

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION OF THE 133rd MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 16 APRIL 2008 AT 2:35 P.M.
IN CONFERENCE ROOM, HONG KONG HERITAGE DISCOVERY CENTRE
KOWLOON PARK, HAIPHONG ROAD, TSIM SHA TSUI, KOWLOON

Present: Mr Edward Ho, SBS, JP (Chairman)
The Hon Bernard Charnwut Chan, GBS, JP
Mr David Cheung Ching-leung
Mr Raymond Cheung Man-to
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Mr Patrick Fung Pak-tung, SC
Mr Philip Kan Siu-lun
Mr Kwong Hoi-ying
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo
Prof Lau Chi-pang
The Hon Patrick Lau Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Prof Bernard Lim Wan-fung
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS
Mr Almon Poon Chin-hung, JP
Prof Simon Shen Xu-hui
Dr Linda Tsui Yee-wan
Mr Bryan Wong Kim-yeung
Mr Yeung Yiu-chung, BBS, JP
Miss Vivian Yu Yuk-ying
Ms Lisa Yip Sau-wah, JP
Ms Heidi Kwok (Secretary)
Senior Executive Officer (Antiquities and Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies:

Prof Leslie Chen Hung-chi
Mrs Mariana Cheng Cho Chi-on, BBS, JP
Mr James Hong Shu-kin
Mr Ng Yat-cheung, JP
Ms Miranda Szeto Shiu-ching
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan, JP

In Attendance: Development Bureau

Miss Janet Wong, JP
Deputy Secretary (Works)¹

Mr Robin Lee
Assistant Secretary (Heritage Conservation)³

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Thomas Chow, JP
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Mr Chung Ling-hoi, JP
Deputy Director (Culture)

Dr Louis Ng
Assistant Director (Heritage and Museums)

Mr Tom Ming
Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)

Ms Cissy Ho
Curator (Historical Buildings and Structures)

Mr Kevin Sun
Curator (Archaeology)

Mrs Ada Yau
Curator (Education and Publicity)

Miss Addy Wong
Senior Marketing Coordinator (Heritage and Museums)

Ms Yvonne Chan
Executive Officer I (Antiquities and Monuments)

Planning Department

Mr Anthony Kwan
Assistant Director/Metro

Architectural Services Department

Mr S L Lam
Senior Property Services Manager/Eastern and Antiquities

Opening Remarks

The meeting began at 2:35 p.m. The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives from the Development Bureau and government departments for attending the meeting.

Item 1 Matters Arising and Progress Report (Board Paper AAB/50/2007-08)

Presentation Session

2. Mr Tom Ming highlighted the progress of the following items for members' information:

Historic Buildings and Structures

- (a) Declaration of Maryknoll Convent School, 130 Waterloo Road, Kowloon (Para. 2)
- (b) Restoration of Chik Kwai Study Hall, Sheung Tsuen, Pak Heung (Item 1 of Annex B)

Archaeological Projects

- (c) Suspected Antiquities Discovered in the Construction Site at San Po Kong, Kowloon (Para. 7)

Education and Publicity

- (d) Virtual Heritage Explorer (Para. 11)

Item 2 Preservation of the Wanchai Market (Board Paper AAB/51/2007-08)

Presentation Session

3. Prof Bernard Lim declared interest as he was involved in Urban Renewal Authority's (URA) other projects and that the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) had also submitted a heritage report on the Wan Chai Market to the AAB when he was President of the HKIA. Mr Andrew Lam also declared interest as former staff member of URA. As they were not involved in the Wan Chai Market project, the Chairman considered that their participation in the discussion would not give rise to any conflict of interest.

4. The Chairman then introduced the following presentation team:

- (a) Ms Ivy Law, Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
- (b) Ms Iris Tam, Executive Director (Planning and Development), URA
- (c) Mr. Eric Poon, General Manager (Standards and Contracts Management Division), URA
- (d) Mr Lau Ming Wai, Executive Director of Chinese Estates

