

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 155th Meeting
held on Friday, 2 September 2011 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)
Dr Anissa Chan Wong Lai-kuen, MH, JP
Mrs Mariana Cheng Cho Chi-on, BBS, JP
Professor Ho Pui-yin
Mr Henry Ho Kin-chung
Mr Philip Kan Siu-lun
Mr Tim Ko Tim-keung
Mr Tony Lam Chung-wai
Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan, JP
Dr Lee Ho-yin
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Professor Tracey Lu Lie-dan
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS, JP
Ms Janet Pau Heng-ting
Professor Simon Shen Xu-hui
Professor Billy So Kee-long
Dr Joseph Ting Sun-pao

Ms Becky Lam (Secretary)
Senior Executive Officer (Antiquities and Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies: Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Professor Chung Po-yin
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo, JP

Dr Lau Chi-pang
Mr Conrad Wong Tin-cheung, JP
Mr Yeung Yiu-chung, BBS, JP

In Attendance:

Development Bureau
Mrs Jessie Ting
Deputy Secretary (Works)1

Miss Vivian Ko
Commissioner for Heritage

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr Tom Ming
Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mr Kenneth Tam
Chief Heritage Manager (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mrs Ada Yau
Curator (Archaeology)

Mr Kevin Sun
Curator (Education and Publicity)

Ms Fione Lo
Curator (Historical Buildings) 1

Ms Angela Siu
Curator (Historical Buildings) 2

Dr Alan Fung
Assistant Curator I (Building Survey)

Planning Department
Mr T K Lee, JP
Assistant Director/Metro

Architectural Services Department

Mr S L Lam

Senior Maintenance Surveyor/Heritage

Opening Remarks

The Chairman thanked Members and representatives from government departments for attending the meeting. He welcomed the new Commissioner for Heritage, Miss Vivian Ko who attended the meeting for the first time. He also expressed his gratitude to Mrs Jessie Ting, who would be appointed as the Postmaster General in October, for her contribution to the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) matters in the past few years.

**Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes
(Board Minutes AAB/3/2011-12)**

2. The minutes of the 154th Meeting held on 15 June 2011 were confirmed without amendment.

**Item 2 Matters Arising and Progress Report
(Board Paper AAB/19/2011-12)**

3. Mr Tom Ming reported the progress of the major heritage issues, inter alia the declaration of the fortified structure at Ha Pak Nai, Yuen Long. It was declared as a monument under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (the Ordinance) by notice in the Gazette on 24 June 2011.

4. He further reported that with Members' support on the proposed declaration of the School House of St Stephen's College and the old structures of King's College as monuments under the Ordinance at its meeting on 15 June 2011, the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) was proceeding with the declaration procedures as required under the Ordinance.

5. He introduced those restoration and maintenance projects being undertaken by AMO as listed at Annex B to the Board Paper with special regard to the Residence of Ip Ting-sz (the Residence) which was located at Lin Ma Hang. Restoration of the Residence had been practically completed and a site visit had been arranged for

Members on 18 August 2011.

6. In response to Dr Joseph Ting's question, Mr Tom Ming said that appropriate display and interpretation facilities would be explored and set out at the site.

7. In view of the remoteness of the Residence, the Chairman doubted if guided tours to the Residence would be attractive. He suggested that tours to the Residence should also include some of the historic sites in the vicinity.

8. In response to the Chairman's suggestion, Mr Tim Ko named a few attractions within the adjacent areas like the MacIntosh Forts, Lo Wu Railway Bridge and Sandy Ridge Cemetery for AMO and Members' reference.

**Item 3 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) on the Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club
(Board Paper AAB/20/2011-12)**

9. The Chairman introduced the presentation team:

Miss Eve Tam

Acting Chief Curator (Art promotion Office), LCSD;

Ms Stephanie Lo

Property Services Manager, Architectural Services Department;

Ms May Ho

Heritage Consultant, Centre for Architectural Heritage Research,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong;

Mr Kennon Cheung

Senior Architect, Yau Lee Construction Company Limited;

Mr Dickson Kwan

Project Manager, Yau Lee Construction Company Limited.

10. Ms May Ho presented to Members the proposal to convert the Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club into a community and public art centre, namely Artspace @ Oil Street that would be used by the Art Promotion Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) as its main office and a venue for organising exhibitions and education activities for the public. She briefed Members

in detail the historical background, architectural merits and key character-defining elements of the compound.

11. Mr Kennon Cheung further explained the proposed works and mitigation measures. In gist, the overall setting and the three existing old building blocks would be preserved and adaptively re-used. To comply with modern-day requirements, management approach and fire engineering approach, such as placing portable plants in front of existing balustrades and enclosing the existing timber staircase by fire protection board, would be adopted so that changes / disturbance to the historic building would be kept to the minimum.

