

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 144th Meeting
held on Tuesday, 2 March 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)
Mrs Mariana Cheng Cho Chi-on, BBS, JP
Mr Patrick Fung Pak-tung, SC
Mr Kwong Hoi-ying
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo, JP
Professor Lau Chi-pang
Dr Lee Ho-yin
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Professor Bernard Lim Wan-fung, JP
Dr Tracey Lu Lie-dan
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS, JP
Mr Ng Yat-cheung, JP
Mr Almon Poon Chin-hung, JP
Professor Billy So Kee-long
Dr Linda Tsui Yee-wan
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: Dr Anissa Chan Wong Lai-kuen, MH, JP
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Mr Philip Kan Siu-lun
Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan
Professor Simon Shen Xu-hui
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan, JP

In Attendance: Development Bureau

Mrs Jessie Ting
Deputy Secretary (Works)¹

Mr Jack Chan
Commissioner for Heritage

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

Mr Raymond Chan
Technical Advisor

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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

Mr Chan Shing-wai
Chief Curator (Conservation)

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)

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 Ling Kar-kan
Assistant Director/Metro

Architectural Services Department

Mr S L Lam
Senior Maintenance Surveyor/Heritage

Buildings Department

Miss Mary Chan
Senior Building Surveyor/Heritage Unit (Acting)

Opening Remarks

The Chairman thanked Members and representatives from Government departments for attending the meeting.

Item 1-3 Confirmation of Minutes
(Board Minutes AAB/4/2009-10)
(Board Minutes AAB/5/2009-10)
(Board Minutes AAB/6/2009-10)

2. The minutes of the following Meeting were confirmed without amendment :
 1. The 140th Meeting held on 4 December 2009;
 2. The 141st Meeting held on 18 December 2009;
 3. The 142nd Meeting held on 22 January 2010.

Item 4 Matters Arising

3. The Chairman updated Members that, with regard to the Board's earlier concern over the restriction of photo taking within the compound of the 1881 Heritage, he had recently met with the management of the hotel operator, the Aqua Group, who expressed their commitment to improving the service to the public and tourists. They had also assured us that there would be no recurrence of similar incidents.

4. The Chairman informed Members that Mr William Meacham had written to the Board on the Rock Carving Consultancy Study ("the Study"). Mr Meacham's letter and the minutes of the relevant meeting had been circulated to Members in advance for reference. In view of Mr Meacham's concern, Mr Chan Shing-wai, Chief Curator (Conservation) of the Leisure and Cultural Services department (LCSD) was invited to brief Members on the progress of the Study.

5. Mr Chan Shing-wai started the briefing by clarifying that as compared to "rock carving", "rock engraving" was a more appropriate term to refer to the ancient rock carving discovered in Hong Kong. He briefed Members on the background, the scope and the expected deliverables of the Study. He remarked that the Agreement signed with the consultants was prepared in consultation with the Department of Justice and the Intellectual Property Department. All consultants were informed of the terms of the Agreement prior to their signing of the Agreement. He explained that the consultants were obliged not to disclose their findings and recommendations before the conclusion of the Study without the Government's prior consent, so as to ensure the independence of the professional input to the Study. He added that the Study was expected to be completed about late 2010 when the full version of all consultants' reports together with a summary report to be prepared by LCSD would be submitted to the Board for consideration.

6. A Member suggested that more information about the Study such as the working schedule, the background of the consultants who had participated in the Study and the study reports should be uploaded to website of AMO as appropriate. He further recommended that a copy of the consultants' full reports could be provided in the Reference Library of Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre for public information. Mr Chan explained that AMO had planned to make publicly available the information and the findings of the Study (including background information such as the consultants involved and the purpose of the Study) after the completion of the Study.

7. Members expressed appreciation of Mr Meacham's enthusiasm on rock engraving in Hong Kong. Members noted that the Study had been openly discussed at AAB meetings several times and hence the complaint and the proposal lodged by Mr Meacham, in particular his comment on the "black box operation", was not substantiated.

8. Some Members opined that the procedures being carried out by LCSD were proper. A Member strongly objected to Mr Meacham's letter, given that he is a consultant hired for the Study, he has the contractual obligation to abide by the requirements of the Agreement which he has signed.

9. The Chairman concluded the Board's view that LCSD had followed proper procedures in pursuing the Study and there was no evidence to substantiate Mr Meacham's arguments. The Board would closely monitor the progress of the Study and the Board's secretariat would issue a reply to Mr Meacham.

