

= Queen 's Pier =

Queen 's Pier , named after Queen Victoria , was a public pier in front of City Hall in Edinburgh Place , Central , Hong Kong . For three generations it served not only as a public pier in day @-@ to @-@ day use but also as a major ceremonial arrival and departure point . The pier witnessed the official arrival in Hong Kong of all of Hong Kong 's governors since 1925 ; Elizabeth II landed there in 1975 , as did the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1989 .

The second and final pier structure , built along the newly reclaimed waterfront , was designed in a modern utilitarian style and was opened by Maurine Grantham , wife of Governor Alexander Grantham , in June 1954 .

On 26 April 2007 , the pier was closed by the government to enable land reclamation , soon after the adjacent Star Ferry pier was closed . There was fierce opposition by conservationists , who carried over their campaign to preserve the landmark . Police officers evicted some 30 protesters from the site on 1 August 2007 ; activists filed for a judicial review , and the High Court hearing began on 7 August . On 10 August , the court dismissed the request .

Finally , the Queen 's Pier was completely demolished in February 2008 . Its base piles were also removed in March 2008 . In 2008 , since dismantling , the government attempts to create the appearance of public support for reassembling the pier at the new waterfront has been criticised by conservationists .

= = History = =

A former wooden pier at the site known as " Queen 's Statue Wharf " was replaced in 1925 . It was a ceremonial landing area for the British Royal Family visiting Hong Kong , and for successive governors to assert their authority on arrival . The first governor to land there was Cecil Clementi , in November 1925 . The preceding governor , Reginald Stubbs , boarded the Victoria from the pier at the end of his term on 31 October 1925 .

= = = 1925 pier = = =

The 1925 pier was originally named " Statue Pier " , but was renamed " Queen 's Pier " in honour of Queen Victoria on 31 July 1924 . It was a sheltered pier made of concrete and steel , with round pillars and arches , built on the waterfront at Pedder Street on the site of the present Mandarin Oriental Hotel at a cost of HK \$ 20 @,@ 000 . Intended to be opened in time for the arrival of Edward , the Prince of Wales , construction delays postponed its completion until October 1925 . It was demolished in January 1955 .

= = = 1954 pier = = =

As part of post @-@ war reclamation , the old pier was demolished . Work commenced in February 1954 on a new pier on the new waterfront designed in a modern utilitarian style . The structure was described as a U @-@ shaped plan , with an open @-@ sided superstructure . It consisted of tiled reinforced concrete base and pillars , and was modelled after previous piers in the area . Its flat roof was also made of concrete , topped with bitumen waterproofing . Five sets of stairs allowed boat passengers to board and disembark , three located on the north side , one on the east and one on the west .

The pier was considered " an integral part " of the ceremonial cluster including City Hall and Edinburgh Place which was being formed at the time , and the entrance to the City Hall formed an axis with the Pier to lend a sense of occasion to visiting dignitaries . The secondary design goal was to maximise public access to the very limited open space in Central in contrast with the city bustle .

The pier was opened by Maurine Grantham , wife of Governor Alexander Grantham , on 28 June 1954 .

= = Function = =

The pier 's primary role was ceremonial . It was the traditional landing place of successive governors , who would arrive at Central on board the official Governor 's Yacht which would dock at Queen 's Pier . From the 1960s , governors would inspect a guard of honour at Edinburgh Place , followed by the swearing @-@ in at City Hall .

HM The Queen landed there on 4 May 1975 on her first visit , after arriving by plane at Kai Tak Airport . The Prince and Princess of Wales landed there in November 1989 .

The pier 's secondary role was as a public pier , where pleasure craft were allowed to dock . Tour boats offering a view of the Kowloon side of the harbour used the pier for passenger boarding . Up to 1978 , it was the finishing line for the annual cross @-@ harbour swimming race . As the ceremonies declined , the pier 's secondary purpose became the main one : people met and strolled in the area , and others fished .

On 26 April 2007 , the pier was closed in order to facilitate land reclamation in Central .

= = Future = =

From the outset , the fate of the pier has been intimately linked with the central reclamation project which was unveiled in 1989 but not explicitly spelled out as such . However , the scale of reclamations has only been slightly cut back following significant legal battles .

= = = Government 's position = = =

Following the controversy and the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier in Edinburgh Place in early 2007 , activists declared Queen 's Pier the next battle @-@ ground against the conservation policy of the Government of Hong Kong . The criticism received over its handling of the Star Ferry Pier caused Michael Suen , the Secretary for Housing , Planning and Lands , to propose a piece @-@ by @-@ piece relocation of the pier to a new location on the reclaimed waterfront during a Legco session on 21 March 2007 . The Government later unveiled four design options for such relocation . The intended closure of the pier was 26 April 2007 .

At the end of January 2007 , the government declared it would postpone the demolition of Queen 's Pier until a consensus could be reached on the course of action ; consultations with the Hong Kong Institute of Architects , the Hong Kong Institute of Engineers , and the Conservancy Association were held . The Institute of Architects , whose members opposed dismantling the pier , originally maintained the pier should remain untouched . However , it was reported that after meeting the government , the Institute and the Conservancy Association were persuaded by the government that the pier could first be dismantled , and then reassembled at another location after completion of the reclamation . This change of heart was heavily criticised by Winston Chu , founder of the Society for Protection of the Harbour . The HKIA clarified that their opposition had not in fact changed .

