

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 149th Meeting
held on Monday, 20 September 2010 at 3:00 p.m.
in Conference Room, Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre
Kowloon Park, Haiphong Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Present: Mr Bernard Charnwut Chan, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Anissa Chan Wong Lai-kuen, MH, JP
Mrs Mariana Cheng Cho Chi-on, BBS, JP
Mr Patrick Fung Pak-tung, SC
Mr Philip Kan Siu-lun
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo, JP
Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan
Dr Lee Ho-yin
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Dr Tracey Lu Lie-dan
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS, JP
Mr Ng Yat-cheung, JP
Mr Almon Poon Chin-hung, JP
Professor Simon Shen Xu-hui
Mr Yeung Yiu-chung, BBS, JP
Ms Heaster Cheung (Secretary)
Chief Administration Manager (Antiquities and
Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies: Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Mr Kwong Hoi-ying
Professor Lau Chi-pang
Professor Bernard Lim Wan-fung, JP
Professor Billy So Kee-long
Dr Linda Tsui Yee-wan
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan, JP
Mr Bryan Wong Kim-yeung

In Attendance: Development Bureau

Mrs Jessie Ting
Deputy Secretary (Works)1

Mrs Laura Aron
Commissioner for Heritage

Mrs Susanne Wong Ho Wing-sze
Assistant Secretary (Heritage Conservation)⁴

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Tom Ming
Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mr Kenneth Tam
Chief Heritage Manager (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mrs Ada Yau
Curator (Education and Publicity)

Ms Fione Lo
Curator (Historical Buildings)

Mr Esmond Chan
Senior Manager (Antiquities and Monuments)

Ms Wendy Tsang
Principal Marketing Coordinator

Dr Alan Fung
Assistant Curator I (Building Survey)

Miss Amanda Leung
Senior Executive Assistant (Antiquities and Monuments)

Miss Catherine Chiu
Executive Officer I (Antiquities and Monuments) 2

Planning Department

Mr T K Lee, JP
Assistant Director/Metro

Architectural Services Department

Mr S L Lam
Senior Maintenance Surveyor/Heritage

Opening Remarks

The Chairman thanked Members and representatives from Government

departments for attending the meeting. He particularly extended his welcome to Mrs Laura Aron, Commissioner for Heritage who attended the meeting for the first time.

**Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes
(Board Minutes AAB/11/2009-10)**

2. The minutes of the 147th Meeting on 24 June 2010 was confirmed without amendment.

Item 2 Matters Arising

3. The Chairman recapped that the Board had discussed at its 144th Meeting on 2 March 2010 a complaint in respect of the Rock Carving Consultancy Study (“the Study”). He informed Members that the complainant had recently written to him to lodge a complaint about the same matter and put forward a proposal for declaring three sites as monuments. A reply had been issued under the name of the Chairman to clarify some misunderstanding. The relevant documents including the complainant’s letter and the corresponding reply had been circulated to Members and tabled again at the meeting for reference.

4. The Chairman brought to the attention of Members that the complainant’s concern was about the outnumbering of Board Members by attending government officials at meetings of AAB. The Chairman clarified in his reply to the complainant that the quorum of the meetings counted AAB Members only; government officials were in attendance to help Members comprehend the government’s administrative background, procedures and technicality. Government officials would not participate in the decision-making of the Board.

5. Mr Tom Ming supplemented that Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) had already received the Study reports prepared by the four consultants. Consolidation of the findings and recommendations was underway and a summary report was expected to be completed by late 2010. The summary report together with the full version of all consultants’ reports would be submitted to the Board for consideration. These documents would also be uploaded onto the AMO’s website.

6. The Chairman then invited Members’ opinions on the complainant’s suggestion to identify the Members making individual remarks in the minutes for open meetings. Mr Tom Ming informed the meeting that the standing arrangement was to identify the Members making individual remarks in the minutes for closed meetings only. Mr. Ng Yat-cheung and Mr. Andrew Lam expressed no objection to identifying Members making individual remarks in the minutes for open meetings as Members should be accountable for their own views and comments given at the meetings. After discussion, the Board agreed that Members making remarks at all opening minutes should be identified in the minutes of the meetings with immediate effect.

**Item 3 Assessment of 1, 444 Historic Buildings – Finalisation of the Gradings of Proposed Graded Buildings and Results of Assessment of New Items
(Board Paper AAB/53/2009-10)**

7. Mr Tom Ming reported that the grading of 1,029 out of 1444 historic buildings had been endorsed so far. He added that AMO received suggestions from the public to include 131 new items / categories for assessment of their heritage value and consideration of the need for grading. In Board Paper AAB/53/2009-10, another 63 historic buildings of the 1,444 were listed in Annex A, B and C for processing. There were seven new items listed in Annex D for discussion due to their urgency. As agreed at the 139th Meeting on 9 September 2009, Members would flexibly advance the discussion on those new items / categories of a cogent need for early assessment.

