

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION OF THE 136th MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 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
Prof Leslie Chen Hung-chi
Mrs Mariana Cheng Cho Chi-on, BBS, JP
Mr Patrick Fung Pak-tung, SC
Mr James Hong Shu-kin
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
Prof Bernard Lim Wan-fung, JP
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS
Mr Ng Yat-cheung, JP
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
Ms Lisa Yip Sau-wah, JP
Ms Heidi Kwok (Secretary)
Senior Executive Officer (Antiquities and Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies:

Mr David Cheung Ching-leung
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Ms Miranda Szeto Shiu-ching
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan, JP
Miss Vivian Yu Yuk-ying

In Attendance: Development Bureau

Mrs Carrie Lam, JP
Secretary for Development

Miss Janet Wong, JP
Deputy Secretary (Works)¹

Mr Jack Chan
Commissioner for Heritage

Mr Edwin Tong
Chief Assistant Secretary (Works)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)

Mr Kevin Sun
Curator (Archaeology)

Mrs Ada Yau
Curator (Education and Publicity)

Ms Fione Lo
Curator (Historical Buildings)

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 Maintenance Surveyor/Heritage

Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Mrs Carrie Lam, Secretary for Development. He also extended his welcome to representatives from government departments.

Item 1 Conservation Management Plan of the Central Police Station Compound (Board Paper AAB/77/2007-08)

2. The Chairman introduced the Presentation Team:

- (a) Mr William Y Yiu, The Hong Kong Jockey Club
- (b) Ms Bonny Wong, The Hong Kong Jockey Club
- (c) Mr Michael Morrison, Purcell Miller Tritton – Hong Kong Jockey Club's Consultant

Presentation Session

3. Mr Morrison gave a PowerPoint presentation on the key points of the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) of the Central Police Station (CPS) Compound.

Discussion Session

4. In response to the Chairman's question on the project progress, Mr Morrison replied that they had just started preparing a plan for the adaptive reuse of the buildings in the CPS Compound. He hoped to have a clearer idea of what these buildings might be used for in about three months' time for further discussion with AMO.

5. In reply to a member's question on the retention of F Hall, Mr Morrison said that while the building had little architectural interest, it did have social significance as the main entrance and exit to the prison for prisoners and their visitors. Upon the member's further question on the interpretation of the whole compound as the first colonial building complex symbolising the rule of law in Hong Kong, Mr Morrison said that the compound was a wonderful snapshot of the whole process of government law and order and that the interpretation could be better done by a series of interpretive facilities around the site than by just one single exhibition.

6. A member asked if there were similar projects in other parts of the world on revitalization of heritage prisons and whether it would be a better arrangement to devote a section of the site to interpretation with the other section focusing on revitalization. Mr Morrison said that he had worked on a few similar projects in the United Kingdom and that one of the most successful sites was Norwich Castle, which had been used as a prison in the 19th Century and had cell blocks very similar in

design to those at the CPS. However, though Norwich Castle works very well as a museum, all traces of the previous prison use have been lost in the adaptation of the buildings. He thought it would be better for the CPS to combine interpretation and revitalization whilst retaining the form and significance of the original buildings, and hoped that the CMP for CPS would provide a framework to manage the changes of the buildings.

7. While concurring with what was said about F Hall in the CMP, a member sought Mr Morrison's views on the architectural value of F Hall, which had aroused a lot of debate, and on the height of the new additions in relation to the existing compound as he considered that there should be a good balance among them. Mr Morrison said that while the site had cultural significance, he did not have a view, as a conservation architect, on the cultural facilities to be put on the site, which seemed to be a decision by HKJC, the planning authority and the community. He said that if F Hall was removed, it would provide a chance for dramatically reducing the height of any new building and allow more flexibility for circulation and servicing areas. He thus considered it a good trade-off to sacrifice F Hall in return for reducing the height of the new building. Upon the member's further question, Mr Morrison clarified that the original CMP attached to the paper was a working document which had to be revised as considerations changed. Changes to the recommendation from keeping the exterior of F Hall to demolishing it could be made after due consideration.

8. In response to the Chairman's question, Mr Morrison advised that he had been closely involved in discussions with the staff of Herzog and de Meuron. The project architects had accepted that the striking structure spanning the court yard should not be pursued and they were starting a completely new design.

9. A member wondered how the design of a new structure could be fitted into a historical site in the context of conservation management. Mr Morrison referred to the slide (in his previous presentation) of the British Museum Great Court and said that he did not experience any problem in reconciling the design of taking out a section of the historic building and putting a new dome over the court yard. This had enabled a vast number of people to enjoy the museum in a way which had never been possible before. He thought the same sort of balance could be maintained for the CPS site by losing some historical elements in return for new cultural facilities, though it was a difficult balance.

