

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 145th Meeting
held on Friday, 16 April 2010 at 9:30 a.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
Professor Lau Chi-pang
Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan
Dr Lee Ho-yin
Professor Bernard Lim Wan-fung, JP
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS, JP
Mr Ng Yat-cheung, JP
Professor Billy So Kee-long
Dr Linda Tsui Yee-wan
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan, JP
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
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo, JP
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Dr Tracey Lu Lie-dan
Mr Almon Poon Chin-hung, JP
Professor Simon Shen Xu-hui
Mr Bryan Wong Kim-yeung

In Attendance: Development Bureau

Mrs Jessie Ting
Deputy Secretary (Works)¹

Mr Jack Chan
Commissioner for Heritage

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

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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

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 Kevin Sun
Curator (Archaeology)

Ms Wendy Tsang
Principal Marketing Coordinator

Miss Addy Wong
Senior Marketing Coordinator (Heritage and Museums)

Miss Margaret Chan
Senior Heritage Officer (4)

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 Confirmation of Minutes
(Board Minutes AAB/7/2009-10)**

2. The minutes of the 143rd Meeting held on 4 February 2010 was confirmed without amendment.

Item 2 Matters Arising

3. There were no matters arising being raised in the meeting.

**Item 3 Heritage Impact Assessment of the Fringe Club, South Block of Old Dairy Farm Depot
(Board Paper AAB/39/2009-10)**

4. The Chairman recapped that Old Dairy Farm Depot where the Fringe Club (the Club) was situated, was a Grade 1 government owned historic building. He remarked that although the proposed renovation of the Club was not a government capital works project, the Hong Kong Festival Fringe Ltd. (HKFF) volunteered to conduct a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) Study as recommended by AMO in view of the heritage significance of the building.

5. The Chairman then introduced the presentation team :

Presenter

- (i) Ms Wailee Chow, JP
Chairman, Fringe Club Board of Directors;
- (ii) Mr Benny Chia, BBS
Director, Fringe Club;

In attendance

- (iii) Ms Catherine Lau, MH
Administrator, Fringe Club;

- (iv) Mr Ivan Ho
Conservation Consultant;
- (v) Mr Robin Howes
Authorised Person.

6. Mr Benny Chia briefed Members with a Powerpoint presentation on the background of the Club. He highlighted that the Club had organized numerous cultural programmes and nurtured many emerging local artists since 1984, thus becoming an important intangible cultural heritage asset of Hong Kong. The Club had demonstrated a successful case of adaptive-reuse of this historic building as a cultural landmark in Hong Kong.

7. He remarked that the Club had lately submitted some advice from Mr Michael Morrison, a British conservation architect, on the proposed renovation works. The advice, together with AMO's response had already been circulated to Members by AMO. He supplemented that Mr Morrison's further reply to AMO's responses would be presented by Ms Wailee Chow.

8. Ms Wailee Chow pointed out that the proposed renovation works were to meet statutory and operational requirements. Among major conversion works proposed were the relocation of the Fringe Theatre and the strengthening of the flat roof to install a means of escape for the users of the existing roof garden and provide additional catering facilities at the roof garden.

9. She further explained that the windows of existing Fringe Theatre were currently blocked up and would be opened after renovation. In this regard, the space was no longer suitable for the use as a black box theatre which required a high standard of sound insulation and black-out facilities. Instead, the existing Fringe Gallery situated in the middle section of the building would be converted to replace the existing G/F Theatre. However, there were two non-structural columns and one structural column at the venue, blocking the sight lines of the audience. Since the columns were not character defining elements, they were proposed to be removed / relocated.

10. The Chairman was concerned about the structural safety after the removal of the columns. He queried if it was necessary to relocate the Theatre.

11. A Member echoed with AMO's comments in Annex C that removal of the structural column would change the structural form of the building and induce extra loading to the brick walls, thus causing irreversible disturbance to historic fabrics. He agreed that the use of independent structural frame could be a feasible solution.

12. In response to Members' inquiries, Mr Ivan Ho explained that the structural column was used to support the roof while the non-structural columns were probably used to support the ice-making machines or cold room on the 1/F in the old days. It was noted that the south block was made up of three buildings. Building 2 in the middle had gone through several renovations, and the columns were 2nd generation heritage.

13. The Chairman invited Members to express views on the historic value of the

columns and the impacts of the removal / relocation of the columns to the building's authenticity.

14. A Member expressed her appreciation to the continuous effort of the Club on the promotion of cultural activities. She was of the view that the removal / relocation of the columns would not adversely affect the heritage value of the building. Another Member echoed that the Club which was situated in the building for more than 20 years had strong association with the historic building and enhanced its heritage value.

15. A Member opined that it was difficult to strike a balance between adaptive re-use and heritage conservation. He considered appropriate alteration in graded buildings acceptable except for declared monuments. He requested the proponent to provide more information on the architectural merits of the building and proposed structural plan to facilitate Members' consideration.

16. A Member appreciated the effort of the Club on preservation of the facades. However, he inquired the reasons for opening those blocked up windows in the existing Theatre. Some other Members shared similar views.

[Posting meeting notes : Fringe Club consultants further supplemented that the request to reopen those blocked windows was related to fire safety.]

17. In reply to Mr K K Ling's questions, Mr Benny Chia replied that the existing theatre would be used as cabaret theatre after renovation. He added that the venue was a retail shop of the Dairy Farm in the past and the windows would be opened to reinstate its original appearance.

18. Mr Kenneth Tam supplemented that there was a chimney at the building when it was originally built. It was supposed that the chimney stack was replaced by the structural column in the 1930s.

19. Mr Tom Ming pointed out that minimum intervention was recommended and appropriate alterations would be acceptable if considered necessary.

