

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Special Meeting
held on Wednesday, 15 April 2009 at 2:00 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
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Mr Philip Kan Siu-lun
Mr Kwong Hoi-ying
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo
Professor Lau Chi-pang
Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan
Dr Lee Ho-yin
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS
Mr Almon Poon Chin-hung, JP
Professor Simon Shen Xu-hui
Dr Linda Tsui Yee-wan
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan, JP
Mr Bryan Wong Kim-yeung
Mr Yeung Yiu-chung, BBS, JP
Ms Heaster Cheung (Secretary)
Chief Administration Manager (Antiquities and Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies:

Mrs Mariana Cheng Cho Chi-on, BBS, JP
Mr Patrick Fung Pak-tung, SC
Professor Bernard Lim Wan-fung, JP
Mr Ng Yat-cheung, JP
Dr Tracey Lu Lie-dan
Professor Billy So Kee-long

In Attendance:

Development Bureau
Miss Janet Wong, JP
Deputy Secretary (Works)¹

Mr Edwin Tong
Chief Assistant Secretary (Works)³

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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

Dr Louis Ng
Assistant Director (Heritage and Museums)

Mr Tom Ming
Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mrs Ada Yau
Curator (Education and Publicity)

Ms Fione Lo
Curator (Historical Buildings)

Dr Alan Fung
Assistant Curator I (Building Survey)

Miss Pauline Poon
Assistant Curator II (Building Survey)

Miss Addy Wong
Senior Marketing Coordinator (Heritage and Museums)

Ms Becky Lam
Senior Executive Officer (Antiquities and Monuments)

Planning Department

Ms Brenda Au
District Planning Officer/Hong Kong

Architectural Services Department

Mr S L Lam
Senior Maintenance Surveyor/Heritage

Opening Remarks

The Chairman thanked members and representatives from departments for attending the special meeting.

2. The Chairman said that the original intent of the special meeting was to brief members on the 1444 historic buildings. With the insertion of two items on the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Old Tai O Police Station (OTOPS) and the Review of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, a quorum at the meeting was therefore required.

**Item 1 Heritage Impact Assessment of the Heritage Site of Old Tai O Police Station
(Board Paper AAB/10/2009-10)**

3. The Chairman introduced the presentation team:

- (i) Mr. Daryl Ng, Executive Director, Hong Kong Heritage Conservation Foundation Ltd.;
- (ii) Mr. Patrick Siu, Project Manager, Hong Kong Heritage Conservation Foundation Ltd.; and
- (iii) Mr. Philip Liao, Director, Philip Liao & Partners Ltd.

4. Mr Daryl Ng gave a PowerPoint presentation on the background of the HIA of the OTOPS. With reference to the conservation management plan (CMP), he briefed members on the key mitigation measures of the OTOPS.

5. In response to the Chairman's inquiry on the trees preservation in the proposed site, Mr Patrick Siu explained that every effort would be made to preserve the trees within the site. Nevertheless, certain tree pruning/felling was still inevitable but special attention would be given on the design and the layout in order to confine the scope to the minimum.

6. A member expressed concern over the room rate of the proposed hotel. Mr Daryl Ng explained that in setting the room rate, reference would be made to a 4-star hotel in the rural areas of London and Tokyo. He explained that as some of the cost items such as the land price, renovation and construction fee were waived under the proposed project, a reasonable room rate could be set.

7. Some members worried that the project commissioning would bring along pressure on the public facilities and traffic condition, Mr Daryl Ng anticipated that the toilet facilities in the site might not be sufficient for the causal visitors during holidays and weekends. However, he believed that the public toilet which was located along the main access might help to ease the problem. He added that local community of Tai O would be engaged in the revitalisation of historic buildings and employment opportunities would be offered to local residents by recruiting 10 full-time and 10 part-time staff from the local residents in view of their better knowledge on Tai O's unique cultural traditions.

8. In order to increase the attractiveness of this revitalised historic building, the original Reception/Library would be turned into a display center to tell the story and significance of the OTOPS by means of historical photographs, artefacts, interpretive panels; video documentary; photo album and guide books. The display centre will be open to the public and guided tours would be conducted free of charge for visitors touring around the hotel, including the un-occupied hotel guest rooms and café. He informed members that about 49% of the total project areas would be opened to the public.

9. Mr. Patrick Siu said that the conservation principles would be to retain authenticity and integrity with minimum intervention to the building. Special architectural design would be made to ensure that alteration to the original architectural

features and fabrics would be kept minimal. Character-defining-elements would be preserved or restored. New elements would be understated in design, compatible to but distinguishable from the original fabric. In particular, the facades and features such as wooden windows, fireplaces, searchlights and cannons would be preserved. Details of the CMP had been uploaded on the website of AMO for public viewing.

10. A member appreciated that the proposed design had made appropriate removal or additions to retain the authenticity and integrity of the historic building. Mr Patrick Siu reassured that all additions would be installed in accordance with the current building safety codes, disable access and functional needs. All new structures and materials would be distinguishable from the old fabrics.

11. Apart from preserving the original building fabrics, a member reminded that there were also other features around the building such as searchlights during the past decades in safeguarding the waters and village communities of Tai O, which were of historical value and should also be preserved. He was also concerned about the possible influx of visitors and overloading to the existing traffic facilities.

12. Mr Edwin Tong explained that public consultation had been launched by the CEDD to collect views from the Tai O residents on the master plan on revitalising Tai O. Liaison between CEDD and the site developer would continue to ensure smooth operation of the hotel.