10. A member asked how Mr Morrison would compare the present CPS site with the Old Bailey in London in terms of cultural interest and significance. Mr Morrison said that he was not sure if he could compare different buildings in different places as what made a heritage site interesting was its context and so what made the group of buildings significant was not just their architectural design but also their own history.

11. A member asked how the balance should be struck between preserving the external granite wall, which defined the site and had heritage significance, and providing access to the site. Mr Morrison said that there would need to be several breaches to allow vehicles to get into the site. He thought that the laundry yard behind the wall on Arbuthnot Road was probably the most sensible place for trying to introduce some vehicle servicing into the site. He added that to improve the east and

west access across the site, some sort of pedestrian entrance on either side of the Magistracy and the Barrack Block would be necessary.

12. A member asked if conservation projects like the British Museum would go through the public engagement process to gain community's acceptance of the design. Mr Morrison said that they would normally engage the public through a series of consultations and exhibitions. He would expect different opinions on the CPS project as he had encountered for the British Museum Great Court from various conservation groups. The consultation could take different forms such as meetings with statutory bodies and stakeholders, and collecting and posting of public views through web-sites.

13. The Chairman asked for Mr Morrison's views on the infill and later additions to the historic buildings and the conservation of E Hall as an exemplar. Mr Morrison said that restoring E Hall to a police museum with its original structure retained as far as possible was worthy of consideration whereas the other three prison blocks would probably need to be adapted for other sensible uses.

14. A member asked if research had been done on the street names around the site such as the Old Bailey Street and Chancery Lane. Mr Morrison said that he had no background information on the street names, which appeared early on the 1851 plans.

15. The Chairman thanked the presentation team.

(The presentation team and Mrs Carrie Lam left at this juncture.)

**Item 2 Confirmation of Minutes of the 135th Meeting held on 25 September 2008
(Board Minutes AAB/8/2007-08)**

16. The minute of the 135th Meeting held on 25 September 2008 were confirmed with the incorporation of the proposed amendment.

**Item 3 Matters Arising and Progress Report
(Board Paper AAB/76/2007-08)**

17. Mr Tom Ming highlighted the declaration of the Green Island Lighthouse Compound, which was gazetted on 7 November 2008, and the Assessment of the 1,440 Historic Buildings which was expected to conclude by end of 2008 after which the Expert Panel's recommendations would be presented to the AAB for consideration.

18. A member referred to Item 2 at Annex A of the paper on the Reprovisioning of David Trench Centre to the Old Upper Levels Police Station (No. 8 Police Station). He asked if the two large trees on site would be included in the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). Mr Tom Ming responded that the HIA focused mainly on the historic building. He would refer the tree issue to concerned departments for

consideration. (Post-meeting note: The Railway Development Office of Highways Department advised that the two large trees within the site would be preserved).

19. Upon the member's further question on the tourism project at the former Marine Police Headquarters site, Mr Tom Ming said that a firm date on its opening to the public was not yet available. A member asked if a visit could be arranged before its formal opening. Mr Tom Ming said that he would have to consult the developer first.

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20. Upon the member's further question about the assessment of the 1,440 historic buildings, Mr Tom Ming explained that in the current Stage 2 assessment, the Expert Panel was reviewing the scores accorded to individual buildings in the Stage 1 assessment. He aimed to present the panel's recommendations at the next AAB meeting after completion of the Stage 2 assessment by end of 2008.

21. In response to a member's question, Mr Tom Ming advised that the New Light House within the Green Island Lighthouse Compound was still in operation while the two quarters buildings and the adjoining area were currently leased to Wu Oi Christian Centre as a drug treatment centre. As such, it was not suitable to open the Compound to the public for the time being.

22. Mr Bernard Chan referred to the minutes of the last meeting and asked if there was any conclusion to the Po Toi Rock Carvings case. Mr Tom Ming advised that a review was conducted after Mr Meacham's presentation at the last meeting, and consideration was being made to commission a consultancy study on relevant issues such as the interpretation and conservation of the rock carvings. The consultancy brief was being drawn up.

**Item 4 Review of the Relationship between the Monument Declaration System under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) and the Grading System of the Antiquities Advisory Board
(Board Paper AAB/78/2007-08)**

23. Mr Jack Chan gave a brief presentation on the paper, which aimed to further consult members on a refined proposal to formally establish a relationship between the Monument Declaration System and the Grading System of the AAB after taking into account members' views and suggestions given at the last meeting.

