

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 174th Meeting
on Monday, 18 April 2016 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 Stephen Chan Chit-kwai, BBS, JP
Mr Chan Ka-kui, BBS, JP
Prof Chung Po-yin
Prof Ho Puay-peng, JP
Mr Tony Lam Chung-wai
Dr Annissa Lui Wai-ling
Ms Theresa Ng Choi-yuk
Ms Janet Pau Heng-ting
Ms Yvonne Shing Mo-han, JP
Ms Karen Tang Shuk-tak
Ms Ava Tse Suk-ying, SBS
Sr Wong Bay
Mr Rex Wong Siu-han
Dr Sharon Wong Wai-yee

Mr Asa Lee (Secretary)
Senior Executive Officer (Antiquities and Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies: Prof Rebecca Chiu Lai-har, JP
Prof Ho Pui-yin
Mr Philip Liao Yi-kang
Mr Kenny Lin Ching-pui
Mr Joseph Luc Ngai
Dr Winnie Tang Shuk-ming, JP
Dr Joseph Ting Sun-pao
Mr Conrad Wong Tin-cheung, BBS, JP

In Attendance: Development Bureau

Mr Albert Lam
Deputy Secretary (Works)1

Mr José Yam
Commissioner for Heritage

Mr Ricky Wong
Chief Assistant Secretary (Works)2

Mr Allen Fung
Political Assistant to Secretary for Development

Ms Mandy Wong
Assistant Secretary (Heritage Conservation)3 (Atg.)

Mr Eddie Wong
Chief Executive Officer (Heritage Conservation)1

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Chan Shing-wai
Assistant Director (Heritage and Museums)

Ms Susanna Siu
Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mr Kenneth Tam
Chief Heritage Manager (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mr Ng Chi-wo
Curator (Historical Buildings)2
(for items 3 and 4 only)

Dr Alan Fung
Assistant Curator I (Buildings Survey)
(for items 3 and 4 only)

Planning Department

Mr Michael Chan

Assistant Director / Metro

Architectural Services Department

Mr Hui Chiu-kin

Assistant Director (Property Services)

Ms Chan Mei-kuen

Senior Maintenance Surveyor / Heritage

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives of government bureau and departments to the meeting.

**Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 173rd Meeting held on 3 March 2016
(Board Minutes AAB/5/2015-16)**

2. The minutes of the 173rd Meeting held on 3 March 2016 were confirmed without amendment.

**Item 2 Matters Arising and Progress Report
(Board Paper AAB/26/2015-16)**

3. Ms Susanna Siu briefed Members on the progress of major heritage issues and activities during the period from 1 February 2016 to 31 March 2016, including the proposal to declare Blocks 7, 10 and 25 of the old Lei Yue Mun Barracks as monuments, which would be discussed under a separate agenda item of the same meeting, as well as the progress of preservation of historic buildings and structures, restoration and maintenance programmes, archaeological projects, and educational and publicity activities as detailed in relevant Annexes of the Board Paper.

**Item 3 Declaration of Three Historic Buildings as Monuments
(Board Paper AAB/27/2015-16)**

4. The Chairman invited Mr Ng Chi-wo to give a presentation on the heritage merits of the three historic buildings proposed to be declared as monuments. Mr Ng Chi-wo briefed Members in details the historical background, as well as the architectural and heritage value of each of these three historic buildings, namely Blocks 7, 10 and 25 of the old Lei Yue Mun Barracks (the “Barracks”). He further showed Members that there were nine Grade 1 historic buildings within the Barracks site. Blocks 7, 10 and 25 were the earliest buildings constructed among these nine Grade 1 historic buildings, and were therefore proposed to be declared as monuments as the first phase.

5. In response to the enquiries of the Chairman and Mr Chan Ka-kui, Mr Ng Chi-wo elaborated that among the 30 buildings situated in the Barracks, there were 14 graded historic buildings, including nine Grade 1 historic buildings and five Grade 2 historic buildings.

6. Sr Wong Bay, Prof Ho Puay-peng, and Mr Stephen Chan supported the proposed declaration and suggested to pay attention to the preventive maintenance measures taken to preserve the buildings.

7. Regarding the enquiry from Prof Ho Puay-peng, Mr Ng Chi-wo explained that there was substantial alteration to the interior of Block 7 and an in-depth heritage conservation study would be conducted after monument declaration. He added that the fireplace inside Block 7 was still in good condition. Prof Ho Puay-peng suggested not to mention the use of Block 25 as “Officers Mess” as this Block was used to be a drinking place by the military.

