

True Light Middle School of Hong Kong 2009-2010  
Form 3 Liberal Studies

**Topic: Historical preservation and the sustainable development in Hong Kong. A case study of Wing Lee Street**



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## I. Introduction

This project studies the historical preservation and sustainable development in Hong Kong. The topic of the project is: Historical preservation and sustainable development in Hong Kong. A case study of Wing Lee Street. This is an assignment of Secondary 3 Liberal Study at True Light Middle School of Hong Kong.

As the movie, *Echoes of the Rainbow*, was awarded a Crystal Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival, due to the filming in Wing Lee Street, the movie draws attention to the fast-disappearing heritage of Hong Kong, because in the Urban Renewal Authority's original plan, the historic Wing Lee Street, where the movie is set, would be redeveloped, with 9 of the 12 "tong laus" being demolished. More people started to concern about this problem.

In fact, the topic of urban renewal has been very popular among the Hong Kong society recently. It shows that the project be a constructive, debatable and hot one. Therefore, we would like to investigate whether the urban renewal project is progressing in a right way.

As a matter of fact, we would like to investigate:

- 1) What are the impacts of Wing Lee Street preservation project on cultural, economic, social and environmental aspects in Hong Kong?
- 2) What are the opinions of different stakeholders towards the preservation of Wing Lee Street?
- 3) What can the government do to make the preservation of Wing Lee Street attain the goal of sustainable development?

### Expected Outcome

- a. We expect to learn the preservation of Wing Lee Street in a more dimensional and detail way.
- b. We expect to learn the relationship between the preservation of Wing Lee Street and the quality of life in Hong Kong after the we have done the project.

## II. An overview of the preservation of Wing Lee Street

### A. The background information of Wing Lee Street

Wing Lee Street is located in the southern part of Sheung Wan, on the Bridges Street. It has a total distance of 0.2 km and located between the Shing Wong Street and Ladder Street. The tenement buildings there were built before the 1955 Buildings Ordinance. There are total 12 tenement buildings in Wing Lee Street (Photos 1 & 2), which provide a better living environment than most of the modern buildings as they have a generous ceiling height of 3.2 meters and large windows. Another feature of tong lau are the shops on the ground floor, with storeowners often living above. In Wing Lee Street, many ground-floor shops are still occupied by printers.



Photo 1



Photo 2

## B. Data collection methods

We had collected the information of Wing Lee Street for our project through internet, newspapers, magazines, interview, field observation, questionnaires. Here is a table explaining the details of our research methods.

| Medium            | Data collection method | Aim   |
|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| newspaper         | /                      | Know more about the opinions of different stakeholders towards the preservation of Wing Lee Street. |
| magazine          | /                      | Understand the background information of Wing Lee Street.   |
| internet          | /                      | Understand the background information of Wing Lee Street.   |
| Questionnaire     | Random sampling        | Know the general living environment in Wing Lee Street.   |
| interview         |                        | Know more about the living conditions in Wing Lee Street and the views of tourists.                 |
| Field observation | /                      | To visit and know more about the living environment in Wing Lee Street.                             |

## A. Definition of urban renewal

Urban renewal means to replan and rebuilt old, dilapidated buildings with poor living conditions to achieve clear environmental and social benefits such as open space and community facilities create quality and vibrant urban living in Hong Kong, creating a better home in a world-class city.

## B. Definition of preservation

Preservation is a strategy of urban renewal. It refers to the act of keeping something in its original state or in good condition.

## C. Definition of sustainable development

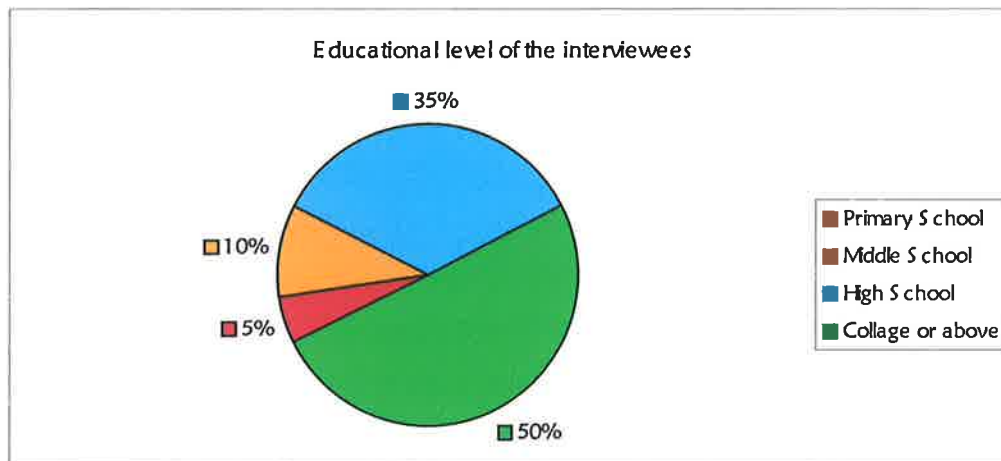
The definition of sustainable development refers to the balancing of the three aspects, social, economic and social aspects in other to save a better environment for the next generation. Our aim is to figure out whether the preservation of Wing Lee Street is a sustainable development of Hong Kong.

