

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 163rd Meeting
on Thursday, 27 June 2013 at 3:00 p.m.
in Conference Room, Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre
Kowloon Park, Haiphong Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Present: Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo, JP (Chairman)

Mr Chan Ka-kui, BBS, JP

Prof Rebecca Chiu Lai-har, JP

Prof Ho Puay-peng, JP

Prof Ho Pui-yin

Mr Tim Ko Tim-keung

Mr Tony Lam Chung-wai

Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan, JP

Mr Philip Liao Yi-kang

Mr Kenny Lin Ching-pui

Prof Tracey Lu Lie-dan

Ms Janet Pau Heng-ting

Ms Yvonne Shing Mo-han

Dr Winnie Tang Shuk-ming, JP

Ms Karen Tang Shuk-tak

Ms Ava Tse Suk-ying, SBS

Sr Wong Bay

Mr Asa Lee (Secretary)

Senior Executive Officer (Antiquities and Monuments)

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies: Mr Stephen Chan Chit-kwai, BBS, JP

Prof Chung Po-yin

Mr Joseph Luc Ngai

Prof Billy So Kee-long

Dr Joseph Ting Sun-pao

Mr Conrad Wong Tin-cheung, JP

In Attendance:

Development Bureau

Ms Grace Lui, JP

Deputy Secretary (Works)1

Miss Vivian Ko

Commissioner for Heritage

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Ms Cynthia Liu

Deputy Director (Culture)

Dr Louis Ng

Assistant Director (Heritage and Museums)

Mr Tom Ming

Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)

Dr Alan Fung

Assistant Curator I (Buildings Survey)

(for item 4 only)

Planning Department

Miss Fiona Lung

Acting Assistant Director/Metro

Architectural Services Department

Mr Fong Siu-wai

Assistant Director (Property Services)

Mr Lam Sair-ling

Senior Maintenance Surveyor/Heritage

Opening Remarks

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

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 161st Meeting held on 20 February 2013 and the 162nd Meeting held on 17 April 2013
(Board Minutes AAB/1/2013-14)
(Board Minutes AAB/2/2013-14)

2. The minutes of the following Meetings were confirmed without amendment:

- (i) the 161st Meeting held on 20 February 2013; and
- (ii) the 162nd Meeting held on 17 April 2013.

Item 2 Matters Arising and Progress Report
(Board Paper AAB/11/2013-14)

3. Mr Tom Ming briefed Members on the restoration and maintenance projects as well as the archaeological projects as detailed respectively in Annexes B and C of the Board Paper AAB/11/2013-14.

4. Mr Tom Ming reported that with Members' support on the declaration of the Béthanie and the Cenotaph as monuments at its meeting held on 17 December 2012; and the declaration of the Tat Tak Communal Hall as a monument at its meeting held on 20 February 2013, notices of the intended declaration had been served on the tenant of the Béthanie and the owner of the Tat Tak Communal Hall respectively under section 4(2) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) ("the Ordinance"). No objection to the intended declarations was received within one month after the service of the notice. Since the Cenotaph is located on government land, a notice under section 4(2) of the Ordinance is not required. The Chief Executive's approval for the intended declaration of the three buildings would be sought.

5. He further reported that Members recommended the declaration of Fat Tat Tong as a monument at its meeting held on 17 April 2013. The Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) was proceeding with the declaration procedures including preparation of the notice and plan required under section 4 of the Ordinance.

6. Mr Tom Ming then briefed Members on the restoration and

maintenance projects with works already in progress or planned to commence in 2013 as detailed in Annex B of the Board Paper AAB/11/2013-14. The projects list was drawn up based on AMO's findings during the inspections to these buildings. The AMO would adjust the list if necessary.

7. He also referred Members to the list of archaeological investigations and excavations set out in Annex D. Following the usual practice, the AMO would inform Members of the archaeological discoveries of particular significance or public concern immediately after completion of preliminary assessment on the heritage value of such discoveries. The final report of the archaeological investigations and excavations would also be uploaded to AMO's website for public access.

8. Ms Karen Tang enquired the opening arrangement of Tat Tak Communal Hall and King Yin Lei. Mr Tom Ming replied that Tat Tak Communal Hall would become one of the major attractions along the Ping Shan Heritage Trail and be opened for public appreciation upon completion of the full restoration. Miss Vivian Ko supplemented that CHO would continue to organise open days for King Yin Lei.

**Item 3 Heritage Impact Assessment (“HIA”) on Duddell Street Steps and Gas Lamps
(Board Paper AAB/12/2013-14)**

9. The Chairman introduced the presentation team that consisted of the following members:

Mr Albert Lam
Engineer, Highways Department

Mr Eddie Chan
Project Manager, Ove Arup & Partners HK Ltd.

Mr Eric Chan
Geotechnical Engineer, Ove Arup & Partners HK Ltd.

Mr Keith Renn

Geotechnical Engineer, Ove Arup & Partners HK Ltd.