Chief Executive Donald Tsang said that being overzealous in saving the past may hurt Hong Kong 's competitiveness , and called on activists to take a more balanced view toward economic growth and conservation . Soon after Tsang 's re @-@ election as Chief Executive , on 26 March , the Government pressed ahead with plans to dismantle and move the entire pier , piece by piece , enabling the reclamation to go ahead .

The government said that the in @-@ situ preservation , though apparently viable on paper , would risk irreversible damage to the pier . Furthermore , it argued that important underground facilities such as the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel would be affected , saying a natural curvature of the track was required . " Setting aside the technical difficulties and the huge risk involved in the works , underpinning for the construction of the extended overrun tunnel would cost about HK \$ 500 million and take more than two years to complete " .

Appearing before a public forum at the pier on 29 July , Secretary for Development Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet @-@ ngor repeated the government 's insistence that keeping the pier was not an option . She said she would " not give the people false hope " . Although Lam 's performance in

public debates was praised , the Secretary for Development 's conflict of interest as the head of the Antiquities Authority was criticised . Lam said the AAB did not have governmental authority , and that it had not suggested keeping the pier in its totality .

= = = Dismantling and storing = = =

At the end of July 2007 , the Development Bureau issued a paper for the Legislative Council 's lands and works panel . Hoardings to be erected by the end of July , and the target for completing " preservation works " by November . It was suggested for the pier 's pitched roof to be disassembled into halves and the 34 concrete columns to be cut at roof and deck level . The pieces would be labeled and then lifted by a crane barge and transported to the government 's explosives depot in Kau Shat Wan , Lantau Island , where it would be stored under guard . The paper suggested that reassembling it in the same location might not take place until December 2012 , as re @-@ alignment of the proposed Road P2 would be involved .

= = = District councils = = =

The government polled 16 District Councils , fourteen of which voted in support of relocating the pier to the new water @-@ front . However , in July 2008 activists cried foul when eight councils revealed that the preservation of the pier in its existing location was not put forth as one of the options ; the vice @-@ chairmen of two councils which voted to support also objected that their decision may have not been an informed one as not all possible options were on the table . The chief town planner said that the omitted proposal " was not an efficient option and would create unnecessary construction waste " .

After it was revealed in August 2008 that the government was behind the 13 concerted District Councils ' motions in 2008 supporting the relocation of the pier to the new waterfront , Albert Ho condemned the government of tampering with District Councils in order to " create public opinion . " Convenor of the Urban Design Alliance doubted the openness of consultation , saying that " the government had engineered its results " . Dr Li Pang @-@ kwong , of Lingnan University , said that the problematic framework of the councils has led them to work too closely with government . He said the ' copy and paste ' Queen 's Pier motions passed by 13 councils to support government decisions was a rubber @-@ stamp , and a clear sign that councils lacked independence .

= = = Conservationists ' position = = =

Ron Phillips , original designer of the pier , backed preservation , saying that any loss of the City Hall and the adjacent open space would be something " future generations will come to regret " . The Hong Kong Institute of Architects denounced the government 's insistence that dismantling and reassembling of the pier was the only feasible option , in disregard of the pier 's " grade 1 " status . The architects concluded that the " technical difficulties were not irresolvable , and the government 's reasons for not revising the current infrastructural design were not at all convincing " .

Environmental groups were angered by the government 's technobabble , and for inflating the costs and technical difficulties of keeping the pier at the original site . The proposed 40 @-@ metre @-@ wide road , planned in the 1980s , was now " obsolete " , and would make the waterfront " inaccessible to the public " . Albert Lai , Chairman of the Hong Kong People 's Council for Sustainable Development , drew attention to the fact that the budgeted spending for infrastructure over the past three years of HK \$ 90 billion contrasted poorly with HK \$ 90 million spent on acquiring and renovating heritage sites .

The Civic Party accused the government of misleading the public : the development plans for the North Island Line precluded the restoration the pier before 2016 . Christine Loh criticised Donald Tsang for failing to grasp the economical , cultural and social importance of heritage .

= = = Preservation campaign battlefronts = = =

=== Public and media ===

In September 2004 , legislator Law Chi @-@ kwong took a swim in Victoria Harbour bearing a plaque saying " Goodbye to the Queen " , to protest the Central and Wan Chai Reclamation , particularly the loss of Queen 's Pier .

Soon after the unsuccessful attempt to save the Star Ferry pier in early 2007 , a campaign to preserve the pier in situ was launched . Ahead of the closure , members of the public , environmentalists , and some lawmakers arrived to tie blue ribbons to indicate their desire to preserve the harbour . On 22 April , about 100 protesters once again rallied at the pier , launching farewell voyages in a last @-@ ditch attempt to urge the Government to reconsider : a petition of over 400 signatures from the Arts community was collected .