### III. Data analysis

#### Questionnaire

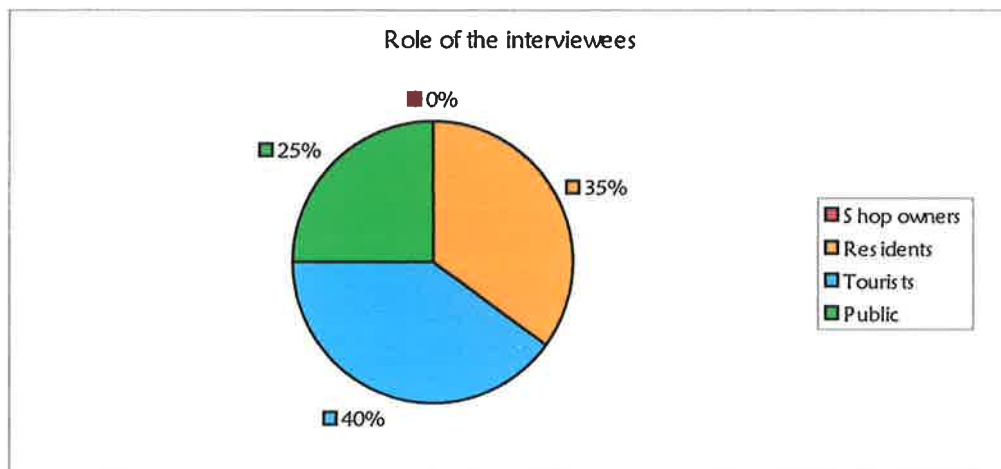
We have interviewed 40 people on Wing Lee Street before. And these are the results of the interview.

Figure 1.



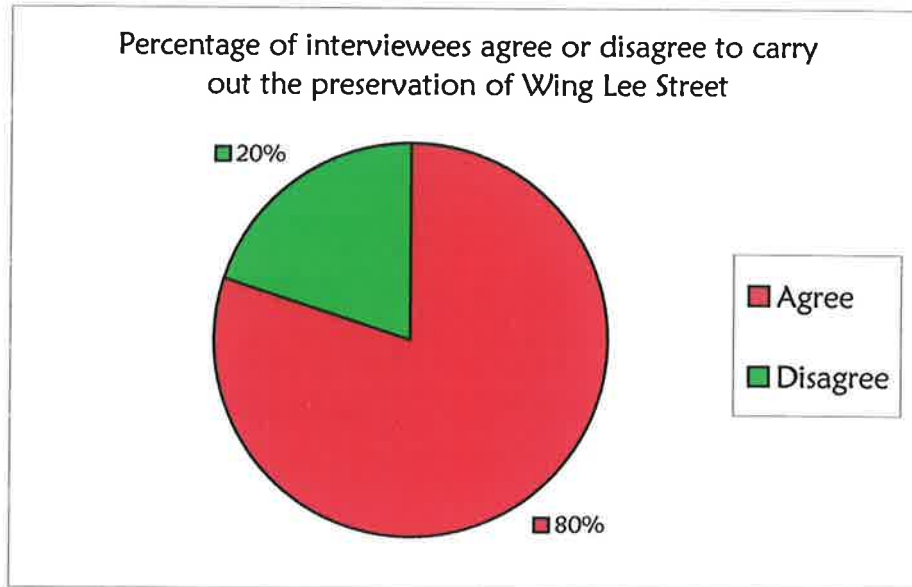
A half of our interviewees have a high educational level which is collage or above. There are also 35% of our interviewees have a high school educational level.

Figure 2



Most of our interviewees are tourists and residents. Their percentages are 40% and 35% respectively. There are also 25% of our interviewees are the public.

