

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 159th Meeting
on Thursday, 14 June 2012 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
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Professor Ho Pui-yin
Professor Chung Po-yin
Mr Henry Ho Kin-chung
Mr Philip Kan Siu-lun
Mr Tim Ko Tim-keung
Mr Tony Lam Chung-wai
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo, JP
Dr Lau Chi-pang
Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan, JP
Dr Lee Ho-yin
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS, JP
Ms Janet Pau Heng-ting
Professor Billy So Kee-long
Mr Conrad Wong Tin-cheung, JP
Mr Yeung Yiu-chung, BBS, JP

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

Absent with Apologies: Professor Tracey Lu Lie-dan
Professor Simon Shen Xu-hui
Dr Joseph Ting Sun-pao

In Attendance: Development Bureau
Ms Grace Lui
Deputy Secretary (Works)1

Miss Vivian Ko
Commissioner for Heritage

Ms Queenie Lee
Assistant Secretary (Heritage Conservation) 3

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mrs Betty Fung, JP
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Ms Cynthia Liu
Deputy Director (Culture)

Dr Louis Ng
Assistant Director (Heritage and Museums)

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 (Buildings Survey)

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

Architectural Services Department
Mr Fong Siu-wai
Assistant Director (Property Services)

Mr Kevin Li
Senior Architect/Heritage

Opening Remarks

The Chairman thanked Members and representatives from government departments for attending the meeting. He said that some AAB Members had visited the “Explore Our Heritage” Exhibition at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre prior to the meeting. He also told the meeting that Mrs Carrie Lam, the Secretary for Development (SDEV), would meet with AAB Members to give a wrap up of her 5-year heritage conservation work and to express her thanks to all AAB Members after the meeting.

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes (Board Minutes AAB/8/2011-12)

2. The minutes of the 158th Meeting on 22 March 2012 was confirmed without any amendments.

**Item 2 Matters Arising and Progress Report
(Board Paper AAB/38/2011-12)**

3. Mr Tom Ming reported that the survey-cum-excavation for the Central Police Station (CPS) conservation and revitalisation project was in progress. Arrangements had been made for AAB Members to visit the CPS site on 6 June 2012 and AAB Members were briefed on the progress of the archeological survey-cum-excavation. Those remains of high heritage significance would be preserved in situ while those of less heritage value would be recorded in detail. Selected collections of bricks and foundation stones would be kept for interpretation purpose or for repairing the historic buildings in future, if applicable. He reported that almost one-third of the survey in the prison area had been completed. He anticipated that the survey-cum-excavation works in the CPS site would be completed by the end of 2012. AMO would closely monitor the progress and brief AAB as appropriate.

**Item 3 Assessment of 1 444 Historic Buildings - Finalisation of the Gradings
of Proposed Graded Buildings and Results of Assessment of New
Items
(Board Paper AAB/39/2011-12)**

4. The Chairman invited Dr Alan Fung to take Members through all items listed in Annex A of Board Paper AAB/39/2011-12 with the aid of PowerPoint. Mr Tom Ming said that these items were all privately-owned buildings with queries and / or concerns raised by the owners. With further information / explanation provided by AMO, the queries / concerns had been addressed. After deliberation, Members endorsed the proposed gradings of the items listed in Annex A.

5. Before discussion of the items listed in Annex B of Board Paper AAB/39/2011-12, the Chairman recapped the established practice of the AAB for grading items which were not included in the list of 1 444 historic buildings but were newly suggested by the public for grading (new items). He said that at the request of AAB, the Expert Panel would assess the grading of new items, taking into account information and materials collected from various sources such as desktop research and those provided by the public. AAB would be briefed by AMO at the AAB meetings on the background information on the buildings and the proposed gradings recommended by the Expert Panel. In some cases where the

AAB considered necessary, Members would ask the Expert Panel to reassess the proposed grading of the historic buildings. If the AAB could agree on a proposed grading, the AMO would proceed to arrange public consultation on that proposed grading. Pending any further information or views received during the public consultation period, the final grading of a historic building would be confirmed at a subsequent AAB meeting.