10. Mr Eddie Chan briefed Members that the Highways Department had proposed upgrading / improvement (U/I) works to the retaining wall (Feature No. 11SW-B/R93 (Sub-division 1)) adjacent to the Duddell Street Steps and Gas Lamps, a declared monument, in order to enhance the stability of the retaining wall which was not meeting the current geotechnical standard. He briefed Members on the cultural significance and the character-defining elements of the declared monument, the proposed U/I works and four design options for the proposed works. He then explained in detail Option 2, the recommended option, regarding the potential adverse impact on the declared monument and the corresponding mitigation measures to be introduced.

11. Mr Philip Liao indicated that he was involved in a redevelopment project within the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Compound. In response to Mr Philip Liao's enquiry on the disused tunnels, Mr Tom Ming referred to the consultancy report "Historical and Architectural Appraisal of the Central Government Offices" that there was a network of old air raid tunnels underneath the Former Central Government Offices. Though many of the tunnels had been backfilled after the Second World War, a few of the entrances (known as "portals") including the one at Duddell Street still existed. Noting the historic background of the disused tunnels, Mr Philip Liao commented that should backfilling of the tunnels be necessary, reversible methods should be employed.

12. Sr Wong Bay considered Options 1, 3 and 4 not preferred. In respect of Option 2, he was worried that the skin wall would induce adverse impact to the roots of the existing wall trees. He considered the proposed masonry facing covering the skin wall incompatible with the existing retaining wall.

13. Prof Ho Puay-peng also expressed concern over the type of the masonry used for covering the skin wall.

14. Mr Tim Ko believed that the disused tunnels were air raid tunnels constructed before the Second World War, which were of high heritage significance but were neglected by the society. He worried that the proposed works would affect the conditions and the setting of the tunnels as well as the portal at Duddell Street. Mr Tony Lam added that suitable measures should be

introduced to prevent the tree roots from blocking the portal.

15. In response to Prof Ho Puay-peng's question on monument boundary, Mr Tom Ming explained that the retaining wall adjacent to the Duddell Street Stone Steps and Gas Lamps is outside the monument boundary. However, the AMO considered an HIA for the proposed U/I works necessary in view of the possible visual impact of the proposed works on the declared monument and interference such as vibration caused during the course of works.

16. To address the above concerns from Members regarding Option 2, Mr Eddie Chan explained that :

- (i) a 300mm gap filled with aggregates had been reserved to allow sufficient air circulation and prevent suffocating of the tree roots. This method, as recommended by their in-house landscape architect and arborist, had also been adopted at the case of Béthanie;
- (ii) compatibility of the proposed masonry facing and the existing retaining wall would be given due consideration;
- (iii) reversible method would be employed for backfilling the disused tunnels.

17. Mr Kenny Lin doubted how serious the traffic condition of Ice House Street would be affected if Option 3, which would induce the least impact on the declared monument, was adopted. Mr Eddie Chan elaborated that a large works area had to be reserved for accommodating the required machinery, and so according to the computer modeling results, the traffic condition on Ice House Street would be seriously affected during the course of works. Mr Eddie Chan also pointed out that the works would affect the existing utilities and cause significant vibrations to the retaining walls.

18. Mr Kenny Lin and Dr Winnie Tang stressed their concerns over the adverse impact caused by Option 2 to the roots of the existing wall trees. Dr Winnie Tang further suggested that independent tree experts be consulted on the proposed design. Noting that the tree condition would be monitored by a certified arborist and tree reports would be prepared every 2 months, she advised the arborist to conduct inspection more frequently and to draw up contingency measures in case the health of the trees deteriorated. Ms Lilian Law expressed her reservations about the installation of soil nails as proposed in Options 2 and 4

which might cause significant disturbance/damage to the tree roots. Mr Chan Ka-kui suggested confining the skin wall surface area to the soil nail heads only.

19. Mr Eddie Chan supplemented that the Landscape Unit of the Highways Department had been consulted and they raised no objection to the proposed design. Ms Grace Lui added that the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of the Development Bureau could give advice on the proposed design and mitigation measures.

20. Mr Chan Ka-kui, Mr Kenny Lin, Prof Ho Puay-peng, Mr Tony Lam, Mr Philip Liao and Sr Wong Bay suggested exploring other methods so that backfill of the disused tunnels and construction of the skin wall could be avoided.

21. Mr Eddie Chan stressed that Option 2 was recommended after consideration of the existing site environment, traffic conditions, construction cost, tree preservation feasibilities, possible impacts on the monument and technicalities.

22. Having considered that the sub-standard retaining wall had no immediate and obvious signs of danger, the Antiquities Advisory Board (“AAB”) agreed that the project team should submit a revised/alternative design taking into account Members’ comments for further consideration.

Item 4 Assessment of Historic Buildings (Board Paper AAB/13/2013-14)

23. Prior to the deliberation on the proposed gradings listed in the Board Paper, the Chairman invited Mr Tom Ming to give Members an account of the research work by the AMO on air raid tunnels. Mr Tom Ming briefed Members that air raid tunnels/shelters were on the list of new items/categories proposed for grading assessment. In addition to collecting information on air-raid tunnel networks from the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the AMO has also commissioned Mr Tim Ko to compile a list of military structures in Hong Kong. Mr Tim Ko then briefed Members on the progress of his study and the difficulties encountered. He reckoned that the report on the first batch of military items could be submitted in late 2013.