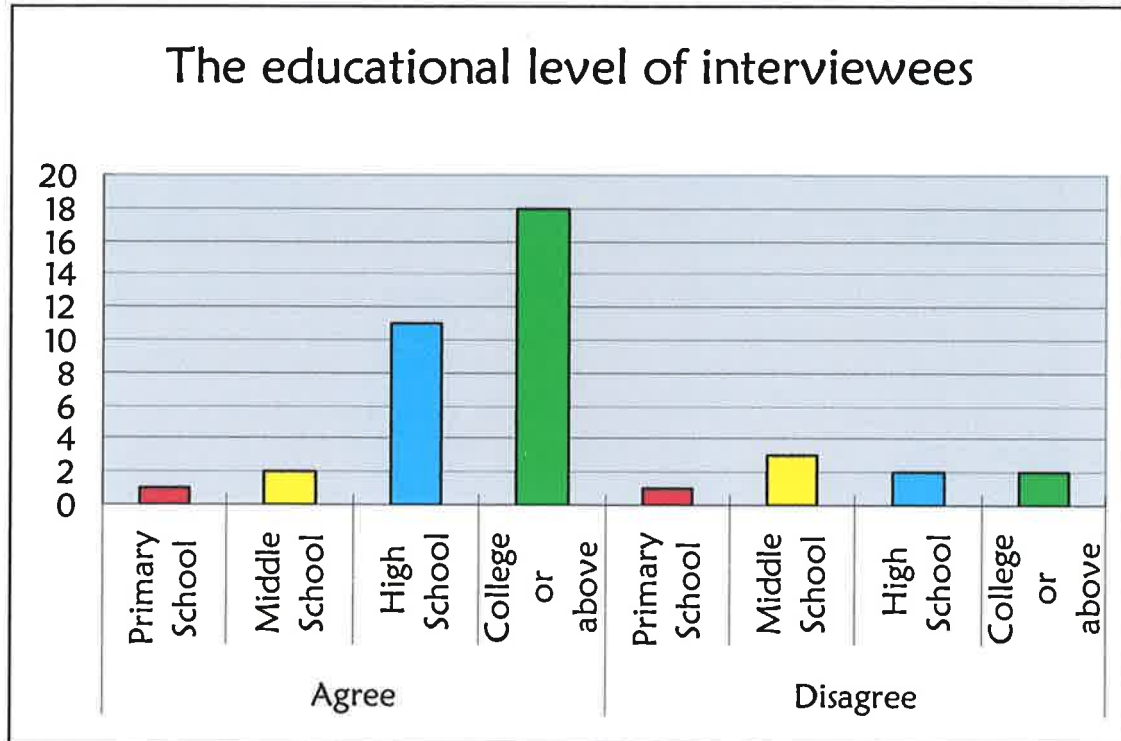
Figure 3.  
Figure 3.



There are 80% of our interviewees agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street while 20% of our interviewees disagree.



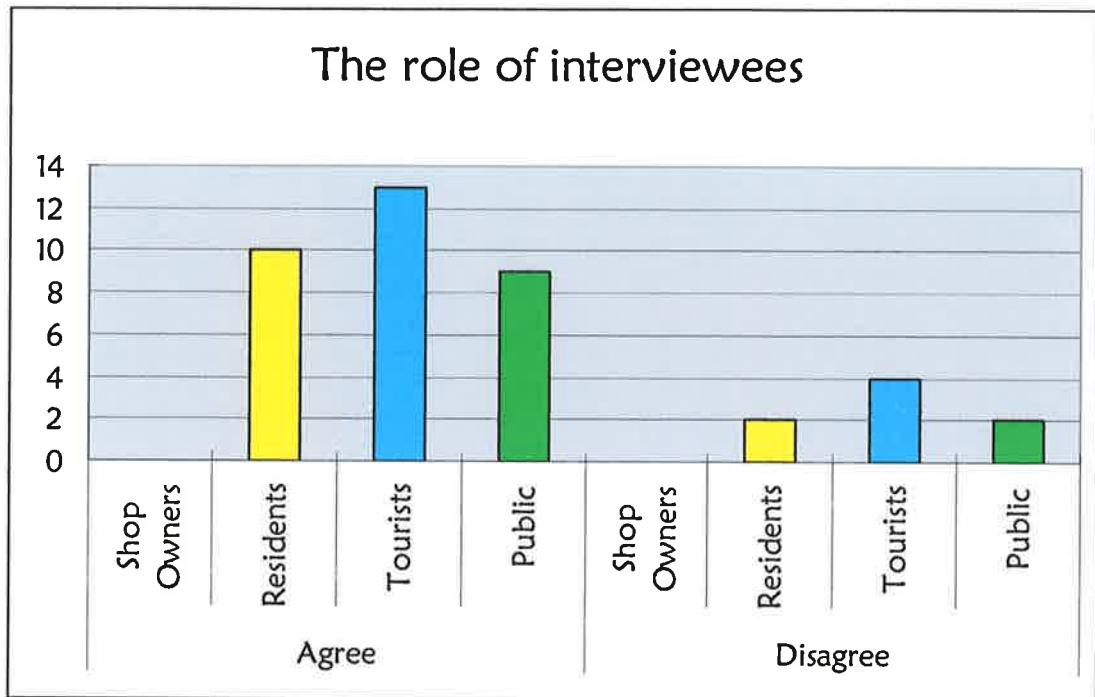
Figure 4.