13. Mr Daryl Ng reassured that Hong Kong Heritage Conservation Foundation Ltd. was a non-profit-making organisation which aimed to protect heritage buildings and promote the conservation and appreciation of heritage and historic places. The profits generated from the project would be injected into the local community such as engaging the local community in the revitalisation of historic buildings and providing employment opportunities, through tour guide training and language programmes targeting at local or nearby residents. Liaisons and connections with local community groups and associations were established. Guidebooks, workshops, photo album, video documentary on the history and traditions of Tai O were under preparation.

14. In response to a member's concern about the access for people with disabilities, Mr Daryl Ng explained that assistance from the hotel staff would be arranged for wheel chaired/ disabled visitors, if needed. The entire fixture within the hotel, including the inclined lift, lift platform and new fire escape staircases would be constructed in order to comply with various barrier free requirements. He informed Members that two hotel rooms at G/F of the Later Extension would provide necessary facilities for the people with disabilities. Mr Patrick Siu informed the meeting that there were three plans of continuous heritage protection, i.e. the conservation management plan, conservation policy and guidelines and maintenance management plan. They were under preparation pending endorsement by relevant government departments to serve as a guide for future operators.

15. To address the concern of Miss Janet Wong on the possible excessive lightings around the site upon operation, Mr Philip Liao explained that LED and natural lights would be used as far as possible to achieve energy efficiency. He also informed the meeting that infrared scanning instead of traditional invasive means would be adopted to detect building defects, water leakage, spalling concrete and delaminated plaster etc.

16. The Chairman noted that members of the Board were generally supportive of the mitigation measures proposed in the HIA.

(The presentation team left at this juncture.)

Item 2 Review of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme
(Board Paper AAB/11/2009-10)

17. Mr Edwin Tong informed members of the key initial review outcomes of the Advisory Committee on the Revitalisation of Historic Buildings (ACRHB) on the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme.

18. The Chairman reiterated that applications submitted by small organisations were most welcome. He remarked that no priority/ preference would be given to large organisations. He strongly recommended those interested organisations to attend the forum to be organized by the ACRHB and DEVB on 5 May in order to have a better understanding of the existing vetting criteria laid down by the ACRHB.

19. A member appreciated the inclusion of social value into the criteria having regard to the assessment made by the DEVB. However, he considered that the suggestion to rename the criterion 5 from “Others” to “Other considerations” was too vague. He opined that “Others” might be renamed as “Management capabilities of the applicant”, judging from an organisation’s adequacy of resources, past experience and institutional set up etc.

20. In response to a member’s query, Mr Edwin Tong explained that “outsourcing and joint venture” proposed by the Social Enterprises (SEs) would be allowed on a reasonable extent provided that a clear relationship was stated in the applications.

21. Miss Janet Wong thanked members’ comments and would take note of members’ views in further reviewing the vetting criterion. Regarding the definition of NPOs, she considered that the charitable status of an organisation obtained under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap.112) should be clear enough to define the NPOs.

22. A member declared that she was one of the directors of the Hong Kong Institution for Promotion of Chinese Culture that proposed The Hong Kong Cultural Heritage for the heritage site of Lai Chi Kok Hospital. She concurred with the assessment made by the ACRHB that no preference should be given to local organisations as overseas organisations could bring in fresh mind and help to elevate our international status in certain areas. The Chairman considered that local elements and social values of a proposal made by local organisation would be taken into account in the assessment. He added that the scheme was a continuous process of heritage protection that would be subject to review from time to time.

23. Declaring that she had participated in the first batch of the Scheme, a member shared that most of the NPOs might not be able to afford the heavy cost of recruiting

heritage conservation consultant in drawing up the technical proposals. She asked if considerations could be made for waiving these NPOs and small organizations from technical submission in future to minimize the cost for bidding the project. Miss Janet Wong said that DEVB would provide assistance to small organisations as far as possible such as organizing briefing sessions for potential applicants in which advice on preparation of the financial information would be provided by DEVB's professional colleagues. She added that a checklist on things applicants should take into account would also be attached to the application form.

Item 3 Briefing on 1 444 historic buildings

24. In view that the Grade I buildings would form the basis for future declaration of monuments, Mr. Tom Ming explained that the briefing would start from the proposed Grade 1 buildings and would spend more time on them. He supplemented that all military sites currently in use would be dealt with in separate closed sessions as sensitive information might be involved. Mr Tom Ming and Dr Alan Fung took members through the list one by one with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

25. Members were briefed on a total of 44 Grade 1 historic buildings and the remaining buildings would be covered in the forthcoming briefing sessions scheduled on 30 April 2009 and thereafter.

26. Some members asked if the sound record of the briefing and the PowerPoint presentation could be copied for interested members' reference. The Secretariat would arrange and notify members in due course.

Item 4 Any Other Business

Proposed Timetable for Briefings and Consultation with 18 DCs

27. A proposed schedule for briefings on 1,444 historic buildings and consultations with 18 District Councils had been tabled for members' information. The Chairman sent in his apology that he would not be able to attend the consultation meeting with DCs on 17 June 2009 as he was required to take a tour to the Mainland. In accordance with Section 17(3) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, Cap. 53, Mr Almon Poon was elected to preside over the meeting on 17 June 2009 in the absence of the Chairman.

28. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6: 20 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
May 2009