5. Ms Iris Tam briefed members on the background of the H9 redevelopment scheme comprising the Wan Chai Market site and two adjacent sites along Wan Chai Road as shown in Appendix I of the Paper for which an amended Master Layout Plan (MLP) had been approved by the Town Planning Board (TPB). She said that with the developer's agreement in principle, a core elements preservation scheme to preserve the key elements of the market building in-situ including the façade and the supporting structures comprising over 40% of the market area had been developed. She highlighted the major development parameters such as the plot ratio and the building height, adding that due to preservation of part of the market, carparking spaces had to be reduced, and the originally proposed road widening at the junction of Wan Chai Road and Queen's Road East together with two proposed pedestrian footbridges to link up the three sites could not be implemented. Fortunately, the proposed road widening was no longer required due to the reduction of expected traffic flow as a result of retaining on-street hawkers at Tai Yuen Street (South) and Cross Street (East). She then briefed members on the proposed residential development and the ancillary facilities which would integrate with the architectural style of the Market. She added that the options of using neighbouring sites for the residential development such as the slope at the back of the Market or along Queen's Road East had been explored but were found to be not feasible as the land was owned by the Hong Kong Tuberculosis, Chest and Heart Diseases Association. The options would also require change of Development Scheme boundary and land use zoning, which were subject to a lot of uncertainties and would significantly increase the time and cost of development.

6. Mr Lau Ming-wai recapitulated that the core elements preservation scheme had been studied for several months among other options and was considered the only acceptable alternative representing a win-win situation from commercial, contractual and community aspiration perspectives.

Discussion Session

7. The Chairman noted that the Wan Chai Market had been discussed by the AAB several times since 1990, resulting in the AAB's request to the developer in 2004 for preservation of the market in whatever way possible. He was pleased to note that despite site constraints and contractual obligations, the URA and the developer had come up with the current core elements preservation scheme.

8. In response to a member's enquiry, Ms Iris Tam advised that the curved

canopy, which was an architectural feature of the market building, was included in the core elements preservation scheme. Preliminary assessment also revealed that the canopies were structurally sound for preservation.

9. A member suggested to streamline the two wings of the residential tower to make it more compatible with the curvilinear façade of the market. He hoped that the residential tower could be set back as far as possible so that a greater part of the market building could be preserved. He also considered the interior space of the market, which was as valuable as the exterior design, should be fully utilized, e.g. for display of art pieces.

10. In response to the Chairman's question, Ms Iris Tam replied that in the approved MLP, there was a provision of 1,000m² for commercial use, which would most likely be set up within the preserved part of the market but the type of commercial use had not been considered yet. Both the Chairman and the member were of the opinion that it was important to also preserve the major features of the Market e.g. the high ceiling and grand entrance.

11. A member commended URA and the developer for their concerted efforts in coming up with the current scheme, which succeeded in preserving the most cherished parts of this Grade III market building in the development, and set a good precedent for the conservation approaches to other graded buildings. He hoped that the developer would preserve the original front entrance steps as a selling point to enable the public to appreciate this original feature of the market. He also suggested setting up a display corner on the history and drawings of the market building as a commercial attraction of the new development.

12. Another member echoed the importance of fully utilizing the interior space of the market. He considered that as much flexibility as possible should be given to its future usage because social aspirations would change in time. As such, a museum with admission charges would not be appropriate.

13. A member said that preservation of the market building would provide an assembly point for visiting other heritage buildings such as the Blue House and the Pak Tai Temple in the vicinity. He supported the preservation proposal based on the concept of bringing heritage closer to the community, adding that it would be easier for the public to visit this conveniently located historic building than to visit a remote heritage site where vast resources had to be put in its publicity and sustainable development. He hoped to make reference to this concept in heritage conservation.

14. A member appreciated the proposal and asked if there were objective standards in defining the core elements of the market. Ms Iris Tam responded that URA had sought advice from heritage consultants in preserving the core elements, i.e. the major façade, the main entrance, the curved canopies and fins, and part of the front portion of the structural form, and the front entrance steps. She however noted that the provision of air-conditioning might necessitate the installation of false ceiling and reduce the ceiling height. In response to the member's further question, Ms Iris Tam explained that URA would engage heritage consultants to give advice and would

consult Government.

15. A member suggested to consider installing classic ceiling fans and lightings among other modern light fittings.

16. The Chairman concluded that the AAB supported the core elements preservation scheme. He thanked the presentation team and hoped that members' views and suggestions would be taken into consideration in the development process.

Item 3 Revitalization of the Original Site of the Central School on Hollywood Road (Board Paper AAB/52/2007-08)

Presentation Session

17. Miss Janet Wong briefed members on the heritage value of the site; its setting; the principles to be borne in mind in revitalization; and the 3-month public engagement exercise conducted since late February including open days, a public forum (to be held on 26 April), and briefings for LegCo Panel on Home Affairs Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation, Central and Western District Council (C&WDC), Travel Industry Council, Tourism Strategy Group, etc.