For the interviewees who agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, most of them have a high educational level. 57% of them have an educational level which is collage or above. While there are just 3% of the interviewees who agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street have a educational level at primary school. For the interviewees who disagree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, 50% of them have the educational level at primary school and middle school.

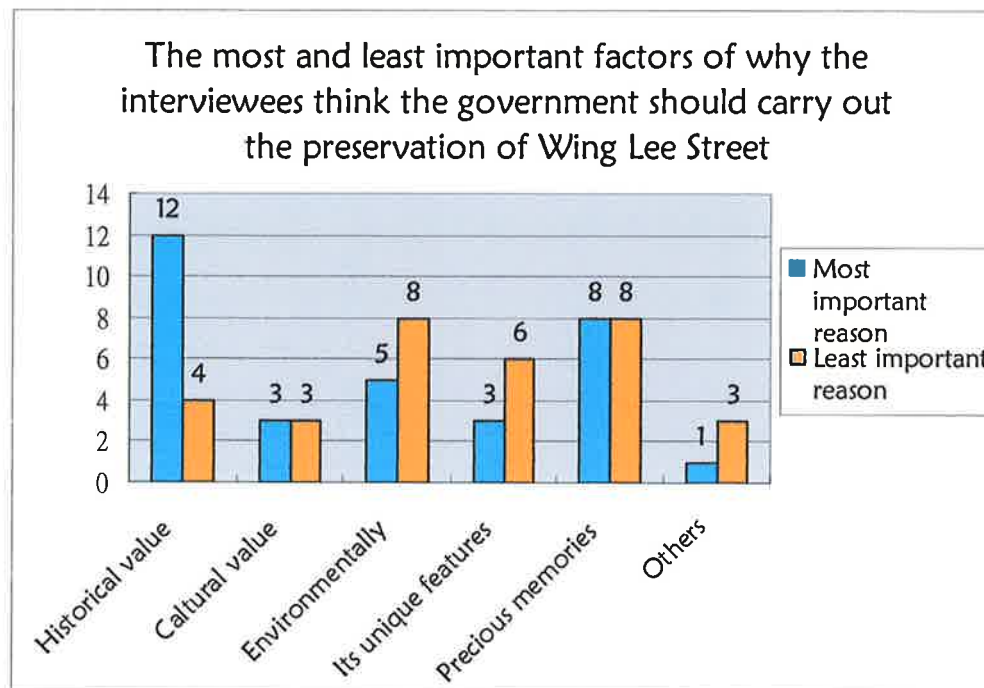


Figure 5.



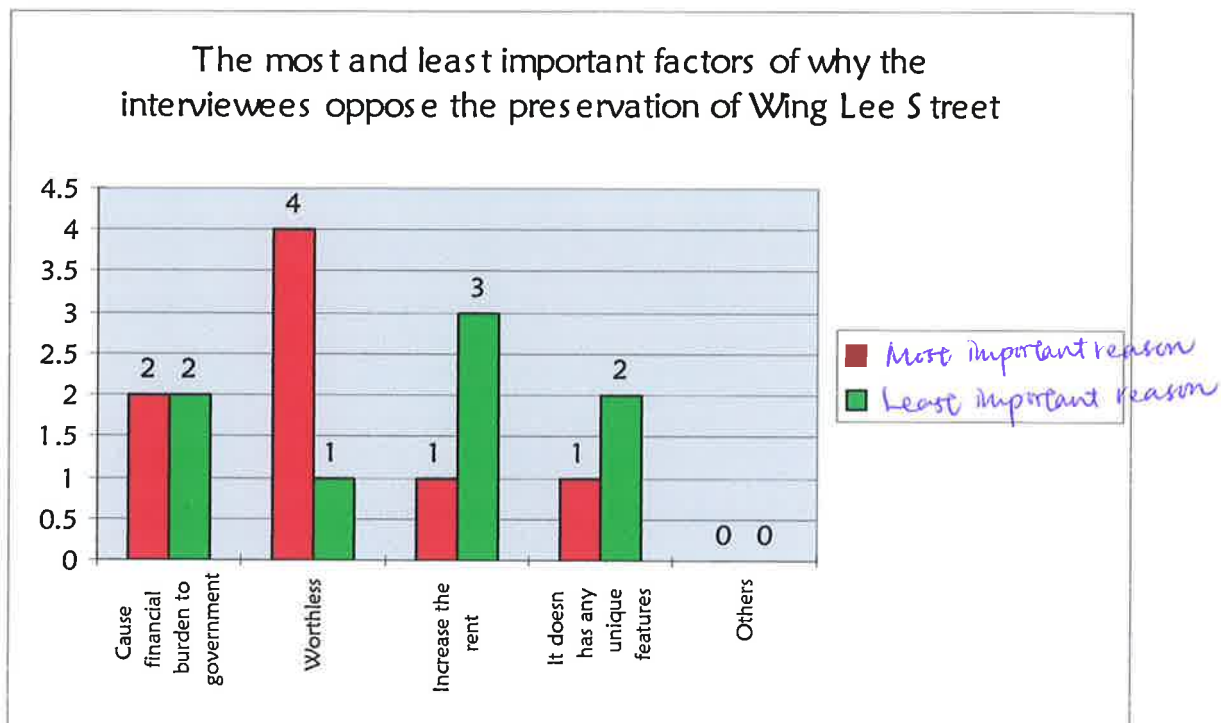
For the interviewees who agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, almost half of them (41%) are tourists. And none of them is a shop owner. For the interviewees who disagree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, 50% of them are tourists and 50% of them are residents and public. Same as those interviewees who agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, none of them is a shop owner.

