Conservation and development have long been mistaken as options that are mutually exclusive. This proposal attempts to challenge this taken-for-granted assumption by exploring a design strategy that would put the architecture of the GPO into new uses while fulfilling the projected floor area listed in the current development plan of Site 3.

Built between 1974-5 and inaugurated in 1976, the GPO can be seen as one of the most outstanding post-war modern architecture in Hong Kong. Designed like a ‘Factory’ for postage services, the building served as the headquarters for Hong Kong Post, as well as the mail-sorting centre for the whole of Hong Kong. Since the movement of mail and parcels relied heavily on maritime transportation, the GPO was equipped with its own ‘private’ loading dock underneath the promenade in front of the building. After the reclamations in the 2000s, this connection with the harbour was lost and the structures along the promenade were demolished. Using these contexts as references, our proposal explores the potential of revealing the historical connection with the harbour while sensitively adding new architectural volumes based on the old promenade design. A sunken plaza was added in front of the GPO to reflect its former connection with the harbour. Moreover, it serves as a new public event space, while offering a new entrance approach and perspective to the building.
Historical and Cultural Approach in the Conservation of Central GPO

Massing Strategy

Existing entrance via Connaught Place

New entrance via sunken place

Additional massing

Programme Layout

Existing GPO

Required commercial GFA: 33,500 sqm

New mass: 12,277 sqm

Total built area: 43,780 sqm

Non-commercial GFA

For exclusive use by Hong Kong Post

With loading platform and 9 loading/unloading bays

- Speedpost section
- Delivery office
- Post office box section
- Post office counters
- One 25m public loading/unloading bay

Public space

- Open air cafe
- Food kiosks

Exempted GFA in POS

Additional POS out of site boundary

New massing

Building height (BH):
- 50mPD height limit (assume 4m per floor)
- 16mPD height limit

GFA & Programme

Plot GFA:
- Over-ground/under-ground level

Public Open Space (POS)

13,000 m²

Jardine House:

25,052 sqm.

Required commercial GFA = 26% of plot

Over-ground/under-ground level

10% exhibition
37% commercial
58% public space

Central CBD

Old Star Ferry Clock Tower

- Reconstructed
- Transport facilities
- Public car parking

Non-commercial GFA

For exclusive use by Hong Kong Post

With loading platform and 9 loading/unloading bays

- Speedpost section
- Delivery office
- Post office box section
- Post office counters
- One 25m public loading/unloading bay
- One 28m coach bay
- One 26m coach bay
- One 15m taxi stand

2,240 m²

Public toilets

360 m²

9,700 m²

Reprovision of district-tied GPO facilities
The atrium on the top floors of the GPO building can be converted into part of the cultural/exhibition space and showcase the postal history of Hong Kong.

View from the retail floors inside the new volume. The elevated deck offers new perspectives to view the GPO building.

View of the sunken plaza entrance. The new volumes were designed in reference to the old promenade structures in front of the building before the reclamation of the harbour.

View of the postal lobby inside the GPO building. Connections with the new volume offering new vantage points and programmatic potentials.

Old Context, New Potentials

Since the GPO was designed to maximise the potentials of future expansions and developments, it offers a high level of flexibility in rearrangements of internal programs and layout. Our proposal assumed a program scenario with a mix of commercial (offices, retail), F&B, and a cultural/exhibition space to showcase the postal history of Hong Kong. A new volume was designed in reference to the old promenade structures in front of the building before the reclamation of the harbour. The programs designated for public uses, such as retail, F&B, and the exhibition spaces were distributed in both the new volume and the GPO building, so that members of the public could freely access and experience different parts of the GPO.
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