8. Following the enquiry of the Chairman, Ms Susanna Siu advised that after the declaration of the buildings as monuments, the Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”) would work closely with the Leisure Services Division of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in the historical interpretation of these three historic buildings, such as their history during World War II and their architectural merits.

9. In response to Ms Ava Tse’s enquiry, Mr Ng Chi-wo said that the restoration works to be conducted at these three historic buildings would be fully

discussed with the existing users in order to maintain normal operation during the works period as far as possible.

10. After Members' deliberation, the Chairman concluded that AAB supported the declaration of the three historic buildings as monuments.

**Item 4 Assessment of Historic Buildings
(Board Paper AAB/28/2015-16)**

11. Before proceeding to the discussion on the confirmation of the proposed gradings of five items detailed in Annex A of the Board Paper, the Chairman would like AMO to brief Members about a recent report from RTHK concerning the suspected damage caused to one of the historic items at the Ma On Shan Iron Mine site (the "Site"), and whether there was a problem in the prevailing notification mechanism.

12. Ms Susanna Siu explained that the building concerned was an explosive store room at the Site. Mr Ng Chi-wo recapped that the proposed gradings of the five items within the Site were agreed by Members in the meeting on 3 March 2016, followed by the one-month public consultation commencing on 7 March 2016. According to the prevailing notification mechanism, the AMO had informed relevant government departments, such as Lands Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department and Buildings Department, the updated list of historic buildings with proposed and confirmed gradings. Upon receiving the public enquiry on the suspected damage to the explosive store room, the AMO had immediately liaised with Lands Department and was given to understand that the explosive store room was partitioned off by its Squatter Control Unit during a squatter control operation. Lands Department undertook to review the existing information dissemination mechanism within its department and improve the prevailing mechanism where necessary. Mr Ng Chi-wo advised that based on the site visit conducted right before the meeting, the external wall and flooring of the explosive store room were not damaged and its heritage value remained unchanged.

13. In response to Mr Stephen Chan's concern about the notification mechanism, Mr José Yam elaborated that under the prevailing mechanism, departments concerned would check against the list provided by the AMO

regarding the historic buildings to be graded and already graded, before conducting any works on the historic buildings. In view of the subject incident, departments concerned would be reminded again to adhere to the prevailing practice to avoid re-occurrence of similar incident.

14. Concerning the enquiries of Ms Yvonne Law and Ms Janet Pau, the Chairman pointed out that Lands Department had admitted to the public that there was inadequacy in disseminating information within its department and they would review the existing mechanism for further improvements. Besides, he noticed that the prevailing notification mechanism had its limitation in monitoring all kinds of cases, such as those cases in which application for works were not necessary and the information provided by the public could help. Mr José Yam added that for those privately-owned historic buildings, relevant departments would also notify the AMO or the Commissioner for Heritage's Office ("CHO") if enquiries about works were received from the owners, so that the AMO or the CHO could contact the owners to discuss and explore possible conservation proposals.

15. The discussion moved on to confirm the proposed gradings of five items detailed in Annex A of the Board Paper. Mr Ng Chi-wo reported that AMO commenced the one-month public consultation on the proposed gradings in March 2016, eleven written comments were received from the public which supported the grading of the five items, four of which suggested to upgrade the grading status of the items to Grade 2 or above and two suggested to declare the items as monuments. The proposed Grade 2 status of the Exterior walls of 240ML and 110ML (Serial No. N110), as well as the proposed Grade 3 status of the Mineral Preparation Plant (Serial No. N101) and Site Structures at Mining Settlement (Serial No. N245) were confirmed as Members raised no alternative comment on the assessment.

16. In response to Ms Yvonne Law's enquiry concerning the justifications for the differences in the proposed grading status of Lutheran Yan Kwong Church (Serial No. N102) and St. Joseph Church (Serial No. N103), Mr Ng Chi-wo recalled that both Churches were originally proposed to be accorded a Grade 3 status; nevertheless, after Members' deliberation in the last AAB meeting on 3 March 2016, the proposed grading of St. Joseph Church (Serial No. N103) was upgraded to Grade 2. Mr Tony Lam and Prof Ho Puay-peng supplemented that St. Joseph Church (Serial No. N103) had a group value when mixing with the

buildings nearby and also higher architectural merits when comparing to the Lutheran Yan Kwong Church (Serial No. N102), thus Members agreed to upgrade the proposed grading of St. Joseph Church (Serial No. N103) in the last AAB meeting. With no further comments on the assessment, the proposed Grade 3 status of the Lutheran Yan Kwong Church (Serial No. N102) and the proposed Grade 2 status of the St. Joseph Church (Serial No. N103) were then confirmed by Members.

