

A study on the potential of converting vacant school premises into elderly residential care homes

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Background

Hong Kong's elderly population is getting worse.

15.3% (2000) to 26.3% (2020) of the elderly ratio aged 64 and above in Hong Kong.

Faced with a serious aging problem, the issue of a lack of residential elderly care services has gradually emerged in Hong Kong's society.

- As of Jan 2019, the average waiting time for an elderly care home is around **39 months** per person.

On the other hand:

- 183 school premises have been vacated up to Apr 2017.

Can vacant school buildings be used as potential development options to convert them into care homes for the elderly?

Objectives

To objective of this study are:

- To identify the current situation of vacant school premises and the elderly care home service in Hong Kong.
- To identify the potential value of converting vacant school premises into elderly homes.
- To provide suggestions for converting vacant schools in Hong Kong.

Methodology

Interview

Interview with professionals
→The view of the current development situation of Hong Kong's vacant school premises
→Their opinions of vacant school premises converted into elderly homes.



Case Study

A comparison method will be used between the three development options:
→Undeveloped land
→Existing building
→Vacant school premises

Data Collection

| Data Collection | |
|--|---|
| Case study (Second-party) | Interview (First-party) |
| 1) Underdeveloped Land: →The government document (e.g. 2020 Land Sale Plan) →Construction data assumed as the same standard for residential elderly care homes | →Questionnaire for 2 professionals →Qualitative data |
| 2) Existing Building x 2 cases →Related report | |
| 3) Vacant School Premise x 2 cases →Government documents →Related reports | |
| Getting detailed information can continue the comparison to find out the study result | Improve the objective and credibility of the project. |

Findings

| | Undeveloped land | Existing Building | Vacant School Premise |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| 1) Site Area | ✓✓✓ | ✓✓✓ | ✓✓✓* |
| 2) Construction time | ✓✓ | ✓✓ | ✓ |
| 3) Technical consideration | ✓✓✓ | ✓ | ✓✓ |
| 4) Financial | Private burden | Private burden | Government Funding |
| 5) Legal consideration | ✓✓✓ | ✓ | ✓✓ |
| Others | -Waste the land value (Priority in residential development) | | *Surrounding provide green plant and basketball court |

✓ = The feasibility of the actual project

Result – Based on case study:

- Under the condition of most site areas, vacant school premises provide **extra activity court and green environment** (Fig 1 and Fig 2)
- The longest construction time options is Vacant School Premise (6-11 years)
- The technical feasibility of converting a **vacant school premise** is better than an existing building.
- The vacant school development have government funding.
→The project is guaranteed
- The legal limits of converting an existing school is the most.

****The vacant school premise in the site area and the technical and financial aspects are desirable**

Suggestion

The issues of converting vacant school premises:

- long construction time
- For example, CCC Kei Ching Primary School project:
→The project started in 2013, but the construction idea was approved in 2019.

Reason:

> **Lack of dedicated team to initiate the project**

Suggestion:

With reference to experiences in Taiwan:

- A specific policy** (“one town one elderly day care”)
➢ Existing vacant school premise → elderly care service
➢ Special department to allocate the resource
➢ Different department have consensus to plan the design of elderly services

****A policy or plan specifically for vacant school conversion is important**

Conclusion

Current Issue: Lack of residential care homes

Land Resource: Vacant School Premises

Finding → Legal ✓
→ Technical ✓
→ Financial ✓ = **Potential**

Future: Reference other countries cases

- Set up a team to initiate the development
- Relieving the issue



Fig 1. Ho Chun Central Primary School (Vacant school case)



Fig 2. CCC Kei Ching Primary School (Vacant school case)