

Abstract

At present, the trend of property development in Bangkok metropolitan is increasing at high level because of city expansion. In many cases, the project development unexpectedly destroyed historical contexts in that particular place.

The objective of this study is mainly to find the common ground or models of historical conservation and design for a new project development. To balance its adaptive reuse approach to be in line with contemporary socio-economic context, which keeping the historic value of that building.

The case study is the old custom house's site known in Thai as Sulakasatan. This place has been registered as national monument by the Fine Arts Department. There is a group of heritage buildings in the vicinity that used to be custom house in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The architecture style of the building is called Neo-Palladian; the Neo-classic architecture which was adapted from the popular style in 19th century by an Italian architect, Andrea Palladio.

As the custom house's area is limited, combine the adjacent area (French Embassy's land) to study site. The new addition area will help facilitate the study and preserve setting of historic buildings on the Bangrak district's river bank. The research methods of this study are based on: 1) Conducting physical survey on site and compare with the literatures review. 2) Expert evaluation in order to seek to design possibility.

The results of the study can be concluded as follows: 1) the old historical buildings in this site, both the custom house and French Embassy, have high significant value in emotional, cultural and utilization aspects; 2) the appropriate conservation method which matches the study's site is an adaptive-reuse and the best of new character, regarding its efficiency and historical contexts, is the hotel. With reference to the restoration, all dilapidated old buildings will be renovated to look a new while keeping original style. The buildings will be altered minimally as necessitated by the historical documentation. The additional parts need to be in perfect harmony with the original building in style, color and material. The changing of interior floor and wall

structure can be considered to justify the new usage; 3) the design of new buildings, a new old heritage conservation area and adjacent area must be clearly designed in different form and style from the old buildings, but the proportion and size of new buildings should not be much different from the old buildings. The designer must comply with strict regulations in terms of set-back distance and control of building height; 4) on the maximum leasehold contract of 30 years, this proposed hotel project is financially infeasible due to imbalanced between cost of investment and profit return. Moreover, the relatively small number of rooms, only 102 rooms, may not cover the project investment cost. It is recommended that under these constraints, the government provide preservation incentives such as extension of maximum long term to be longer than 30 years, reduction of lease premium, and appropriate height control relief.