18. A member asked if the public latrine would be preserved, noting that there were few in existence. Mr Tom Ming responded that though the latrine could be seen at the site, it was actually located outside the site boundary the preservation of which had to be further examined. The member suggested to seriously consider its preservation, which was in line with the proposed heritage conservation approach of 'spot', 'line' and 'area'

19. A member supported the 'spot', 'line' and 'area' approach. He further proposed that in the revitalization, there should be matching designs and colour schemes for related facilities such as pedestrian pavement surface, railings, street lightings, signage and mail box.

20. In reply to the Chairman's question, Miss Janet Wong said that a consensus had not been reached at C&WDC on whether the existing quarters blocks should all or partly be retained, or not retained at all.

21. A member hoped to solicit community views on the preservation options stated in paragraph 20 (c) of the Paper at the public forum to be held on 26 April 2008 after which the AAB could then consider if the existing building(s) could be revitalized to provide the necessary facilities so as to strike a balance between preservation and development.

22. A member referred to paragraph 19 (b) of the Paper and remarked that it would be rather difficult in the revitalization process to manifest the heritage and historical values of the site over a long history, with the foundations of the former Central School buried underground and the Police Quarters built over it. He

considered that appropriate interpretation would be required to enable the public to understand and appreciate the historical significance of the site.

23. A member commented that it might be difficult to have a scheme which could manifest the significance of both the former Central school and the Police Quarters. The member therefore suggested to focus on the historical significance of the Central School in revitalization and considered the best approach was for Government to take back the site and convert one quarters block for educational purposes such as evening school of Queen's College. This would highlight the history of education development in Hong Kong.

24. A member supported Government's plan to reduce the development density and building height of the future development on the site to provide for more open space in the District. As regards conservation, he asked if the historic relics unearthed on site, which helped to manifest the historical value of Central School and the historical changes of the site, would be displayed to the public. He also suggested that AMO conduct further study on the contemporary history of the site.

25. Mr Tom Ming advised that AMO had conducted a detailed archaeological excavation last year during which the foundations of Central School and other component parts were found. The excavation site was backfilled for protection of the site and public safety and could be exposed again simply by removing the backfill. He said that the relics were mainly discovered at the platform between the two blocks. These could be exhibited in future through suitable display methods for the enjoyment of the public.

26. A member opined that public participation was an important consideration in the adaptive re-use of historic buildings. She noted that there was a lack of small exhibition venues at affordable charges and convenient locations for display of local art. The member considered that the former Central School site, being centrally located, would be a suitable venue for mini-concerts/art exhibitions to promote art and culture.

27. The Chairman summarized the views on the revitalization of the former Central School site. He shared members' view that a more detailed proposal, perhaps supported by an artistic impression, would enable members to better understand the revitalization scheme.

28. Miss Janet Wong responded that there was no concrete revitalization proposal yet as the Administration was in the process of public engagement. However, Mr Robin Lee could brief members in greater detail on the structure and design concept of the former Police Married Quarters and any constraints in revitalization.

29. Mr Robin Lee said that the design concept of the Police Quarters was quite similar to that of the early public housing/resettlement estates. The individual housing units were separated by structural walls, which could accommodate drilling of small holes for public utilities pipes and door opening through addition of

reinforcement. However, removal of these structural walls to enlarge the space was difficult due to loading problem. He quoted overseas examples of revitalizing similar historic building for hotel or other purposes by building a light-weight truss over the roof to provide a large space for reception or exhibition purpose. He summed up that the structural form of the quarter blocks would pose certain constraints on its future usage and these had to be deliberated in detail in future.

**Item 4 Archaeological Survey at the Site of the Former Mountain Lodge
(Board Paper AAB/53/2007-08)**

Presentation Session

30. Mr Tom Ming briefed members on the background and findings of the survey conducted between January and March of 2007, including a subsurface investigation and a field reconnaissance. He said that as there were few structures built over the site after demolition of the former Mountain Lodge (FML), it was believed that most of the underground features and many other relics could have been preserved. Further investigation was proposed to ascertain all underground features of the FML, in particular the foundation on the western side, the associated facilities of the FML, as well as the third structures of the servant quarters. The project would comprise two parts: an archaeological excavation to ascertain all underground features of the FML, and an interpretation study to consider options for future display of the features found.