10. The Chairman went on to invite Mr Tom Ming to update Members on the receipt of an anonymous letter regarding the gradings of some historic buildings along Kennedy Road, Central. Mr Tom Ming recapped that Members agreed at the last AAB meeting to consider the gradings of historic buildings Number¹ 551 (No. 6 Kennedy Road, Central) and Number 552 (No. 8 Kennedy Road, Central) after comparison with the gradings of similar privately owned residences. Mr Tom Ming informed Members that the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) received in end February 2010 an anonymous letter which provided information on the heritage value of a few historic buildings along Kennedy Road including Number 551 and Number 552. The owners of Number 551 and Number 552 had also provided AMO with supplementary information on the buildings. Both letters had been tabled for Members' consideration. He further explained to Members that both buildings of Number 551 and Number 552 had initially been proposed to be Grade 2 historic buildings. After considering the supplementary information provided by the owner and those gathered by the AMO during a recent inspection to the buildings, the Expert Panel adjusted the scores and accordingly the proposed gradings were downgraded to Grade 3. The scores given by the Expert Panel in the two assessment exercises were tabled for Members' reference.

11. Mr Jack Chan supplemented that Members agreed at the last meeting to make reference to private residences of similar type to ensure that a consistent benchmark would be adopted for grading historic buildings. Some Members concurred with this view.

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.

12. Dr Alan Fung presented the information on the buildings set out in the two letters mentioned above by organising them into the following topics :

- (i) whether the buildings were the family residence of the owner;
- (ii) impact of the alteration works on the heritage value of the buildings;
- (iii) any prominent historic figures the buildings should be associated with; and
- (iv) how to define a prominent historic figure.

13. Given the latest assessment by the Expert Panel recommended a Grade 3 status, Dr Alan Fung presented various Grade 3 western-styled residential buildings of some prominent families in Hong Kong to serve as possible benchmarks for ensuring consistency in the gradings.

14. The Chairman was concerned whether the Board was in a position to judge or define the prominence of a person or a family in history. A Member supplemented that from historical perspective, a person would be considered as prominent if his or her contributions to the society were widely recognised.

15. In response to a Member's inquiry on why the Expert Panel proposed the buildings to be downgraded in the second stage of assessment, Mr Tom Ming explained that the scores for the historical interest and architectural merit were adjusted downwards in view of the supplementary information set out in the owner's letter and the previous alteration to the interior of the buildings identified in the recent site inspection by AMO.

16. A Member commented that the buildings had considerable architectural merit and heritage value while a Member opined that the arguments as presented in the owner's letter were convincing. Another Member was of the view that the buildings were rare and had become one of the landmarks in Central. A Member pointed out that how the society would value certain historic buildings could change over time, reflecting the prevailing values of the society. Some other Members expressed that these buildings demonstrated the lifestyle of prominent businessmen in Hong Kong in a particular period of time in the history of Hong Kong. A Member opined that while there was no doubt about the importance of the preservation of historic buildings, this had to be pursued with careful prioritisation because the public resources it required were not unlimited. Another Member worried that downgrading the historic buildings because of the interior alteration might encourage other owners of historic buildings who favoured downgrading or delisting to follow suit.

17. After careful deliberation of the historical interest, architectural merits, authenticity and rarity of the buildings as well as their significance in comparison with similar buildings, Members were unable to reach a consensus on the final grading. The Chairman proposed that it should be resolved by a vote and he would cast his vote when it tied.

18. After counting the votes, the Chairman announced the following voting result :

- (i) no. of votes supporting Grade 2 : 7;
- (ii) no. of votes supporting Grade 3 : 7;

19. The Chairman then voted for Grade 2. He concluded the Board's decision to accord Number 551 and Number 552 a Grade 2 status.

**Item 5 Assessment of 1, 444 Historic Buildings – Finalisation of the Gradings of Proposed Graded Buildings
(Board Paper AAB/35/2009-10 continued)**

20. Mr Tom Ming recapped that grading of item 1 to 14 listed in Annex B to Paper AAB/35/2009-10 had been confirmed at the last AAB meeting. In the interest of time, he suggested that the Board should start by considering the gradings of item 40 to 59 and 61 representing 10 historic buildings along Shanghai Street (Number 453 - Number 462 inclusively) and 11 buildings along Prince Edward Road West (Number 443 - Number 452 inclusively and Number 586) which had been covered in some proposed urban renewal/development projects.

21. Mr Almon Poon declared interest as a member of the Urban Renewal Authority and was involved in the preservation-cum-redevelopment project of Shanghai Street.

22. After discussion, Members endorsed the grading of the aforementioned 21 buildings. The Board will continue to discuss the remaining items listed in Annex B to Paper AAB/35/2009-10 at the next meeting.