12. Mr Tony Lam was concerned about the feasibility of the management approach for improving the safety of the building as proposed by the presentation team. Ms May Ho explained that as 1/F would be used as office without public access, management control would be implemented by putting portable plants in front of the existing balustrades along the verandah on 1/F to prevent people from leaning on them.

13. Dr Lee Ho-yin expressed his support to the proposed works and corresponding mitigation measures which he considered had struck a proper balance between heritage conservation and adaptive re-use.

14. The Chairman concluded that AAB was supportive of the findings of the HIA on the Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club and further consultation with AAB to finalise the HIA report would not be necessary.

Item 4 Progress Report on Rock Carvings Consultancy Study (Board Paper AAB/21/2011-12)

15. The Chairman invited Mr Tom Ming and Mrs Ada Yau to brief Members on the Rock Carvings Consultancy Study and implementation of the recommendations as suggested in the consultancy reports.

16. Mr Tom Ming briefly introduced to Members the eight rock carvings and the rock inscription in Hong Kong which had been declared as monuments under the Ordinance. These rock carvings and rock inscription scattered mainly along the coastal areas and had undergone weathering for many years. In 2009, AMO

identified four international specialists to review the existing conservation measures and the display settings of these rock carvings and rock inscription.

17. Mrs Ada Yau then explained that the term “rock carving” in the study mainly referred to “rock engraving” or “petroglyph” which described a motif that had been pecked into the bedrock resulting in a lowering of the surface to form the motif. However, “rock carving” was more commonly used in general archaeology publications. She went on to introduce the features of each rock carving and rock inscription.

18. Mrs Ada Yau briefed Members that a geotechnical engineer, Mr Richard L. Thomas, was commissioned to study the preservation of the rock carvings in 1977 and 1979. Both studies recommended the construction of a surface channel to intercept groundwater and surface water flow, the provision of viewing platform and shelter to protect the rock face from wave attack and sea water spray, and the construction of concrete buttress to enhance the overall stability of the block of rock. AMO implemented the measures as recommended over the past decades to protect the declared rock carvings and inscription. In 2007, Mr William Meacham, an AAB Member in 1987-1988, expressed his views on the inadequacy of the conservation measures adopted for the rock carvings on Po Toi and proposed a consultancy study to look into the issue. After the presentation made by Mr Meacham in September 2008, AAB advised AMO to review the conservation measures of rock carvings by consulting international experts. In 2009, four international experts, namely Dr Richard Engelhardt, Mr William Meacham, Mr Andrew Thorn and Dr Valérie Magar, were commissioned to conduct a consultancy study.

19. Mrs Ada Yau reported that the short-term improvement measures as recommended in the study, including removal of the Perspex screens, shelters, water diversion dams, cement capping, had been implemented. For the rock carving at Shek Pik, the surrounding area had been cleaned up and renovation works for the refuse collection point would be arranged. The plants above the rock carving at Cheung Chau had also been removed to fix the water seepage problem. Geological surveys of all the sites and hydrological assessment of the rock carvings on Po Toi and Cheung Chau had been completed. Hydrological studies for other sites would be arranged in due course.

20. In order to implement the recommended medium-term and long-term

measures, Mrs Ada Yau said that 3D laser scanning would be arranged to collect information on the monuments and monitor the rock carving surface. The Central Conservation Section of LCSD had also been assisting AMO in exploring suitable materials for replacement of the water diversion dams. As regard the recommendations to enhance interpretation of each rock carving and its linkage with other rock carvings in Hong Kong to promote public awareness of their heritage value, AMO had commissioned the Community Project Workshop (CPW) of the Faculty of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong to design new protection and visitor facilities for the sites.

21. Prof Tracey Lu commented that the objective of the consultancy study should be a review of the conservation measures and interpretation of the rock carvings but not a study of their heritage value. She agreed that removal of the existing protection shelters would enhance public appreciation of the rock carvings but the public should be suitably prevented from touching the rock carvings. Given the unique climate condition in Hong Kong and geological condition of the rock carvings, she considered that experts with knowledge in local climate as well as geology should be invited to give advice on the design of the new protection measures.

22. Dr Lee Ho-yin remarked that it was common in the past to focus on protection when formulating conservation measures for rock carvings. With increasing public aspiration for heritage, visitor interpretation became increasingly important.

23. Dr Joseph Ting said that it was hard to strike a balance between conservation and public appreciation. He doubted if there was sufficient research on the heritage significance of the rock carvings.