6. In response to some media reports alleging that the AMO deliberately withheld the notes of the Expert Panel's meeting on the grading of the Former Central Government Offices (CGO), the Chairman clarified that it was not the practice for AMO to submit meeting notes of the Expert Panel to AAB in all previous grading cases. In view of the possible concerns on the grading of the Former CGO, the notes of the Expert Panel's meeting on the grading of the Former CGO had been tabled for Members' information and would be uploaded to the websites of AAB and AMO for public access.

7. Mr Tom Ming advised that the briefs, photos and proposed gradings of the historic buildings under the 1 444 exercise and those of the new items already assessed had been uploaded to the website of AMO and AAB. Research materials on the historic buildings could be viewed at the Reference Library of the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre.

8. Mr Laurence Li shared with the meeting that he had studied the research materials at the Reference Library twice before and reassured that these materials were open for Members and the public.

9. The Chairman recapped the AAB's decision at its meeting on 23 November 2011 that although the three buildings of the Former CGO (i.e. Main Wing, East Wing and West Wing) were new items, assessment of their gradings should be accorded with priority. The Expert Panel had been requested to grade the three buildings of the Former CGO at the same time and it was up to the Expert Panel to advise AAB whether individual grading should be given to each building of the Former CGO.

10. The Chairman invited Mr Tom Ming to explain why item 1 in Annex B namely, "Post 1950 Former Central Government Offices Compound" was amended as "Post 1950 Former Central Government Offices Site". Mr Tom Ming said that

the term “site” was adopted by the Expert Panel in discussing the Former CGO grading and used in the Board Paper AAB/39/2011-12 except its Annex B. The term “site” was also in line with the terminology used in the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53). Dr Louis Ng added that the term “site” was commonly used in the heritage field and by organizations such as the International Councils on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

11. In response to enquiries from Ms Susanna Chiu and Prof Ho Pui-yin about the boundary of the Former CGO Site, Mr Tom Ming presented to Members, with the aid of Powerpoint, a site plan in respect of the Former CGO covering the three buildings and the adjacent areas.

12. The Chairman asked whether AAB had accorded gradings to a site and individual buildings within the site in the past. Mr Tom Ming said that the Old Lei Yue Mun Barracks had been accorded with a Grade 1 status, while the buildings within the Barracks had been accorded with gradings from Grade 1 to Grade 3 in 1989. The CPS Compound was quoted by Mr Andrew Lam as another example. He recalled that the CPS Compound had been declared as a monument whereas individual buildings within the Compound had been considered by the AAB to be of different levels of significance and some buildings could even be demolished.

13. Mr Tom Ming explained that the Old Lei Yue Mun Barracks as a whole had been an important military site with a long history. However, the buildings within the Barracks had been built in different phases and in different years, and were apparently of different heritage significance and thus had been accorded with different gradings.

14. Mr Tom Ming further said that the six criteria namely historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity and rarity adopted for assessing the 1444 historic buildings had been employed by the Expert Panel in the assessment of the Former CGO to maintain consistency. The following documents and papers had been forwarded to the Expert Panel for consideration before its meeting on the assessment of the Former CGO:

- a) all information and materials submitted by the public including those provided by the Government Hill Concern Group;

- b) “Historical and Architectural Appraisal of the Central Government Offices” by Purcell Miller Tritton LLP (2009) (the PMT Report);
- c) “Cultural Landscape” in Annex 3 “Guidelines on the inscription of specific types of properties on the World Heritage List” of the “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention” (World Heritage Committee, United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1992);
- d) “Proposals Concerning the Desirability of a Standard-Setting Instrument on Historic Urban Landscape” (UNESCO, 2011);
- e) “Xi’an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas” (ICOMOS, 2005).

15. In response to Dr Lau Chi-pang’s enquiry, Mr Tom Ming reiterated that the notes of the Expert Panel’s meeting on the assessment of the Former CGO as tabled at the meeting had been endorsed by all Members of the Expert Panel.