An occupation of the pier was started by ten activists on the designated closure date . The campaign was boosted by the appearance of Chow Yun @-@ fat early on the morning of 28 April to sign the petition , and to appeal pre @-@ emptively to the police not to hurt protesters . Some activists , like Chu Hoi @-@ dick , have been involved in the Star Ferry pier protest , and took turns to maintain a round @-@ the @-@ clock presence . Leung Chun @-@ yiu spent three nights a week at the site , despite working a full @-@ time job , vowing to block the demolition non @-@ violently in any way he could .

On 27 July , three students , as part of a group called Local Action started a hunger strike at the pier . Hunger striker Chan King @-@ fai said : " The government wasn 't chosen by us . All we can do is to use our humble and limited voices . " The government responded with a communications offensive , announcing that Secretary for Development Carrie Lam would appear on RTHK 's City 's Forum and at a public forum on 29 July at the pier .

On 30 July , the Government ordered an end to the " unlawful occupation " of government land by midnight . Activists vowed to defy the order ; a candlelight vigil held at the pier was attended by 200 sympathisers . The Government did not risk a violent confrontation immediately on the expiry of the eviction deadline . In an operation which lasted ten hours during daylight hours on 1 August 2007 , 300 Police officers cleared away the 30 or so protesters from the site , amid scuffles . Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor complained that its observers were denied access to the area during the eviction .

=== Legislative Council ===

An application for HK \$ 50 million to fund the dismantling and relocating of the pier was scheduled for debate by the Public Works sub @-@ committee on 9 May 2007 , the same day the Antiquities Advisory Board would hold a public hearing to decide on the historical grading of the pier . Government stressed the timing was " a coincidence " , and steadfastly refused to defer the vote pending an outcome of the AAB vote .

On 9 May , after an hour @-@ long heated debate , the government was forced to withdraw its motion due to the lack of support . Choy So @-@ yuk , from the usually pro @-@ Government DAB , called for the vote to be postponed , and the Liberal Party equally did not back the Government . However , Government ministers declared that it had " no plans to list the pier as a declared monument " , and insisted that there was " no direct relationship between the grading and whether we will demolish and relocate the pier " . During the debate , the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services also said that even if the site was pronounced a first @-@ class monument , there remained no legally binding prohibition against its demolition . Liberal Party Chairman James Tien said that , in failing to muster support to implement its policies , " the Government is like a crab with weak legs " .

The government claimed that its handling of the issue had been " in line with pledges made by Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam @-@ kuen during his recent re @-@ election campaign " to regain the moral high ground regarding heritage preservation , following the mistakes of the Star

Ferry saga . Civic Party legislative councillor Fernando Cheung Chiu @-@ hung said that there was " no sincerity [from the government] to preserve historic venues " .

The public works subcommittee approved the Government 's re @-@ submitted request for funds to dismantle and relocate Queen 's Pier on 23 May in a 10 @-@ 7 vote . Choy So @-@ yuk , who voted against the appropriation on 9 May , abstained . She revealed that she had been lobbied by Michael Suen and Donald Tsang ; party whips did not allow her to cast an opposing vote . The Hong Kong Institute of Architects said it " regretted the funding approval " .

= = = = Antiquities Advisory Board grading vote = = = =

The Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) held a public hearing 9 May , and Board members voted a ' Grade 1 ' listing for the pier by a majority . Twelve members voted for Grade 1 listing , and ten voted for Grade 2 listing . However , the status is not @-@ binding on the Government .

After the hearing , an activist from ' Local Action ' declared the AAB 's decision a victory for the people , and warned the government " not to treat the voice of the people lightly " .

= = = = Legal challenge = = = =

As Lands Department officials arrived on 30 July to put up notices ordering an end to the " unlawful occupation " of government land , the activists filed for a judicial review , claiming that the decision of the Secretary for Home Affairs not to declare the structure a monument was unreasonable and illegal . The High Court set the date for the case to be heard as 7 August . Judge Johnson Lam said that the case about the future of Queen 's Pier should be heard as there is great public interest in the outcome and justified a one @-@ week respite for the site .

On 10 August , the High Court dismissed the request for judicial review , thus giving the go @-@ ahead for the government to demolish it . The judge ruled that the applicants had failed to establish that the government had acted perversely .

= = = = Institute of Planners controversy = = = =

The Hong Kong Institute of Planners , the majority of whose members work in government departments , had backed the in @-@ situ preservation of the pier . There was uproar in May 2008 when it made an apparent U @-@ turn in a position paper submitted to the government backing the relocation to a waterfront location , based on a sparsely attended meeting . It then submitted a revised paper presenting that a majority of its members supported such a move as a conclusion prior to the completion of a survey . A former vice @-@ president of the institute questioned how the institute had become allies of the government .

= = Popular culture = =

The pier is featured in the following programmes and videos :

My Date with a Vampire (ATV)

Life Made Simple (TVB)

Glittering Days (TVB)

the music video of " Goodbye Bell " , a song by Sam Hui

in the 2010 movie Dream Home set in Hong Kong in the year 2007 .

in the 1988 television miniseries Noble House (TV miniseries) starring Pierce Brosnan .