31. Mr Kevin Sun then briefed members on the history of the FML, the remnants identified by Arch SD during their ground investigation, the objectives, methods, and the major discoveries of the subsequent archaeological survey conducted by AMO in 2007, which led to the current plan of conducting a further excavation in late 2008 and the interpretation study in early 2009.

32. Members noted the paper.

**Item 5 Progress Report on the Assessment of Historic Buildings in Hong Kong
(Board Paper AAB/54/2007-08)**

Presentation Session

33. Mr Tom Ming briefed members on the background of the Territory-wide Historic Building and Structure Survey from 1996-2000, the selection of 1,440 buildings with higher heritage value from 2002-2004; the formation of a building assessment panel in March 2005; the two-tier assessment approach and the assessment form formulated by the panel and endorsed at the AAB meeting of 29 November 2005. He reported that from March 2005 to January 2008, the panel had completed the assessment of 783 historic buildings of Chinese and mixed styles, which accounted for about 60% of the 1,440 items. The assessment of the western buildings had commenced since 29 January 2008 and as at 14 March 2008, a total of 1,014 buildings

had been assessed. The current plan was to complete the Stage 1 assessment around mid-2008 and the Stage 2 assessment in late 2008 when the building's overall/ group value would be reviewed/ adjusted by using three parameters namely historical, typological and contextual. The two-tier assessment results and the panel's recommendations would be presented to the AAB for consideration.

Discussion Session

34. The Chairman was grateful to the panel for their hard work. He noted the AMO's recommendation not to grade the buildings until the overall comparison and review were conducted in Stage 2 of the assessment.

35. In anticipation of the massive workload, a member asked how the AAB would follow up the assessment results and whether the public would be engaged. The Chairman requested the AMO to put up recommendations for the AAB's consideration. Mr Tom Ming added that the assessment panel had given some preliminary thoughts to the post-assessment work and subject to members' view, they could devise some marking indicators accompanied by explanatory notes to show the relative heritage values of the assessed buildings. The Chairman referred to the discussion at the AAB Retreat and said that if members agreed, the assessment panel could recommend grading for the assessed building for the AAB's consideration.

36. A member proposed to make use of the time while waiting for completion of the assessment to consider how the assessment of individual buildings would align with the conservation approach of 'spot', 'line' and 'area' and whether amendment to the existing legislation would be required to keep pace with time and community aspirations for heritage conservation.

37. Mr Tom Ming advised that group value was taken into account in the assessment. He cited Shek Kwu Chau as an example where the value of a building in a cluster was adjusted on top of the building's individual value. However, the conservation of an area was outside the panel's work scope.

38. The Chairman asked if historic structure such as Pottinger Street (石板街) would fall within the panel's assessment. Mr Tom Ming responded that in the past only historic buildings and structures were graded whereas archaeological sites and boundary stones were recorded by the AMO. Some of the recorded items had been declared as monuments without going through the grading process, e.g. Duddell Street Steps and Gas Lamps, Central.

39. A member suggested that the AAB should do some preparation for the big task ahead such as conducting site visits. The member considered assessment on a district base a good and feasible approach and suggested to start with Central District, which was quite special in terms of heritage.

40. A member suggested that some arrangements be made for the AAB to digest the recommendations of the assessment panel, which was worked out in the past three years.

41. Another member also considered that the AAB should make use of the next half-year to closely liaise with the assessment panel.

42. Noting that AAB members and the assessment panel might be using different yardsticks in their assessment, a member suggested that there should be closer interaction between members and the panel in the next few months to arrive at uniform standards of assessment.

43. In view of the big task ahead, Mr Thomas Chow suggested that members could first of all consider if the existing system should be reviewed as he noted that members had raised different views at the AAB Retreat on the three-tier grading system, the grading definitions, and whether it should align with the conservation approach. He said that as the 495 graded buildings would be reviewed, members might wish to consider the need for setting up a task force to review the grading system and criteria so that the assessment panel could give relevant advice to enable the AAB to start the grading assessment as soon as possible.

44. The Chairman noted that it would be an important task of the AAB to proceed with the grading of the 1,440 historic buildings. He requested the AMO to put up some recommendations on how to go about the grading exercise for the AAB's discussion at the next meeting. Where necessary, AMO could arrange meeting for the AAB and the assessment panel.

AMO

45. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
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