20. Ms Wailee Chow added that renovation works would be properly recorded for education purpose.

21. The Chairman summarized that the Board generally considered the heritage value of the columns were not so significant. However, Members were concerned with the structural impact to the building.

22. In the second part of the presentation, Ms Wailee Chow briefed Members on the proposed strengthening of the roof at Building 2 for the new roof garden which would be used for outdoor cultural activities. Mr Ivan Ho supplemented that the strengthening works were carried out to satisfy the statutory requirements under the Clubs (Safety of Premise) Ordinance as well as the Club's operational needs.

23. The Chairman expressed that he was generally supportive to the aforesaid

works in order to meet the proponent's operational needs provided that the works were technically feasible and would not cause detrimental impact to the brick walls and historic fabrics.

24. A Member stressed that the brick walls had significant heritage value and was concerned about the impact of the strengthening works to the brick walls. He encouraged the proponent to consider other alternatives such as the use of independent structural frame mentioned in the powerpoint presentation. He also used Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, formerly the Kom Tong Hall, to illustrate the balance between alterations and operational needs. Some other Members supported his views.

25. A Member recognized the Club's contribution to cultural communities and supported its intention for better space utilization. However, she queried that the outdoor activities on the roof would cause nuisance to the surroundings.

26. A Member expressed concerns about the increase in pedestrian flow after re-opening of the door abutting Lower Albert Road, along which the pedestrian path was too narrow to accommodate a surge in pedestrian flow.

27. The Chairman thanked the proponent for attending the meeting and exchanging views with the Board. He proposed with Members' agreement that the AMO would liaise with the Club for a revised renovation plan taking into consideration of Members' comments.

(The presentation team left at this juncture.)

**Item 4 Assessment of 1, 444 Historic Buildings – Finalisation of the Gradings of Proposed Graded Buildings
(Board Paper AAB/35/2009-10 continued)
(Board Paper AAB/40/2009-10)**

28. The Chairman brought to the attention of Members historic building Number¹ 226 (Dragon Garden, Tsuen Wan) which was listed in Annex B to Paper AAB/40/2009-10. The building was proposed to be Grade 2 and remained to be Grade 2 after re-assessment by the Expert Panel. He informed Members that the owner, after learning the re-assessment result, had lately written to express his view that the building should be accorded a Grade 1 status. The owner also provided supplementary information to the Board for consideration. After discussion, Members agreed to pay a visit in order to get a better understanding of the site before the discussion of its final grading.

29. Mr Tom Ming reported that the gradings of 798 historic buildings had been endorsed so far. As advised at the 139th Meeting held on 9 September 2009, Members would endorse the gradings of buildings for which no adverse comments have been received under Step 1. He remarked that most of the buildings under Step 1 had been dealt with. As the next step, Members would proceed to consider those proposed graded buildings with queries/

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.

requests for delisting/ upgrading/ downgrading. He also updated that research of some items under Step 3 was underway.

30. Before going on to discuss the remaining 27 items (item 15 to 39 and item 62 to 63) listed in Annex B to Paper AAB/35/2009-10, a Member suggested that Number 637 (No 64, Hang Mei Tsuen, Ping Shan) be accorded a Grade 1 status with reasons summarized as below :

- (i) it had significant historical value as it illustrated the village life in the New Territories in the old days;
- (ii) it had high social value because it was a residence of *xiuca* in the Qing dynasty;
- (iii) it represented an omitted but significant element along Ping Shan Heritage Trail. The inclusion of this item would make the trail complete and representative.

31. Some other Members concurred that the building had higher heritage value from the point-line-facet perspective. A Member shared similar views; however, he also stressed the importance of benchmarking and consistent assessment standard throughout the grading exercise. Mr Ng Yat-cheung declared interest as he was an indigenous inhabitant of Ping Shan.

32. Mr Tom Ming supplemented that the building was proposed to be Grade 3 and the proposed grading was upgraded to Grade 2 after re-assessment by the Expert Panel. He added that the Expert Panel had already taken into consideration the building's group value and the rarity of the house in Hong Kong. He proposed with Members' agreement that the grading of the building should be discussed after a visit.

33. The Chairman then invited Dr Alan Fung to take Members through the remaining items listed in Annex B to Paper AAB/35/2009-10. He suggested that a meeting with Chinese Temples Committee (CTC) be arranged to enhance communication. He further proposed to meet with District Councils to explain the Board's decision when necessary.

34. Members noted some buildings had undergone extensive alterations with their heritage value diminished. In this regard, Members endorsed the downgrading of those buildings as listed below :

- (i) Number 1364 (Pak Tai Temple, Hung Hom; from Grade 3 to Nil Grade);
- (ii) Number 859 (Sam Shan Kwok Wong Temple, Ngau Chi Wan; from Grade 2 to Grade 3);
- (iii) Number 1374 (Tin Hau Temple, Lei Yu Mun, Kwun Tong; from Grade 2 to Grade 3);
- (iv) Number 1069 (Tin Hau Temple, Aberdeen; from Grade 2 to Grade 3);
- (v) Number 914 (Tin Hau Temple, Sha Kong Tsuen, Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long; from Grade 2 to Grade 3)).

35. Historic building Number 567 (No. 15 Middle Gap Road, Wan Chai) was originally proposed to be Grade 3. During the public consultation period, the owner wrote in

to clarify that the building, though in classical form, was constructed in 1990. With confirmation from the Building Department on the construction year and after re-assessment by the Expert Panel, the grading of building was adjusted to Nil Grade. Members noted the change.

36. The Chairman concluded that all items listed in Annex B to Paper AAB/35/2009-10 had been discussed. The Board would continue to deliberate the items listed in Paper AAB/40/2009-10 in the next meeting.

Item 5 Any Other Business

37. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
June 2010

Ref: LCS AM 22/3