17. Members proceeded to consider the proposed Grade 3 status of the Former State Theater (Serial No. N46) (the “State Theatre”). Dr Alan Fung briefed Members on the historical background of the State Theatre, including its usage and the changes in the interior and exterior design of the building throughout the years. He also pointed out that the State Theatre was the third earliest theatre constructed, which still existed in Hong Kong. Another two were the Yau Ma Tei Theatre and Cheung Chau Theatre. The State Theatre was the earliest theatre constructed which remained on Hong Kong Island.

18. The Chairman recalled that in the last meeting, Members were informed that public comments were received regarding the grading of the State Theatre. Members were then also advised that there was no demolition risk or redevelopment plan at the site. Mr José Yam confirmed that as far as the CHO and the AMO were aware, the status remained the same up to that moment.

19. In response to the enquiries of the Chairman and Dr Sharon Wong, Ms Susanna Siu and Mr Ng Chi-wo mentioned that all the public comments were submitted to the Historic Buildings Assessment Panel (the “Assessment Panel”) for information, except for the information received right before this meeting. The Assessment Panel had considered all the available information and assessed the grading according to the six prevailing assessment criteria. In view of the major alteration works carried out to the interior, relatively lower scores were attained in the criteria for integrity and group value. Dr Alan Fung supplemented that the grading boundary only covered the theatre hall and the connecting building was excluded. The State Theatre also underwent a major upgrading works for its performance stage in 1950s. Later in 1997, after the closure of the State Theatre, interior of the building was transformed into a shopping centre cum snooker room by removing all the seats inside the theatre hall.

20. Mr Stephen Chan declared that he was a director of the Conservancy

Association. Prof Chung Po-yin, Prof Ho Puay-peng, Mr Stephen Chan and Ms Janet Pau all opined that the State Theatre should be accorded a higher grading status, in view of its architectural uniqueness, historical merits and public collective memories. Prof Ho Puay-peng added that there was insufficient information concerning the interior design of the State Theatre, such as the condition of the original ceiling above the false ceiling and the original flooring below the raised floor. He also suggested the grading of the interior and the exterior part of the State Theatre could be considered separately, as the special exterior architecture was worthy of according a Grade 1 status. Ms Yvonne Law and Ms Janet Pau echoed his suggestion and opined that the State Theatre had significantly contributed to the film development in Hong Kong and should be conserved for the public to learn about its history.

21. Mr Tony Lam and Sr Wong Bay expressed that the State Theatre could be accorded a higher grading status in view of the rarity of its architectural design, and it was an outstanding combination of architectural, engineering and surveying techniques.

22. Dr Sharon Wong expressed that the current function of the State Theatre as a shopping mall was a demonstration of the local shopping and entertainment culture. She proposed to conduct further study about this culture and the interior design of the State Theatre, before proceeding to the discussion on the grading. Ms Ava Tse also suggested to take into account the grading status of other theatres, such as Cheung Chau Theatre, when considering the grading of the State Theatre.

23. The Chairman pointed out that the fish-bone like architectural structure was rare in Hong Kong. Mr Ng Chi-wo agreed that it was a unique feature in Hong Kong's buildings. The Chairman further enquired whether the original roofs were still be kept and covered by false ceilings and whether the original theatre furniture were still there. In response, Mr Ng Chi Wo said that the office could try to seek permission from the occupiers to inspect the roofs, and Dr Alan Fung replied that the original theatre furniture could not be located in the building currently.

24. The Chairman concluded that Members all treasured the State Theatre and wished to have more information to facilitate deliberation on the grading, in particular information on the interior design and setting. It was also noted that

the previous mode of activities inside the State Theatre was part of the collective memories there. As there was neither demolition risk nor redevelopment plan for the building at this moment, there would be no urgency for the grading assessment, yet concerned departments should keep in view the latest development of the site. On top of this, Prof Ho Puay-peng proposed to provide Members information on the gradings of modern buildings for reference. The discussion of grading for the State Theatre would resume when the requested information was available.