24. A member asked if Government would report regularly to the AAB on the progress of the selection of Grade I building for monument declaration, and the reasons for those Grade I building not selected for monument declaration. Mr Jack Chan said that Government had undertaken to provide regular reports vide paragraph 6 at Annex E of the paper. The member requested and Miss Janet Wong confirmed that such information would be available for public information, perhaps in the form of a paper for the open meeting or press release.

25. While supporting the clear division of responsibilities between the AAB and the Antiquities Authority as outlined in the paper, a member asked if there was any

channel through which a private owner could request for assessment and grading of his building, the rationale for not notifying owners of Grade II and III buildings and when ‘collective memory’ was included as an assessment criterion of ‘social value and local interest’. Mr Jack Chan said that Government always welcomed owners to offer their properties for heritage assessment. Given the implications on Grade I buildings, e.g. pool for monument consideration, proposed monument if under threat, avenue for redress, economic incentive, etc., Government would notify private owners of Grade I buildings of such implications. Owners of Grade II and III buildings could also access the grading information on the AMO web site. On ‘collective memory’, Dr Louis Ng said that the Historic Building Assessment Form had been under continuous improvement since 2001, and ‘collective memory’ was subsumed under the assessment criterion of ‘social value and local interest’ in 2007/2008 after it was much debated during the Star Ferry Pier and Queen’s Pier incidents.

26. A member referred to paragraph 6 of Annex E of the paper and asked whether the commitment of Government to actively consider Grade I historic building as possible monuments should be reflected in the definition of Grade I building. Mr. Jack Chan explained that since the definitions of Grade I and II buildings had been in use for a long time, Government did not propose to change them for the time being.

27. While supporting the proposal to clarify the relationship between the Monument Declaration System and the Grading System, a member asked whether flexibility would be given for declaring Grade II and III buildings as monuments and how the ‘point-line-plane’ concept would be reflected in the grading system as in the case of heritage buildings in Closed Areas. Mr Jack Chan said that such flexibility had been set out in paragraph 19 (c) of the paper. Dr Louis Ng added that the individual (point) and group values (line and plane) of historic buildings had been taken into account in Stages 1 and 2 of the heritage assessment.

28. Another member suggested that the AAB could consider historic buildings in Closed Area as a special zone in the context of the ‘point-line-plane’ approach. Miss Janet Wong added that it was Government’s policy to pursue heritage conservation along the ‘point-line-plane’ concept as reflected in the revitalization of the CPS Compound, former Marine Police Headquarters, old Wanchai, etc. and every effort would be made to pursue that concept for other types of heritage buildings subject to the availability of resources.

29. A member endorsed the paper and suggested amending the Ordinance to incorporate the ‘point-line-plane’ concept in order to conserve an area with group value or natural landscape noting that the individual structures therein might not look significant. Mr Jack Chan explained that the current Ordinance already provided for declaration of a site as a monument if so justified.

30. Since the prevailing legislation did not allow downgrading of any Declared Monuments to graded historic buildings, a member asked whether review of the Ordinance could be pursued now in parallel with the administrative measures and whether there would be a mechanism to downgrade a historic building. Mr Jack Chan reiterated the rationale for not pursuing legislative amendments at this juncture, and that Government was looking into the feasibility of setting up a heritage trust in the long run, which would possibly involve a legislative exercise. He explained that

the grading of historic building would be reviewed periodically and upgrading/downgrading of historic buildings would both be possible.

31. A member commended that the proposed framework in the paper was very comprehensive and would set the scene for implementation of heritage conservation work in the long term. He suggested that a review should be conducted some time after its implementation. Miss Janet Wong agreed that a review be conducted to assess how the system worked, say one year after its operation. Government would report the situation to the AAB.

32. A member noted that a newspaper had reported wrongly that the concept of 'collective memory' had been taken out from the assessment criteria. As that was an open meeting, he took the opportunity to clarify to the press that 'collective memory' had been subsumed under the assessment criterion of 'social value and local interest' at Annex E of the paper.

33. The Chairman concluded that the Board supported the revised proposal.

**Item 5 Heritage Impact Assessment of the Heritage Site of Yaumatei Theatre & Red Brick Building
(Board Paper AAB/79/2007-08)**

34. Mr Tom Ming briefed members on the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) mechanism and the report of the HIA study on Yaumatei Theatre (YMTT) & the Red Brick Building (RBB).

