whose proceeds were designated for charity .

= = = Protest movement = = =

On 19 November 2006 , the Civic Party , Democratic Party , Harbour @-@ front Enhancement Committee , Hong Kong Institute of Architects , People 's Sustainable Development Committee , Clear the Air , and Earth Care jointly met to urge the public to fight for the preservation of the pier . Over 1 @, @ 000 signatures were collected on that one day alone , in a petition to be submitted to Chief Executive Donald Tsang and other senior officials . In addition , a group of protesters began a peaceful sit @-@ in that day . So Sau Chung , veteran campaigner (now a monk) , whose hunger strike against Star Ferry fare increases triggered the riots in 1966 , came by to lend his support .

Further spurred by the start of demolition on the afternoon of 12 December 2006 , more protesters started gathering spontaneously after workers removed the bell and the clock face from the tower , leaving a big hole . Activists , including " Long Hair " Leung Kwok @-@ hung , rushed into and occupied part of the demolition site , chanting slogans from the roof of an excavator and demanded to meet Secretary for Housing , Planning and Lands , Michael Suen Ming @-@ yeung .

In addition to the public , Civic Party legislators , and Choy So @-@ yuk , a councillor from the pro @-@ government Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong , showed up to lend support

. The demolition drew widespread condemnation from the public , legislators , and conservationists , all of whom claimed the government action was contrary to the wishes of the public . Legco members tabled motions to immediately halt the demolition , pending further consultation . The Government denied a last @-@ minute reprieve , reiterating that there has been " adequate consultation " , and forged ahead with demolition . The Conservancy Association claimed it made its objection known in 1996 when Government proposed to construct a temporary road through the

Edinburgh Place and that the Government has never consulted the public regarding demolition of the pier , or the adjacent Queen 's Pier .

After the demolition of the pier , the government said that it would consider the memories of the citizens and not the historic value of the building / structure before demolishing it .

Conservationists vowed to take the fight to Queen 's Pier , and a number of other historical sites threatened with a similar fate . At the end of 2006 , in a testament to how the protests have struck a chord with the public , the Ferry protesters were voted " Person of the Year " by RTHK Radio 3 . Local Action , the group of rather young cultural and media activists which formed the core of the movement , were to later influence social movements , in Hong Kong as well as in the mainland : part of the more militant " post 80s " generation , they are critical of government business collusion , a one @-@ sided development approach , Hong Kong 's subordinate status within China and the perceived lack of democracy in the territory , and have been involved in the fight for real political reform in Hong Kong , and against the Express Rail link to Guangzhou .

= = = Demonstration timeline = = =

August 2006 , a group of local artists subsequently known as " We Are Society " and patronised by Para / Site member Kith Tsang Tak @-@ ping started carrying out shows and setting up installations on the premises of the Star Ferry Pier in an attempt to heighten people 's awareness . [2]

19 November 2006 , pressure groups met at pier to collect petition signatures ; protesters began sit @-@ in at the pier .

6 December 2006 , demolition workers broke through a human chain of peaceful protesters and erected scaffolding around the site .

12 December 2006 , site occupied by demonstrators determined to stop demolition .

13 December 2006 , demolition resumed after all demonstrators were forcibly removed from the site by police , despite protesters remaining outside .

14 December 2006 , 200 people attended a candlelight vigil to mark the pier 's 49th anniversary ; activists again broke through a police cordon to retake the building . 13 protesters were detained in the early hours of the morning

15 December 2006 , Government vows to get tough against protesters and accelerates demolition by carrying on work overnight ; the clock tower is lifted off in one piece and taken off @-@ site . A group of 20 students start a 49 @-@ hour sit @-@ in hunger strike at midnight , one hour to represent each year of the pier 's existence .

17 December 2006 , 200 people marched on the Government Headquarters demanding to see the Chief Executive ; violent scuffles broke out ; Conservationists vow to take the fight to Queen 's Pier .

18 December 2006 , legislators incensed at a volte @-@ face by the demolition company who recanted on selling the remains to conservationists and by suggestion that the clock tower may be used as landfill , demanded to know the whereabouts of the remains .

19 December 2006 , newspapers published interviews of witnesses who claim to have seen the old clock tower being broken up at the building waste landfill in Tuen Mun .

11 May 2007 , harbour protester Ho Loy convicted of criminal damage for having slashed the canvas surrounding the demolition works on 12 December 2006 and ordered to pay \$ 800 in compensation .