8. The Chairman then invited Dr Alan Fung to take Members through the items listed in the Board Paper starting with Annex A, with the aid of PowerPoint.

9. Knowing that Number¹ 857 (Sing Lei Hap Gei Lime Kiln Factory, Peng Chau) was unoccupied, Ms Lilian Law was concerned about the condition of the building. Mr Tom Ming explained that graded buildings were protected under an administrative alert mechanism where departments responsible for processing of development/ works applications would alert the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) and AMO of any possible threat. In addition, owners had been provided with information on the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme (FAS) which provided subsidy for repair / maintenance of a privately-owned graded building subject to certain undertakings by the owners, e.g. commitment not to demolish the building in a specified period of time. AMO would also provide technical advice if and where necessary.

10. Members endorsed the proposed grading of Number 866 (Great China Match Factory, Peng Chau) having regard to the historic significance of the industry which illustrated the early industrial and economic development in Peng Chau and Hong Kong. The Chairman and Dr Annisa Chan suggested that plaques with information on graded building's historic and heritage value be erected on the sites for public's easy reference.

11. With regard to Dr Tracey Lu's question about the components of Number 191 (Tung Kok Wai, Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling), Mr Tom Ming replied that the proposed grading of the walled village included its entrance tower and enclosing wall.

12. As regards Number 876 (Old Village Houses, Nos. 15, 16 & 17 Hok Tau Tsuen, Fanling) and Number 877 (Watchtower, Attached to No. 15 Hok Tau Tsuen, Fanling), Dr. Tracey Lu opined that in view of the good condition of the structures and the rarity of watchtower in Hong Kong, the proposed grade 3 seemed not sufficient to reflect its heritage value. Members proposed that the grading of these two items be reconsidered by the Expert Panel with reference to the gradings of other watch towers already confirmed.

13. After deliberation on the first 17 items listed in Annex A, the Board endorsed their proposed gradings except Number 876 and 877 as detailed in paragraph 12. The Chairman then proceeded to discuss the seven new items warranting priority listed in Annex

¹ The numbering of the historic buildings mentioned in the minutes follows that adopted for the 1444 territory-wide historic buildings listed in the AAB Board Paper AAB/8/2009-10 on the proposed gradings of all these historic buildings.

D.

14. Mr Tom Ming briefed Members that the sites of the seven new items in Annex D had been planned for redevelopment and thus there was an urgent need for consideration of their gradings. AMO had completed researches into these buildings and assessment had been conducted by the Expert Panel in accordance with the same set of assessment criteria adopted under the current exercise to assess 1,444 historic buildings. He proposed and the Board agreed that in handling the proposed grading of these new items, we should follow the same consultation procedures for the assessment exercise for the 1444 buildings. However, instead of a 3-month public consultation period, a 1-month period would be sufficient for a smaller number of new items under consideration. AMO would write to registered owners of privately-owned historic buildings to provide them with the information on and the proposed grading of these new items and invite their comments. The same information would also be uploaded onto the AMO's website to invite public comments.

15. As requested by Mr Patrick Fung, Mr Tom Ming recapped the definition of gradings listed below :

Grade 1 : Buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible;

Grade 2 : Buildings of special merit; efforts should be made to selectively preserve;

Grade 3 : Buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable.

16. Mr Tom Ming remarked that the exact preservation arrangement for any graded building would depend on many factors such as heritage value, condition of the whole structure, the features worth preservation as well as technical feasibility of preservation.

17. Taking into consideration the government subsidy by way of the FAS Scheme, Ms Marianna Cheng was concerned about the financial implication and burden to the society with an increasing number of graded buildings. The Chairman replied that AAB's prime concern should be on the heritage value and the gradings of individual buildings to provide an objective basis for determining the preservation needs. The Government will consider the appropriate measures for facilitating preservation having regard to all relevant considerations.

18. Dr Tracey Lu elaborated that heritage conservation and development were not necessarily two conflicting objectives. Self-sustainable revitalisation projects were a feasible example of achieving both objectives through the adaptive re-uses of the historic buildings. She also commented that the growing public aspiration for heritage conservation was a reflection of public's desire for a better quality of life.

19. Mrs Jessie Ting agreed with the Chairman that grading of historic buildings should be assessed based on their heritage significance only. The gradings would form the basis for consideration and implementation of the appropriate heritage conservation options including economic incentives, the FAS and the Revitalisation Scheme. She explained that though initial capital investment was required for renovation of government-owned historic

buildings for adaptive re-use, viable financial proposals would be able to support the maintenance and upkeeping of the buildings in the long run. Thus, financial viability was one of the important criteria for assessment of revitalisation proposals.