Figure 6.



In those 32 interviewees who agree the government to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street (which means 80% of our interviewees), there are 12 interviewees (37.5%) think that Wing Lee Street has a good historical value is the most important reason for the government to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street. While there is only one interviewee thinks that the most important reason for the government to start the preservation is that it is forced by Hong Kong citizens and the government has no choice so that's why he ticked the box of others. For the least important factors, there are 8 interviewees out of 32 (25%) think that environmental friendly and precious moments are the least important reasons for the government to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street. And there are only 3 interviewees out of 32 (9.375%) think the least important reason is cultural value of Wing Lee Street.

Figure 7.



In those 8 interviewees who oppose the government to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street (which means 20% of our interviewees), there are 4 interviewees (50%) think that this preservation is worthless and they think that's the most important reason why they oppose the government to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street. There are 2 interviewees (25%) think that starting this preservation will increase the rent and they think Wing Lee Street doesn't have any unique features. For the least important factors, there are 3 interviewees out of 8 (37.5%) think that the increasing of land rent after preservation is the least important factor affecting their negative standpoint. And there is just 1 interviewee (12.5%) thinks that preserving Wing Lee Street is worthless is the least important reason for opposing the government to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street.

## IV. Discussion

Base on the questionnaires we distributed, we have the following findings.

1. Wing Lee Street has its unique features and can attract people all around to visit it.

Firstly, we found out that the education level and role of people are the factors affecting their view towards the preservation of Wing Lee Street. In the 80% of our interviewees who agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, most of them have a high educational level. It shows that the education level of people have a larger understanding on the preservation work the sustainable development to strive a better future and living environment for the next generations.

On the other hand, the role of local and international tourists has the highest proportion towards agreeing to carry out the preservation. There are even two local tours visiting Wing Lee Street that day. One of the tourists thinks that Hong Kong is full of old acquaintances buildings and this gives her another image of Hong Kong. She also hopes that Wing Lee Street can be preserved as it is a unique cultural of Hong Kong (according to Appendix III). It shows that if the Hong Kong government does more to promote the tourism there and to embellish the sight in Wing Lee Street, it can greatly promote Hong Kong economy and revitalize the publishing shops there.

2. Poor living conditions in Wing Lee Street

Secondly, according to our observation there and Appendix II, we discover that the living environment there is actually very bad. The wall is old and the paints are peeling. Besides, the surface of the buildings decayed and the water pipes are leaking and the iron has the problem of rusting (Photos 3 & 4). Some residents want to move out from Wing Lee Street as the living environment there is worse and the demolished of Wing Lee Street provides them about \$200,000 compensation that may improve their living standards. They can move out and enjoy better facilities, for example better linked of transportation. So many people who opposed the preservation of Wing Lee Street are residents living there.



Photos 3 & 4

### 3. Hong Kong people lay stress on the collective memories.

In the 80% of our interviewees who agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, half of them think the historical value is the most important reason for why they think the government should carry out the preservation. From the above data, we found out that residents living there, tourists, and even the public is concern on the historical value. They don't want to lose some traditional heritages in Hong Kong. Also, Hong Kong people care about the precious moments they had together. And in the 20% of our interviewees who disagree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street, half of them think that carrying out this preservation project is worthless is the most important reason for why they disagree the government to start the preservation of Wing Lee Street, and they don't want to waste money, time and even construction material.