**Item 6 Heritage Impact Assessment of the Heritage Site of Lui Seng Chun
(Board Paper AAB/36/2009-10)**

23. The Chairman introduced the presentation team :

Presenter

- (i) Mr Tony Lam
Director, AGC Design Ltd.;

In attendance

- (ii) Mr William Wong
Assistant Manager (Project Management and Development), Hong Kong Baptist University;
- (iii) Miss Claudia Cheung
Architectural Assistant, Hong Kong Baptist University;
- (iv) Miss Erica Chui
Architect, AGC Design Ltd.

24. Mr Tony Lam gave Members a powerpoint presentation on the preliminary report of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study of Lui Seng Chun (LSC). He explained to Members that approval-in-principle was given by the Development Bureau (DEVB) on the adaptive re-use of LSC as a Chinese Medicine and Healthcare Centre. He briefed Members on the major mitigation measures they proposed following the Study.

25. In brief, the main façade and key character defining elements would be preserved in situ as far as possible. Having careful consideration of different options to meet the preservation requirements and the operational needs of the future Centre, they have come up with the proposed design including glass enclosure, fire escape staircase, disabled lift. The

additional features are reversible and are at obscure locations with minimum visual impact.

26. A Member was concerned that the aesthetic value of the verandahs would be adversely affected if they were enclosed with glass. The Chairman shared a similar view and was concerned that the use of curtains would make it worse. Another Member stressed the importance of a reversible design. Some Members were concerned about the wear and tear of the floor tiles and proposed that long term protective measures should be implemented. A Member added that there should be an appropriate balance between the above consideration of heritage conservation and the need to meet the operational needs of the future adaptive re-use.

27. In response to Members' inquiries, Mr Tony Lam explained that non-reflective clear glass would be adopted to minimise any visual impact of glass enclosure. He further supplemented that floor mats could be used to protect floor tiles, depending on the estimated number of visitors after operation. Mr Jack Chan supplemented that the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) would conduct regular inspections and where necessary, would request the project proponent to implement remedial measures to ensure the best protection of the historic building and the proper operation of the social enterprise.

28. The Chairman noted that the Board generally supported the project and the mitigation measures proposed in the HIA. The project proponent should incorporate the comments made by the Board and AMO into their final HIA report.

(The presentation team left at this juncture.)

**Item 7 Heritage Impact Assessment of the Heritage Site of Mei Ho House
(Board Paper AAB/36/2009-10)**

29. The Chairman introduced the presentation team :

Presenter

- (i) Mr Michael Wong
Chairman, Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association;
- (ii) Mr Bernard Lim
Principal, Architecture Design and Research Group Ltd.;

In attendance

- (iii) Mr John Strickland
City Hostel Working Group Chairman, Executive Committee Member,
Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association;
- (iv) Mr Lawrence Wong
Registered Structural Engineer, Registered Geotechnical Engineer,
Director, Canwest Consultants Ltd.;
- (v) Mr Ivan Ho
Conservation Consultant, Director, The Team Consultant;
- (vi) Mr Rex Chan
Principal, Architecture Design and Research Group Ltd.;
- (vii) Miss Amy Woo
Architect, Architecture Design and Research Group Ltd.;

(viii) Mr Chan Chi Hong
Architectural Assistant, Architecture Design and Research Group Ltd.

30. Mr Michael Wong and Mr Bernard Lim presented to Members, with the aid of the Powerpoint, the proposed adaptive re-use of Mei Ho House (MHH) as City Hostel and the preliminary report of the HIA study of MHH. Mr Bernard Lim highlighted that character defining elements including the “H-shaped” layout of the building block and the signage with old lettering “Mei Ho House” on elevations would be well preserved. Alterations works would be limited to those required for structural safety and addressing the operational needs of the future hostel. In addition, a “Mei Ho House Livelihood Display Gallery” would be provided to interpret and enhance the public understanding of the history of public housing in Hong Kong. A Member commented that this project would be a good showcase of the social and economic value of a heritage building.

31. The Chairman noted that the Board was generally in support of the project and the mitigation measures proposed in the HIA. The project proponent was requested to incorporate the comments made by the Board and AMO into their final HIA report.

(The presentation team left at this juncture.)

32. After discussion, the Board agreed that further consultation with AAB on the two revitalisation projects with the final version of the HIA reports was not required.

Item 8 Any Other Business

33. A Member pointed out that according to the recent assessment of the Transport Department’s Study on the Proposals for Provision of Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems, there was a proposal to construct an escalator link at Ladder Street (a confirmed Grade 1 historic item). Feasibility studies would be conducted before deciding on the proposals to be taken forward. CHO and AMO confirmed that they would continue keeping in view the development in the study.

34. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
June 2010

Ref: LCS AM 22/3