16. The Chairman asked if the decisions made by the Expert Panel on the proposed gradings of the Former CGO and the three wings had been determined by voting. Mr Tom Ming replied that the Expert Panel arrived at the decisions by consensus after lengthy deliberation.

17. Considering that the gradings might affect the modes of preservation, Mrs Mariana Cheng was concerned about the future of a Grade 3 historic building on a Grade 1 historic site. Mr Tom Ming stressed that AAB should focus on a building’s heritage significance in considering the grading of the building, irrespective of any development plan.

18. Dr Louis Ng added that the existing grading mechanism was mainly for the assessment of the heritage value of historic buildings having regard to the aforesaid assessment criteria; and a mechanism for assessing historic sites could be formulated if deemed necessary.

19. Ms Susanna Chiu asked if alteration to a Grade 3 historic building would undermine the heritage significance of a Grade 1 historic site, Mr Tom Ming repeated that the definition of Grade 1 historic buildings were those buildings of

outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible; whereas Grade 2 buildings were those buildings of special merit; efforts should be made to selectively preserve; and Grade 3 buildings were those buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable. He explained that similar definition of a historic building might be applied to a historic site. However, elements within a historic site, including the graded historic buildings within the site, were not bound to remain completely unchanged. A pragmatic approach should be to allow alteration / removal of elements which would not cause adverse impact to the heritage significance of the site / building.

20. Dr Lee Ho-yin shared the view and said that a similar approach was also applied to sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Structures / elements within a UNESCO World Heritage Site could be of different heritage significance and should be preserved in different ways. He also said that alteration / demolition of elements within the UNESCO World Heritage Sites without diminishing the integrity and heritage significance of the sites was permitted. He shared Dr Louis Ng's view on the establishment of a mechanism for handling historic sites.

21. Prof Chung Po-yin brought Members' attention to the media interviews of two Expert Panel members. These members said that the proposed grading of the Former CGO site was an assessment of its landscape, buildings, setting, architectural style as a whole and its coherent historical atmosphere generated. She considered that their views should be respected.

22. Mr Laurence Li agreed that AAB should focus on a building's heritage significance in considering its grading. The development plan of the historic buildings was not under the purview of AAB.

23. Mr Tony Lam disagreed on the proposed redevelopment plan to demolish the West Wing and suggested the Former CGO be declared as a monument.

24. Dr Lau Chi-pang was of the view that following the usual practice, AAB was responsible for making decision on the grading after considering the recommendation of the Expert Panel.

25. Prof Chung Po-yin repeated that the West Wing of the Former CGO was

a piece of functionalist style architecture which reflected the practice of the British colonial rule in Hong Kong.

26. Mr Andrew Lam expressed his support to accord a grading to the Former CGO site and suggested that the buildings on San Lau Street mentioned in Annex A of the Board Paper be accorded a grading as a whole. Mr Tom Ming explained that San Lau Street and the historic buildings therein shared the same background and history. However, in the case of the Former CGO, the site itself had been the seat of the government for over one and a half century while the existing buildings therein were only built in the 1950s. There was an apparent difference between the two cases.

27. As requested by Mr Henry Ho, Mr Tom Ming highlighted the salient points of the Expert Panel meeting as follows :

- (i) the six assessment criteria for assessing the 1 444 historic buildings had been adopted for assessing the Former CGO;
- (ii) the Former CGO site should have higher heritage significance than the individual buildings within the site;
- (iii) the historical interest of the Main Wing was highest in view of their association with historical events and figures, and their importance in the historical development of Hong Kong ;
- (iv) the three buildings were structures of functional design. They were of similar architectural merits though, the Main Wing and the East Wing were decorated with more featured elements;
- (v) the Former CGO site and the Main Wing, as a landmark of Hong Kong, were of higher social value. The forecourt of the Main Wing, in particular, was regarded as a place for significant political and public events;
- (vi) the Former CGO site was considered of the highest authenticity due to little modification to the site environment including its landscape while alterations of different extent had been carried out to the three buildings.

28. With the above discussion and comments by Members, the Chairman concluded that the Board generally agreed to accord a proposed Grade 1 status to the Former CGO site and the Main Wing and proceeded to handle the proposed

gradings for the East Wing and West Wing.