25. Members then proceeded to discuss the proposed nil grading status of the Former Fanling Theatre (Serial No. N246) and Former Peng Chau Theatre (Serial No. N55). Dr Alan Fung briefed Members the historical background of these two Theatres, which were both privately-owned. Mr Ng Chi-wo supplemented that both of them were constructed after World War II and had plain architectural design.

26. Ms Karen Tang declared that she was the trustee for the foundation under Mr Chiu Te-ken, Deacon.

27. Ms Yvonne Law opined that the proposed nil grading was justified given its simple architectural design and no special merit was identified, as compared to the proposed Grade 3 status of the State Theatre.

28. After deliberation, the proposed nil gradings of the Former Fanling Theatre (Serial No. N246) and Former Peng Chau Theatre (Serial No. N55) were confirmed by Members.

Item 5 Any Other Business

29. The Chairman recapped the decision made in the “Any Other Business” session of the last AAB meeting of not to proceed with the grading assessment for the building remains at Cochrane Street (“Building Remains”). He then informed Members that a joint letter dated 18 April 2016 was received from the Central and Western Concern Group (the “Concern Group”) and the Sai Wan Concern Group concerning the same matter. He further mentioned the accusations and five requests raised by these Concern Groups in the letter. He explained that AAB did not have a standing practice for meeting the public. Should members of the public have information about historic buildings,

depending on individual circumstances, they would be requested to provide detailed information and justifications to the AAB vide the Secretariat; AAB could invite the members of the public to a separate informal meeting to discuss the issue, if necessary. Such meeting would not be arranged as a session within the regular AAB meeting due to resources limitation. If the new information provided was not considered in previous grading procedures, AAB might review the grading of the historic building.

30. Ms Susanna Siu reported that all the information provided by the Central and Western Concern Group since October 2015 had been circulated to Members for information, and the latest research findings and recommended ways of preservation were reported to Members in the last meeting, as a response to the Chairman's enquiry in the "Any Other Business" session. Mr Ng Chi-wo elaborated the research findings again and reported that Urban Renewal Authority ("URA") had been requested to consider preserving the Building Remains in-situ, as far as possible. The research findings of the AMO and AAB's views were also conveyed to the URA for information.

31. Prof Ho Puay-peng suggested to clarify whether the Building Remains were historic buildings or archaeological remains, and whether an assessment could be made by the Assessment Panel first. Mr Stephen Chan echoed his view and agreed to discuss with the URA on the preservation proposal and the historical interpretation at the site, prior to commencing the grading assessment.

32. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Ms Susanna Siu explained in details to Members the composition of the Assessment Panel; the Assessment Panel had been working with an aim to providing a balanced and independent assessment of historic buildings. Subsequent to the assessment by the Assessment Panel and the AMO, the proposed grading would then be submitted to the AAB for deliberation. The AMO would then conduct a one-month public consultation on the proposed grading agreed by the AAB. After taking into account the public comments received, AAB would then confirm the grading. Indeed, whenever public comments regarding historic buildings were received, AMO would conduct a preliminary study on the information provided; further studies would be carried out if the historic building concerned had a genuine heritage value as proposed by the public. If the public comments were substantiated by research findings, the aforementioned grading procedures involving the Assessment Panel, the AMO and the AAB would be triggered.

33. Prof Chung Po-yin and Mr Stephen Chan both trusted the integrity of the AMO and believed that the decision made in the previous meeting was based on all the information available. The public was welcomed to provide new information for further consideration, if justified.

34. Due to limited resources, the Chairman emphasised that there was a judgmental process for any proposed item to be justified for undergoing further grading assessment by the Assessment Panel and the AAB. The Chairman concluded and suggested:

- (i) to conduct a thorough study by the AMO on the information provided by the Concern Group and provide the AAB a summary of comparison of the research findings from the AMO and the Concern Group;
- (ii) to invite the Concern Group for a separate meeting if the research findings provided were justified for a review of the grading status of the Building Remains; and
- (iii) to invite the URA to attend the upcoming AAB meeting and brief Members their conservation proposal of the Building Remains.

35. Finally, Prof Ho Puay-peng proposed to conduct a research on the relationship among the Building Remains and other buildings in the vicinity and related events of the same era. Prof Chung Po-yin also suggested that wills of the deceased once living in the area could also provide some clues for the study.

36. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
September 2016

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