24. The Chairman declared that he was discussing collaboration with the owner of the building situated at Serial No.¹ N64 (No. 60, Kat Hing Street, Tai O). Mr Tony Lam declared his interest as the architect and heritage consultant of the development project at Serial No. N18 (No. 27, Lugard Road, the Peak).

25. After Dr Alan Fung's presentation with the aid of PowerPoint, Mr Tony Lam, Prof Ho Puay-peng and Ms Lilian Law considered Serial No. N59 (No. 1, Tai O Market Street, Tai O), which was in close proximity to the footbridge, a local landmark and of high importance in the whole setting, and thus should be accorded with a higher grading.

26. Mr Kenny Lin and Sr Wong Bay suggested according a higher grading to Serial No. N61, N62, N63 (Nos 7, 9, 11 & 13, 14, 17, Tai O Market Street, Tai O) in view that they were rare pieces of built heritage with balustrade cantilevered balcony.

27. Prof Tracey Lu and Ms Lilian Law proposed to accord a higher grading to Serial No. N64 due to the high integrity of its interior.

28. Prof Ho Puay-peng and Ms Janet Pau supported according a higher grading to Serial No. N59, N61, N62, N63, N64 in order to pursue the "point-line-plane" approach in heritage conservation.

29. With the above comments, Members agreed to accord a proposed Grade 2 status to Serial No. N59, N61, N62, N63, N64 and a proposed Grade 3 status to Serial No. N67.

30. Prof Tracey Lu considered Serial No. N68 (Stilt Houses, Tai O) a cultural landscape of high heritage value and supported to accord a grading for the whole area. She opined that the stilt houses at Tai O were one of the best examples of pile dwellings in China. Prof Ho Puay-peng added that the organic growth and evolution of the stilt houses were their characteristics.

31. Members generally recognised the heritage value of the stilt houses at Tai O. As the stilt houses should be conserved as a cultural landscape, Members raised the need to:

¹ This numbering of the historic buildings mentioned in the minutes follows the Serial No. listed in Annexes A and B to Board Paper AAB/13/2013-14.

- (i) formulate new guidelines for preservation and sustainable development;
- (ii) review the eligibility for grants under the Financial Assistance Scheme for maintenance of privately owned historic buildings;
- (iii) explore other administrative protection mechanisms other than the existing grading system;
- (iv) consult the public on the use of public resources for preservation of the stilt houses.

32. Ms Grace Lui responded that the existing grading system aimed to provide an objective basis for determining the heritage value of individual historic building/structure. She proposed and Members agreed to refer the applicability of the existing grading system for conservation of the stilt houses to the Technical Working Group for deliberation.

33. The Chairman concluded that the grading of Serial No. N68 would be deferred.

34. Prof Ho Puay-peng suggested according a proposed Grade 2 status to Serial No. N188, N189, N190, N191, N192, N193, N194, N195, N196, N197, N198, N199, N200 (13 historic buildings at Yuen Long Kau Hui) to pursue the “point-line-plane” approach in heritage conservation. Prof Ho Pui-yin concurred with Prof Ho Puay-peng that Yuen Long Kau Hui was one of the earliest markets in Hong Kong.

35. Prof Tracey Lu worried that upgrading these historic buildings would expedite their demolition by the owners.

36. Mr Kenny Lin questioned if photos of the interior of the proposed graded buildings were available for Members’ consideration. Mr Tom Ming replied that AMO had tried to gain access to historic buildings when carrying out the territory-wide survey from 1996-2000. However, in some cases where there was no owner’s consent, photo-taking of the interior could not be arranged. Nevertheless, some owners had invited the AMO for inspection or submitted photographic records of the interior of their buildings to the AMO during public consultation with a view to adjusting the proposed grading of their buildings.

37. With the above comments, the Chairman asked the AMO to prepare

more background information of Yuen Long Kau Hui including the graded buildings in the area to facilitate Members' deliberation on the grading of Serial No. N188, N189, N190, N191, N192, N193, N194, N195, N196, N197, N198, N199, N200 in the next meeting.

38. Members also agreed to accord a proposed Grade 2 status to Serial No. N18 (No. 27, Lugard Road, the Peak) and N143 (Zonta White House, No. 4010 Tai Po Road, Yuen Chau Tsai); and a proposed Grade 3 status to Serial No. N19 (No. 28, Lugard Road, the Peak) and N178 (Nos 130 & 132, Portland Street, Mong Kok).

39. Following the usual practice, the AMO would proceed to arrange a one-month public consultation on the proposed gradings of the abovementioned historic buildings as agreed in the meeting.

Item 5 Any Other Business

40. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
September 2013

Ref: LCSD/CS/AMO 22-3/1