29. In response to Mr Andrew Lam's concern over the assessment of the historical significance of the three buildings, Mr Tom Ming explained that a building would be considered of higher historical interest if it was associated with significant historical figures/events and was important in the historical development of Hong Kong.

30. Prof Ho Pui-yin opined that the assessment of historical interest in accordance with the association with historical figures was a traditional and conservative way of assessment. The importance of depicting the cultural identity and perpetuating the collective memory of the community through public participation should also be emphasised. As such, she considered that a proposed Grade 1 status should be accorded to the East Wing.

31. Judging from the notes of the Expert Panel's meeting that the forecourt of the Main Wing had been cited as a popular place for political and public events, Ms Grace Lui was of the view that the importance of public participation had not been overlooked by the Expert Panel.

32. Dr Lau Chi-pang said that since colonial rule had been decentralised after the Second World War, the Former CGO site only reflected part of the colonial history of Hong Kong.

33. Mr Tim Ko shared similar views with Prof Chung Po-yin and Dr Lau Chi-pang. He commented that the West Wing was a piece of "plain" architecture which reflected the British colonial rule in Hong Kong. He considered that this point should not be undermined in the grading assessment. He doubted if Members of the Expert Panel should be considered as "experts" and considered that more historians should be invited to be Members of the Expert Panel.

34. Mr Tom Ming explained that the term "Expert Panel" was commonly used in AAB meetings to refer to the group of specialists undertaking the grading assessment of historic buildings for the 1 444 exercise. Nevertheless, Prof David Lung, one of the Expert Panel Members, mentioned on a number of occasions that the term "Assessment Panel" would be more appropriate to reflect the role of the panel in the grading exercise.

35. Dr Louis Ng further explained that the setting up of the Expert Panel had been suggested by AAB during the discussion of the grading mechanism at its earlier meetings. The composition of the Expert Panel had also been reported to AAB before.

36. The Chairman reiterated that the Expert Panel had been tasked to make recommendations to the AAB on grading assessment. As AAB was composed of professionals from different sectors, Members should have their own views and make a decision after considering the Expert Panel's recommendations.

37. Ms Janet Pau considered that the West Wing should deserve a higher grading when compared with other historic buildings already graded.

38. Prof Ho Pui-yin shared with the meeting a newspaper article reporting a party for the public held in the restaurant of the West Wing in 1969. Prof Chung Po-yin believed that the Government had arranged many similar public events in the West Wing after the 1967 riot to facilitate the British rule over Hong Kong through the creation of Hong Kong's identity. She supported a higher grading for the West Wing to reflect its importance in the colonial history.

39. The Chairman invited Members to make a decision on the proposed grading on the East Wing. With the voting result of 11 Members supporting proposed Grade 1 and 7 Members supporting proposed Grade 2, the Chairman concluded that the East Wing be accorded with a proposed Grade 1 status.

40. The Chairman further invited Members to make a decision on the proposed grading on the West Wing. Before voting, the Chairman explained that Members would start voting in the sequence of proposed Grade 3, Grade 2 and then Grade 1. Mr Tom Ming and Mr Andrew Lam further clarified that Members should have a fresh vote on each of the motion.

41. The voting results showed that 4 Members supported proposed Grade 3, 8 Members supported proposed Grade 2 and 8 Members supported proposed Grade 1 for West Wing.

42. Ms Lilian Law raised that Members should further express their views

and vote again for West Wing.

43. Mr Conard Wong disagreed to vote again as he considered that the motions had already been in process and the Chairman had given Members sufficient time for discussion on the subject. He supported to follow the usual practice of AAB for the Chairman to cast his vote.

44. After listening to Members' views, the Chairman exercised his casting vote for proposed Grade 2 for West Wing. The Chairman concluded that the West Wing be accorded with a proposed Grade 2 status. He reiterated that AAB would finalise the gradings for the Former CGO site and the three wings after the one-month public consultation period. He encouraged Members to attend the next meeting when the gradings of the Former CGO site and buildings would be confirmed.