20. Mr Patrick Fung proposed that the Government should consider different options to support heritage conservation in the long run, e.g. setting up a heritage trust or imposing a land sale surcharge for the purpose of heritage conservation. Mrs Jessie Ting replied that the Government was looking into the feasibility of setting up a heritage trust in the long run.

21. Dr Alan Fung was then invited to brief Members each item listed in Annex D one by one.

22. Before discussion on the heritage value of S/N² 3, Former Police Married Police Quarters, Hollywood Road, Central (PMQ), Mr Tom Ming briefed Members that the PMQ were situated atop of the site where the Central School had once stood. An archaeological investigation of the site had been conducted in 2007 and site investigation reports had been uploaded onto AMO's website. Archaeological remains and historic buildings are dealt with separately following the respective procedures in place. The PMQ site, like other archaeological remains of archaeological value, have been put in the list of Sites of Archeological Interest and protected under the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) mechanism and the administrative mechanism established to monitor any application for works in these sites. Archaeological remains meeting a high threshold of archaeological value will be declared as monuments under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (the Ordinance). For historic buildings, their heritage value is recognized under an administrative grading system with 3 grades. Those Grade 1 items of exceptional value may be declared as monuments under the Ordinance and subject to statutory protection. Accordingly, in considering the grading which applies only to historic buildings, we should focus on the buildings of the PMQ site, instead of the archaeological remnants.

23. The Chairman supplemented that in proceeding with the revitalisation into a creative industries landmark, PMQ would be required to be preserved.

24. In reply to Dr Ng Cho-nam's question, Mr Tom Ming explained that remnants of the Central School such as the foundations and retaining walls had been classified as archaeological features and detailed in the site investigation report. A request for consideration of grading the public latrine at the juncture of Staunton Street and Aberdeen Street had been received and put on the list of new items. The item would be submitted to the Board for consideration of grading when the research and the Expert Panel's assessment had been completed.

25. Ms Lilian Law stressed the architectural importance of the PMQ as the buildings were a model of the functionalistic and pragmatic design for the first batch of public housing in Hong Kong. In the absence of documentary proof in support of such opinions, Mr Tom Ming pointed out that the social value of PMQ could not be compared to that of Mei Ho House which was recently accorded a Grade 2 status. Dr Lee Ho-yin shared similar view.

² The numbering of the historic buildings mentioned in the minutes follows that listed in Annex D to AAB Board Paper AAB/53/2009-10.

26. When deliberating on S/N 5 (Nos 2 and 4 Tai O Market Street, Tai O, Lantau), Mr Yeung Yiu-chung proposed with the agreement of the Chairman, Dr Lee Ho-yin, Dr Tracey Lu, Mr Almon Poon and Mr Andrew Lam that other old buildings along Tai O Market Street which formed an integral cluster should also be graded for preservation of a historic area. Mr Tom Ming responded that more research would be required to study other buildings along the street. He suggested that the Board dealing with the aforementioned buildings first because of the planned development at the site. In addition, Mr Almon Poon suggested that the stone stairs leading to the former hand-pulled ferry be preserved as well.

27. Upon the Chairman's requests, Mr Tom Ming summarised the comments by the Expert Panel on S/N 7 (Nos 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 Observatory Road, Tsim Sha Tsui) as follows :

- (i) the architectural merit was insignificant and the buildings were not considered as a masterpiece of the architect, Mr. Fan Wenzhao;
- (ii) the historical value was insignificant because the buildings were not in association with any historical events / figures;
- (iii) the buildings, as residential accommodation of both Chinese and Westerners, were common in the area in the old days.

28. Dr Lee Ho-yin opined that the heritage value of these buildings was not as high as those at Lee Garden Road, which were built at similar period.

29. With the above comments, the Board noted the proposed gradings of the seven new items in Annex D. AMO would proceed with the follow-up and public consultation as agreed. The Board then continued discussion on the items in Annex A.

30. Having regard to the uniqueness and the social value of Number 660-665 (Nos 1-6, Pat Kan, Stanley), Number 882 (Law Ancestral Hall, Po Sam Pai, Tai Po) and Number 951 (Yu Cheung Tong, Nos 1-3 Po Sam Pai, Tai Po) as raised by Dr Ng Cho-nam, Dr Lee Ho-yin, Mr Almon Poon, Mr Ng Yat-cheung and Mr Patrick Fung, the Chairman requested that the gradings of these items be reviewed by the Expert Panel.

31. After deliberation of the first 30 items listed in Annex A, Members endorsed all the proposed gradings except Number 876, 877, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 882 and 951 as mentioned above. The Board would continue to deliberate the remaining seven items listed in Annex A and all items in Annex B and Annex C at the forthcoming meetings. The gradings of those buildings confirmed at this meeting would be uploaded onto the AMO's website accordingly for public information.

Item 4 Any Other Business

32. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
November 2010

Ref: LCS AM 22/3