24. The Chairman took the opportunity to brief members on Mr Meacham's letter which had been circulated to all Members for information. Mr Meacham strongly advised the government to seek advice from specialists, consult academic rock art researchers and establish a balanced working group to plan for the future course of actions. The Chairman invited Mr Tom Ming to brief Members on the way forward.

25. Mr Tom Ming said that Mr Meacham was an expert in the ancient rock carvings of Hong Kong and had conducted considerable research on the subject. He

explained that these rock carvings and rock inscription were under statutory protection as monuments. The objective of the consultancy study was to review the conservation measures and to enhance interpretation for visitors. AMO had implemented short-term measures as recommended in the consultancy reports. To implement the medium and long term measures, CPW had been commissioned to formulate new protection measures and visitor facilities for the sites. CPW, as a team of experts from the Faculty of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong, would have its advantage to draw interdisciplinary experts within the University whenever necessary. They would also consult the experts responsible for the consultancy study if and where necessary.

26. Dr Lee Ho-yin declared his interest as he was an adviser of CPW, but he would not take part in the project. He supplemented that CPW had been commissioned to formulate appropriate measures taking into account the recommendations in the consultancy reports as well as the views of Mr Meacham with an aim to strike a balance between conservation and public appreciation of the rock carvings.

27. In answering the Chairman's question about who should assume the leading role in the project, Mr Tom Ming reiterated that the issue would require professional knowledge from various fields. As such, AMO had commissioned CPW to conduct the design study. CPW would consolidate the recommendations in the consultancy reports, seek views from related experts and draw up an appropriate design proposal. The proposal would be submitted to AAB for comments.

28. Prof Tracey Lu supported AMO to take the leading role because the rock carvings and rock inscription were declared monuments under statutory protection.

29. Mr Laurence Li considered it appropriate for CPW to take up the project. For the protection of these rock carvings, he would rather suggest not to include any aggressive promotion. He also expressed his appreciation for Mr Meacham's enthusiasm on rock carvings.

30. The Chairman, on behalf of AAB, thanked Mr Meacham for his continuous efforts and valuable views on rock carvings.

31. Dr Ng Cho-nam agreed with Mr Meacham's concern over the

over-protective measures carried out in the past decades. He stressed the importance to strike a balance between conservation and public appreciation. He was of the view that visitors should only be allowed to view the rock carvings from a certain distance. He suggested consulting specialists when the design proposal was ready.

32. The Chairman summarised that AAB generally supported the arrangement made by AMO and advised AMO to seek related specialists' comments before any design proposal was formulated.

33. Prof Tracey Lu declared interest as she planned to conduct a study on the impact of the preservation of Big Wave Bay to the surroundings in 2012.

34. Ms Lillian Law supported AMO to take the lead in the project. With reference to the walkway to the Rock Carving at Tung Lung Chau, she proposed that similar walkways could be constructed to facilitate public's access to other rock carvings as well. She also suggested that replicas of the rock carvings be made and placed in museums for public viewing.

35. Mr Tom Ming responded that the Hong Kong Museum of History once made replicas of rock carvings. However, the work was strongly opposed by experts who believed that the replication process was harmful to rock carvings. AMO would explore ways such as 3D-scanning to produce replicas with minimum damage to the carvings.

36. Dr Lee Ho-yin concurred with the views expressed in the letter from Mr Meacham:

- (i) rock carvings should not be over-protected; and
- (ii) cement was commonly used for protection / repairs of heritage items in the past decades but no longer considered acceptable nowadays.

37. The Chairman summarized the following views raised by Members on the subject:

- (i) experts should be consulted in the course of developing design proposals ;
- (ii) aggressive promotion was not encouraged; and
- (iii) over-protection was not desirable.

38. The Chairman further concluded that AAB generally supported the recommendations in the consultancy reports and the way forward proposed by AMO. He advised AMO to proceed with the proposed follow-up actions and report progress to AAB regularly.

39. Before moving on to the next agenda item, the Chairman took the opportunity to discuss a newspaper article on Yu Yuen at Tung Tau Wai, Wang Chau, Yuen Long published on the day of the meeting. It was reported that the historic building Yu Yuen had fallen into disrepair and was downgraded from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

40. Mr Tom Ming responded that in the past, gradings of historic buildings were based on the assessment result of their historic and architectural value. In the prevailing grading exercise of 1 444 historic buildings, a new set of criteria based on historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity and rarity were adopted. Therefore, the gradings of some buildings under the current grading exercise might be different from that of the previous assessment.