## Conclusion and limitations

### A. Conclusion

#### 1. Is the preservation of Wing Lee Street a sustainable development in Hong Kong?

Base on our findings on discussion part, we made a conclusion to summarize our project.

To a larger extent, we agree that the preservation of Wing Lee Street is a sustainable development of Hong Kong as it can balance the economic, social and environment aspects.

Firstly, in economic aspect, the preservation of Wing Lee Street can help revitalize the publishing shops in Wing Lee Street (refers to point 1 Appendix V) because the movie, Echoes of the Rainbow, raised the awareness of public towards Wing Lee Street. More people came to visit Wing Lee Street and hence increasing the overall business of Wing Lee Street. Thus the income of the shop owners increases and the GDP of them increases as well. Besides, the living standard of them will be improved and they will have a larger consuming power. The local economy in Hong Kong grows.

Moreover, as the filming of the movie, The Echoes of Rainbow, and the raised awareness of Hong Kong public towards the preservation of Wing Lee Street, we can see that most of the people there were local tourists and some of them were even tourists from other countries (refers to Appendix III). Therefore we can draw out a conclusion that if the government can do more to promote the tourism in Wing Lee Street and to preserve it better, more tourists would be attracted and that would bring us a long term benefit. Furthermore, if the government can do well in the preservation work, it can show the whole world that Hong Kong is both a civilized, with high technology skills and also a place with lot historical and precious heritages. As a result, Hong Kong's international image and status improves.

Nevertheless, someone may argue that the preservation of Wing Lee Street cost even more money to the government then to rebuild them that may cause financial burden to the Hong Kong government. However, we think that if the government can do more to promote the tourism in Wing Lee Street such as making advertisements for it through newspaper, magazine, government department etc. The rise of tourism in Wing Lee Street can actually bring us long term benefits then to cause burden to Hong Kong government. All in all, in economic aspect, we think that the preservation of Wing Lee Street can strike a balance between stakeholders and bring more benefits to Hong Kong.



Secondly, in social aspect, there is no compensation given to the residents If the government start the preservation work (point two of appendix V and point 1 of Appendix VI,VII)(Photos 5 & 6). The land rent will increase as the cost for maintaining the old buildings increase (refers to point 1 of Appendix VI). Also, refer to our questionnaires, many residents want to move out of Wing Lee Street and find somewhere which provides better facilities. But they couldn't because they cannot afford to buy other flats other than those in Wing Lee Street. Moreover, the living conditions are really poor (Refers to Appendix II, point 3 of Appendix V, point 2 of Appendix VI and VII). The interviewees told us there are many rats and cockroaches inside the buildings (refers to Appendix II). Diseases will spread easily and the ceilings are already cracking. Furthermore, the elderly people have to walk long and dark stairs everyday and that cause a lot of inconvenience to them. People there are actually endanger, they may hurt by the cracking ceilings. However, the relationships between neighbors are pretty close; they know how to help each others. To conclude, the disadvantages of preserving Wing Lee Street outweigh the advantages in the social aspect of the sustainable development.



Photo 5



Photo 6

In cultural aspect, based on our findings in discussion part, it is worth to preserve Wing Lee Street as it has a very high historical and cultural value and many tourists support the project. As they think Wing Lee Street is historical and has a high cultural value, they think it is worth to carry out the preservation work. Besides, the environment of Wing Lee Street that a lot of old tenement buildings are found, they can know more about the past of Hong Kong. We can say that Wing lee Street is part of our Hong Kong history, that's why so many tourists think that it is precious to preserve Wing Lee Street.



Furthermore, Wing Lee Street is a street which is full of 1960s Hong Kong characteristics. In the past, the British soldiers landed on this street and called this street "Occupied Street". Later, it was renamed as Wing Lee Street. That's why so many people think that it was precious to preserve. At the same time, Wing Lee Street helps promote the development of Hong Kong movies, "Echoes of the Rainbow" is a good example. If the buildings in Wing Lee Street are demolished, the heritages in Hong Kong will be less and less. However, based on our interviews, there are still some people who strongly oppose the preservation of Wing Lee Street. One of them even thinks that if all the old buildings are preserved, Hong Kong would look more obsolete. This will hence affect Hong Kong international image! All in all, no matter in its historical and cultural value, it is worth to preserve Wing Lee Street as it improves the quality of life of Hong Kong citizens. In an overall view, more people can know deeper about the history of the past Hong Kong and what the buildings at that time look like if preservation of Wing Lee Street is done!

