



Before and after looks of the four preserved shophouses at Johnston Road.



## Preservation in Action

The URA has been steadily broadening its vision to look at solutions to urban decay that are all-encompassing, and address the needs of the community as a whole.

One of our preservation projects, a cluster of four shophouses on Johnston Road, now known as the Pawn, was completed in July 2008. It is now one of Hong Kong's hippest places to hang out. They are within the boundary of our Johnston Road redevelopment project.

The four shophouses were very run-down and the surrounding neighbourhood was also dilapidated.

Knocking down the old shophouses would have been the easiest solution, but they housed Hong Kong's oldest pawn shop, and so they had significant heritage and architectural value.

We decided to preserve the most valuable shophouses for re-use as restaurants and shops and to redevelop the rest of the cluster, which did not have significant heritage value.

The entire project took no less than six years and just the restoration itself cost more than \$15 million. But the value goes far beyond just these four restored shophouses. We also took advantage of the opportunity to try and revitalise Wan Chai District altogether. Ship Street nearby has already benefited, as has the rest of Johnston Road itself.



The Wedding City will be located in three preserved Cantonese verandah-type shophouses at Queen's Road East.

In fact, the URA's revitalisation efforts stretch all the way across to Queen's Road East, and they include the redevelopment and revitalisation of the old Wan Chai market.

It also includes Wedding Card Street, which we are proposing to redevelop, because of the appalling state of the buildings, which suffered from not just cosmetic problems but major structural degeneration that made them unsafe. We are redeveloping Wedding Card Street in a way that will continue to see the street used as the focus of the wedding industry.

Whenever we look at a redevelopment project, we do take into serious consideration the heritage aspects.

At Staunton Street, for example, we are taking a conservation led approach that will actually reduce the permitted plot ratio from 8 to under 4.5.



A small plaza will be created at the junction of Wing Lee Street and Shing Wong Street to enhance visibility to the Victoria stone pitch wall.



At Mong Kok, we are now working to preserve two clusters of 20 pre-war shophouses, one on Prince Edward Road West and the other on Shanghai Street. The two projects are breakthrough in URA's preservation work and there will not be redevelopment elements at all.

To date, the URA has already preserved 25 pre-war buildings and we expect to safeguard 48 more shophouses.



A cluster of 10 pre-war verandah-type shophouses of outstanding heritage value in Prince Edward Road West will be preserved and revitalised.