35. The Chairman introduced the presentation team:

- (a) Ms Chow Wai-sum, Winsome, Chief Manager (New Territories),
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
- (b) Mr Chau Kwun-tong
Senior Project Manager, Architectural Services Department
- (c) Mr King Kwok-cheung, Huckleburry
Architect, Architectural Services Department
- (d) Mr. Tse Ching Kan, Curry
Heritage Consultant, Architectural Conservation Office (ACO)

36. Ms Winsome Chow briefly introduced the background for converting the YMTT and the RBB into a practicing and performing venue for traditional Cantonese Opera. Mr Curry Tse briefed members on the cultural significance, character defining elements of the YMTT and RBB and the heritage mitigation measures proposed in the HIA of YMTT and RBB. Mr Huckleburry King introduced the architectural design for the performing venue, which had incorporated the proposed heritage mitigation measures including new elements where necessary.

37. In response to the Chairman's question, Mr Huckleburry King advised that the external walls of YMTT were constructed mainly of stones and bricks and the original pattern could not be traced due to later alterations and additions.

38. Given a small seating capacity of some 300, a member suggested trimming down the size of the air-handling units so as to increase the seating capacity. Mr Huckleburry King undertook to convey his suggestions to the building services engineer to check on feasibility.

39. The Chairman asked if it was possible to restore the external walls. Mr Curry Tse advised that based on historical research, the original walls were designed as whitewashed.

40. A member noted that there was a public toilet separating the YMTT and the RBB and asked whether the public toilet could be resited so that the two historic buildings could be linked up. Ms Winsome Chow added that the said site actually comprised not only a public toilet but also a street sleepers' home and a refuse collection point (RCP). The Department had in the past years made various efforts to incorporate the site into the project. However, it was difficult to identify an alternative site agreeable to the community to re-provision these facilities in the vicinity, which were essential to the community. Due to the urgent need for more venues for Cantonese Opera, it had been decided to proceed with the current project first. Government would continue to pursue the relocation of these facilities.

41. A member enquired about the rationale for grading the YMTT and the RBB as Grade II and Grade I historic buildings respectively and the reason for not grading the RBB earlier until June 2000 as he recalled that the RBB was discussed at Town Planning Board (TBP) meetings around 1998/99. Mr S L Lam recalled that the RBB was not recognized as historically significant in the past. It was not until AMO discovered through in-depth research that the RBB had been the Yau Ma Tei Pumping Station, the oldest surviving waterworks building in Hong Kong, that the building was accorded a Grade I status in June 2000.

42. The Chairman asked if any other historic buildings like the RBB would have been overlooked and not included in the 1,440 historic buildings under detailed assessment. Dr Louis Ng said that the original plan was to demolish the YMTT and the RBB. It was after AMO's negotiations with the developer that the RBB was eventually preserved. The 1440 list might not be comprehensive but would be supplemented when new historical information like that of RBB was found.

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43. The member further suggested demolishing the public toilet and RCP and to use the site for outdoor performance so as to highlight the relationship between the YMTT and the RBB.

44. A member noted that apart from the public toilet, there was also a bathhouse on the said site, which was frequented by local residents. He considered it more practicable to re-provision the fruit market, the public toilet cum bathhouse, and the RCP as whole.

45. Mr Thomas Chow responded that the project of the YMTT and RBB would proceed as the first stage so as not to delay the provision of Cantonese Opera performing venue which was much needed. LCSD would continue to liaise with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department on the feasibility of relocating the aforesaid facilities to enable stage 2 development of the project to proceed.

46. A member raised the issue of how to strike a balance between reinstating the original features such as the publicity panels and the design of the external walls, and asked if the space underneath the stage could be optimised for modern stage effects.

47. Ms Winsome Chow added that they had been consulting practitioners on the design of the stage and the proposed stage could accommodate a small or medium troupe of 20 performers and was equipped with audio-visual and lighting facilities for professional and experimental performances. She thanked Arch SD for the flexible design of the stage, which could be altered for experimental performances.

48. Upon the Chairman's enquiry, Ms Winsome Chow advised that the City Hall Theatre could cater for an audience of about 460 whereas the YMTT an audience of about 300.

49. To implement the point-line-plane approach, a member asked if the site of the fruit market could be taken as stage 3 of the project upon its relocation. Mr Thomas Chow said that reprovisioning of the fruit market was a very complicated issue, which was being reviewed by relevant policy bureau.

Item 6 Any other Business

50. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
February 2009

Ref: LCS AM 22/3

Confirmed at the meeting on 25 February 2009.