In environmental aspect, the preservation of Wing Lee Street doesn't require the demolish of buildings which in terms won't have such serious impact in air pollution, noise pollution. Instead, it only requires more embellish and renewal in the inside and outside of the buildings.

As the preservation of Wing Lee Street cannot balance the social, economic, environmental aspects and benefit between different stakeholders and hence strive a better living environment, we defined the preservation of Wing Lee Street as a not sustainable development in Hong Kong. Therefore we are going to give suggestions to the government in order to modify the project (we are going to discuss this in the next part).

2. What can the government do in order to make the preservation of Wing Lee Street attain the goal of sustainable development?

As Wing Lee Street is not a sustainable development, we think that more could be done in order to develop a better place for living. Firstly, in economic aspect, we think that the government can make efforts trying to save the preservation budget. As a result, less money is used in this project and the government expenditure will not be so much. Thus, it would not cause financial burden to the Hong Kong government and it would not be a worry to the Hong Kong citizens.

Secondly, in social aspect, the Urban Renewal Authority can spend more money to prevent the decay of the built environment by promoting and facilitating the proper repair and maintenance of buildings. For example, to draw the paintings outside the buildings again, to repair the water pipes etc. As a result, the safeties of buildings are maintained and the residents can enjoy a living with more confidence.

Besides, more could be done by the department, such as purifying the buildings as the cleanness of the buildings are very bad and to add facilities such as lifts into the buildings. As a result, the residents there can enjoy a better living and the living standards of them improve. Thus, more residents will be more willing to live there continuously and less people will oppose the preservation of Wing Lee Street.

B. Limitation

In this project, we have some investigations and findings; we have learnt lots from it. However, because of limited time and lack of experience there are many areas for further improvement, especially for the data collection. Due to the lack of time, we could not interview and sent out so many questionnaires to different group of people. So we could not get many opinions about the preservation of Wing Lee Street. If we have another chance to do this kind of project, we will learn from the experience from this time and do much better.

## VI. Reflection

We have learnt a lot from this LS project e.g. how to choose a good topic, how to set up questions in the questionnaire, how to write a complete and clear report etc. These are all new and challenging to us. Although we had met a lot of difficulties in our process, our cooperation with teammates help us to overcome the problems. Besides, we have learnt different data collection methods, for example systematic sampling and simple random sampling. These methods help us so much when we collect data at the day of field trip to Wing Lee Street. Although there were only a few people there at first, we didn't give up and more and more people came to Wing Lee Street later. When we asked the people to help us fill in the questionnaire, we found that the foreign people were the nicest! Almost all of the foreign people we have asked agreed to fill the questionnaire for us. They were really kind. Moreover, it was really a good experience for us to talk and interview with the residents and the visitors in Wing Lee Street. During our field trip, we have also learnt much, for example to know more deeply about Wing Lee Street. All in all, doing a project includes lots of steps, from setting topic, then collects data , analysis information and finally comes out the results and conclusions. Through out the whole project, our group has cooperated well and each teammate takes part in different work. This LS project does not only let us learnt more things, like collection method, the history of Wing Lee Street, but also let us knows the importance of cooperation! We really hope that there will be more project tasks to do in the future years.

## VII. Appendix

### Appendix I

#### A. Questionnaire



True Light Middle School of Hong Kong Liberal Studies Project  
We are F.3 students from True Light Middle School of Hong Kong. We are doing a survey on the preservation of Wing Lee Street. Our purpose is to investigate the views and opinions of the residents as well as shop owners of Wing Lee Street and tourists toward the preservation of Wing Lee Street. Please help us to fill in this questionnaire.

- 1) Your age group is: (please tick the answer)  
☐ a. under 15 ☐ b. 16-22 ☐ c. 23-35 ☐ d. 36-45 ☐ e. 46 or above
- 2) You are: (please tick the answer)  
☐ a. male ☐ b. female
- 3) Education level: (please tick the answer)  
☐ a. primary school ☐ b. middle school ☐ c. high school ☐ d. collage or above
- 4) Role: (please tick the answer)  
☐ a. shop owners ☐ b. residents ☐ c. tourists ☐ d. public
- 5) What is your impression of Wing Lee Street? (list as much as you know)  

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- 6) Do you agree to carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street?  
☐ a. yes (to question 7) ☐ b. no (to question 8)
- 7) Why do think that the government should carry out the preservation of Wing Lee Street?( Use grades 1-6, with 6 as the best)  
☐ a. historical value ☐ b. cultural value ☐ c. environmentally  
☐ d. its unique features ☐ e. precious memories ☐ f. others

8) Why do you oppose the preservation of Wing Lee Street? (Use grades 1-5, with 5 \_\_\_\_\_ as the best)

- ☐ a. cause financial burden to government ☐ b. worthless  
☐ c. increase the rent ☐ d. Wing Lee Street didn't have any unique features ☐ e. others

8) What is the direct impact of the preservation of Wing Lee Street to you?