(The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. and resumed at 5:45 p.m.)

**Item 4 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) on Former Central Government Offices (Main Wing and East Wing)
(Board Paper AAB/40/2011-12)**

45. The Chairman introduced the presentation team:

Ms Andy Lui

Principal Executive Officer (Special Duties), Department of Justice;

Mr K C King

Senior Architect, Architectural Services Department;

Mr C S Lo

Architect, Architectural Services Department;

Mr Eric Lee

Conservation Consultant, LWK & Partners (HK) Ltd.

46. Mr K C King briefed Members on the proposed works in relation to the relocation of the Department of Justice (DoJ) to the Main Wing and East Wing of the Former CGO. The project involved alteration and conversion of the buildings. Mr Eric Lee explained to Members in detail the cultural significance and key character-defining elements of the Main Wing and East Wing and corresponding

mitigation measures. In summary, all key character-defining elements were preserved and new additions and alterations would be kept to the minimum and reversible to the original fabric.

47. Mr Andrew Lam commented that the heritage significance of the Main Wing and East Wing lied on its historical background and its popularity of holding public events. He hoped that public accessibility would be improved after the relocation.

48. Dr Lee Ho-yin expressed his appreciation on the HIA having noted that the proposed works involved many green building elements which was a new trend in heritage conservation internationally. He hoped that the new Government would encourage addition of green building elements in heritage conservation projects.

49. The Chairman concluded that AAB was supportive of the findings of the HIA and further consultation with AAB to finalise the HIA report would not be necessary.

Item 5 Practice Guidebook on compliance with Buildings Safety and Health Requirements under the Buildings Ordinance for Adaptive Re-use of and Alteration and Addition Works to Heritage Buildings 2012 (Board Paper AAB/41/2011-12)

50. The Chairman introduced the presentation team:

Ms Clarice Yu

Chief Building Surveyor/Hong Kong East and Heritage,
Buildings Department;

Ms Karen Cheung

Senior Building Surveyor / Heritage, Buildings Department;

Ir Wong Koi-hou

Director, Building Structure, Scott Wilson Ltd.;

Dr C M Zhao

Project Manager, Arch & Fire Professional (Int'l) Ltd.

51. Ms Clarice Yu introduced the “Practice Guidebook for Adaptive Re-use of and Alteration and Addition Works to Heritage Buildings 2012” (the Practice Guidebook) published by the Buildings Department (BD). The aim of the Practice Guidebook was to provide design guidelines in terms of straight-forward practical solutions and alternative approach that might be adopted for compliance with building safety and health requirements under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123). She also reported that a Technical Committee on Building Safety and Health Requirements for Historic Buildings under the BO (Technical Committee) would be set up for sharing views and experience, and recommending appropriate measures in response to enquiries.

52. Dr Lee Ho-yin showed his appreciation on the comprehensive study by the consultants. He commented that their recommendations were useful reference for architects and designers participating in heritage conservation projects.

53. Mr Tony Lam clarified that he would be one of the members of the Technical Committee. Noting the difficulties encountered by the BD when processing building and structural plans involving historic buildings under the BO, Mr Tony Lam considered that more support should be given by the policy bureau concerned.

54. Mr Andrew Lam and Dr Lau Chi-pang were of the view that compliance with prevailing statutory requirements would be one of the hurdles in building conservation. Mr Andrew Lam suggested the BD to invite the Hong Kong Institute of Architects to provide more information on the difficulties faced by the industry nowadays.

55. The Chairman concluded that AAB was generally supportive of the Practice Guidebook.

Item 6 Any Other Business

56. Ms Susanna Chiu shared her observations on heritage conservation from her recent visit to Guangxi Province and highly recommended sharing Hong Kong’s experience on heritage conservation and revitalisation with the Mainland.

57. Mr Tony Lam suggested the progress of grading and current condition of

the historic buildings on the 1 444 list be updated periodically. Mr Tom Ming assured Members that updating would be arranged from time to time and a full list would be compiled upon conclusion of the exercise.

58. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
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