41. Mr Tom Ming explained that the proposed gradings of 1 444 historic buildings were announced in 2009 which was followed by a four-month public consultation. During the consultation period, the public was invited to give their views on the proposed gradings and provide additional information, if any. AAB also met with the District Councils and professional bodies to listen to their views. As no adverse comment had been received, the Grade 2 status of Yu Yuen was confirmed by AAB at its meeting on 17 May 2010.

42. Mr Tom Ming further said that a number of heritage initiatives had been launched since 2008. Among them, the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme (FAS) was introduced to provide funding assistance to owners of privately owned graded historic buildings to carry out minor maintenance works. Besides, graded buildings were protected under an internal monitoring mechanism under which government departments responsible for the processing of development / works applications would alert the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) and AMO of any possible threat. CHO/AMO would proactively reach out to the private owners, offering various economic incentives to explore preservation-cum-development options

43. Prof Tracey Lu said that cases similar to Yu Yuen also occurred in countries with a long history of heritage conservation. She was of the view that private property right should be respected and the Government could offer economic incentives to encourage preservation of these historic buildings. Dr Ng Cho-nam suggested CHO/AMO to proactively approach those property developers or owners to explore with them appropriate preservation options. Mrs Mariana Cheng shared the same view with Dr Ng Cho-nam.

44. Mr Tony Lam suggested that repair orders, similar to that issued by the Buildings Department, could be issued to owners of disrepair historic buildings.

45. Mr Henry Ho stressed the importance of public education to enhance the community's understanding on the grading system and the importance of heritage conservation.

46. Noting that there was a change in the assessment criteria, Dr Lee Ho-yin commented that the downgrading of Yu Yuen was not necessarily a consequence of the disrepair. To strike a proper balance between preservation of historic buildings and respect for private property rights of the building owners, economic incentives were considered appropriate to encourage preservation of privately owned historic buildings.

47. As inappropriate maintenance works would greatly diminish the integrity and authenticity of historic buildings, Prof Billy So proposed that guidelines should be issued to owners to enhance their understanding on the heritage significance of their buildings and to help them carry out maintenance works.

48. Both Prof Billy So and Prof Ho Pui-yin stressed the importance to strike a balance between preservation of historic buildings and respect for property rights of owners.

49. Prof Ho Pui-yin believed that the Administration was facing the problem of having limited resources to carry out heritage conservation measures. She raised the need to identify more resources to support heritage conservation.

50. Prof Simon Shen and Dr Anissa Chan echoed Prof Billy So's view of

providing guidelines to owners of privately owned historic buildings.

51. Mr Tom Ming informed members that owners of privately owned graded historic buildings had been provided with information of the FAS and AMO would provide technical advice on the maintenance of historic buildings.

Item 5 Assessment of 1 444 Historic Buildings - Finalisation of the Gradings of Proposed Graded Buildings and Results of Assessment of New Items (Board Paper AAB/22/2011-12)

52. The Chairman invited Dr Alan Fung to take Members through all items listed in the Annexes with the aid of PowerPoint.

53. Noting that there were suspected unauthorised building works at some historic buildings, Dr Anissa Chan was concerned about whether the grading exercise would rationalise these illegal structures. Mr Tom Ming replied that grading of historic buildings should focus on heritage value. Enforcement actions against any illegal structures should be taken by other relevant government authorities.

54. After deliberation on each item listed in Annexes A and B, Members endorsed the proposed gradings of all these items.

55. Mr Tom Ming briefed Members that after the lapse of one-month public consultation on the proposed gradings of the items in Annex C, no adverse comment had been received. Based on the information, Members confirmed the gradings of these two items.

Item 6 Any Other Business

56. In response to the rising aspiration from the public on the work of AAB, the Chairman proposed to set up an independent website for AAB.

57. Mr Tom Ming supplemented that information related to AAB was currently uploaded to AMO's website. With reference to the practice of District Councils and Town Planning Board, it was recommended to set up an independent website for AAB, namely www.aab.gov.hk. A preliminary design of the main page was tabled for Members' reference.

58. Mr Laurence Li expressed support to the proposal. Moreover, he suggested that mobile website and mobile applications with information about declared monuments and historic buildings should also be considered. Mr Tom Ming replied that AMO would consider providing information about declared monuments and historic buildings under the GeoInfo Map of Lands Department, which would have a mobile version.

59. Prof Simon Shen believed that an AAB Facebook page could also enhance interactive communication with the younger generation. Mr Henry Ho shared similar view with Mr Laurence Li and Prof Simon Shen.

60. The Chairman concluded that AAB agreed to the setting up of an independent website and looked forward to more interactive communication channels in the future.

61. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
October 2011

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