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This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your co-operation. 😊

## Appendix II

Interview:

We have interviewed a resident of Wing Lee Street about the living environment inside. Q= student A= Miss Leung

Q: We are the student from True Light Middle School of Hong Kong. We want to know more about the living environment in Wing Lee Street in order to do our Liberal Studies Project. Can we ask you a few questions about the living environment in Wing Lee Street?

A: Okay, that's fine.

Q: Is Wing Lee Street a good living environment? How is the appearance of the building?

A: The living environment in Wing Lee Street is not that good. Firstly, the wall is old and the paints are peeling. Besides, the surface of the building decayed and the water pipes are leaking and the iron has the problem of rusting.

Q. How about the environment conditions and facilities there?

A: The building density is very high and it is very dirty as there are many insects inside the building. However, Wing Lee Street is usually very quiet and It has enough open space. Moreover, its traffic condition is very good as it located in Central. Furthermore, its transport facilities, community facilities and recreational facilities are quite good.

Q: Thanks for your co-operation.

A: You're welcome.

### Appendix III

Interview:

We have interviewed a tourist in Wing Lee Street about the opinion towards the preservation. Below is our conversation:

Q: Student

A: Miss Fung

Q: Hello. We are the F.3 students from True Light Middle School. Would you mind to spend some time on having the interview with us?

A: Sure.

Q: Thanks. Firstly, we would like to ask you the first impression which Wing Lee Street gave you.

A : Actually, this is the first time I visited Wing Lee Street. I think it is full of old acquaintances buildings and I just like went back to the early 70s of Hong Kong. I can see the history of Hong Kong through Wing Lee Street.

Q: That's means you support to carry out the preservation?

A: Yes. When I first came to Hong Kong, I think it is a very high technology and civilized city. Everywhere is full of tall commercial buildings and shopping malls. However, when I came to Wing Lee Street, it gives another image of Hong Kong.

Q: So you like the environment of Wing Lee Street? Just like giving you a feeling of going back to 1650s.

A: Yes. I enjoyed so much. I think this image of Hong Kong is fresh to me and I would like to preserve it as it is a unique cultural of Hong Kong.



## Appendix IV

### Assignment 6: Data research

Class: F.3 A, B

Name: Agnes Ho (10) Clara Lee (19) Joanne Ma (23) Wendy ( ) Tam ( )

#### Worksheet A

| Source + Name                   | Author | Responsible member     |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------------------|
| 1. Newspaper (銀禧日報)<br>誰為弱小主公道? | 李卓人    | Wendy Tam,<br>Agnes Ho |

Step 1 : Highlight the keywords

Step 2 : Stick your information below

Step 3 : The information below is about the negative influence after the preservation of Wing Lee Street. As the buildings in Wing Lee Street become cultural heritage, it needs large amount of money to repair it which the residents there can't receive compensation but to pay more money or providing a higher rent.

**誰為弱小主公道?**

永利街事件，讓人看到了一個對比。

這個就是強大的輿論壓力和弱小社群之比。

強大的輿論壓力來自民間的所謂「保育力量」。因為電影《歲月神偷》的緣故，加強了反對重建永利街的聲音，「保育者」吶喊，政客抽水，終於「迫使」市建局低頭，將永利街剔出了重建計畫。

於是政府「從善如流」，「保育者」歡天喜地，由此形成了一個氣場，似乎「保育」潮流浩浩蕩蕩，勢不可擋。

但是，在這麼一片「大好形勢」下，永利街那些盼了許多年政府收購重建的舊樓小業主，不但因為重建計畫叫停而見財化水，更因為往的房子變成了「文物」，那就要按照「文物」的標準

加以修葺，修葺費用不菲，全由自己負擔。這一出進的損失消耗，高聲歡呼的「保育人士」是不會管的，上竄下跳的政客是不會管的，取消了重建計畫的市建局也不會管的。

這些舊樓小業主，就是我說的「弱小社群」。一群有苦說不出的人，在高調的「保育」浪潮中，拋上拋下，兩頭不到岸，成了正義旗下的犧牲品。

平時那些聲言為「弱勢社群」助拳的大爺們，現在都不知到哪裏去了。或者，他們都去參加慶祝保衛永利街的慶功會了，興高采烈渾忘了平時的正義扮相，甚至連台詞都忘了。

時至今日，有誰站在那些小業主的立場，為他們主持一個公道？