

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 176th Meeting
on Thursday, 8 December 2016 at 2:30 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 Rebecca Chiu Lai-har, JP
Prof Chung Po-yin
Prof Ho Puay-peng, JP
Prof Ho Pui-yin
Mr Tony Lam Chung-wai
Mr Philip Liao Yi-kang
Mr Kenny Lin Ching-pui
Mr Joseph Luc Ngai
Dr Annissa Lui Wai-ling, JP
Ms Theresa Ng Choi-yuk
Ms Janet Pau Heng-ting
Ms Yvonne Shing Mo-han, JP
Dr Winnie Tang Shuk-ming, JP
Dr Joseph Ting Sun-pao
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: Ms Karen Tang Shuk-tak
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 Leonie Lee
Assistant Secretary (Heritage Conservation)3

Mr Eddie Wong
Chief Executive Officer (Heritage Conservation)1

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Dr Louis Ng
Deputy Director (Culture)

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

Ms Susanna Siu
Executive Secretary (Antiquities and Monuments)

Ms Veta Wong
Principle Information Officer (Cultural Services)

Mr Kenneth Tam
Chief Heritage Manager (Antiquities and Monuments)

Mr Ng Chi-wo
Curator (Historical Buildings)²

Miss Pauline Poon
Assistant Curator I (Building Survey)

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 175th Meeting held on 8 September 2016 (Board Minutes AAB/7/2015-16)

2. The minutes of the 175th Meeting held on 8 September 2016 were confirmed with the following amendments:

(i) Proposed by Dr Joseph Ting to revise paragraph 14 as follows:

“14. The Chairman, Dr Joseph Ting, and Ms Susanna Siu

declared that they were members of the Heritage Working Group of Tai Kwun. The Chairman, Mr Kenny Lin, and Ms Theresa Ng declared that they were members of the Hong Kong Jockey Club (“HKJC”). Ms Yvonne Shing declared that her husband was an honorary voting member of the HKJC.”

**Item 2 Matters Arising and Progress Report
(Board Paper AAB/37/2015-16)**

3. Ms Susanna Siu briefed Members on the progress of major heritage issues and activities during the period from 1 August to 15 November 2016, including the progress of preservation of historic buildings and structures, restoration and maintenance programmes, archaeological projects, educational and publicity activities as detailed in relevant Annexes of the Board Paper.

4. In response to the enquiry of Dr Joseph Ting regarding the progress of the restoration works of Tat Tak Communal Hall, Yuen Long, Ms Susanna Siu reported that most of the restoration works of Tat Tak Communal Hall had been completed, with the exception of some works relating to the slope nearby.

5. The Chairman recalled that during the discussion of the preliminary conservation plan for the archaeological features discovered at the works site of the To Kwa Wan Station of the Shatin to Central Link at the Board meeting in December 2014, which was just before the beginning of the current term of the Board, the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) had agreed to preserve Well J2 by dismantling and reassembling at its original location, and to explore ways for Well J2 to be viewed from the station, and would submit the design details of the preservation proposal to the Board for consideration and further comments. Yet the submission from MTRCL was still pending by the end of the current term.

6. Ms Susanna Siu reported that the Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”) had yet to receive the submission from MTRCL to the Board, despite the fact that MTRCL had been urged repeatedly to make early submission to the Board in its regular working meetings with AMO. In view of the public concern on the issue, the Chairman requested AMO to reiterate the Board’s stance in the upcoming monthly meeting with MTRCL such that the design details of the preservation proposal would be put to the Board for advice once available.

Given that the park area had been extended according to the latest development plan by the Government, more flexibility would be allowed in the design of the preservation and display of the archaeological features discovered. It would not be desirable if the Board was not consulted in this regard.

Item 3 Assessment of Historic Buildings
(Board Paper AAB/38/2015-16)

Building Remains at Cochrane Street, Central (Serial No. N262)

7. Before moving to the discussion of the grading assessment of the building remains at the site of Cochrane Street (the “Building Remains”), the Chairman informed Members that some new information provided by the Central and Western Concern Group (the “Concern Group”) right before the meeting would be circulated to Members for reference.

8. Mr Ng Chi-wo reported that the Board had decided at the meeting on 8 September 2016 that grading assessment should be conducted for the Building Remains. AMO then critically studied all the historical records of the Building Remains available and examined all the information provided by the Concern Group. After going through all the research findings of AMO and the information provided by the Concern Group, as well as conducting an on-site visit, the Historic Buildings Assessment Panel (the “Assessment Panel”) had completed the heritage assessment and recommended to accord a proposed Nil Grade to the Building Remains.

9. Mr Ng Chi-wo went on to elaborate the latest research findings detailed in the updated heritage appraisal of the Building Remains. He showed Members pictures of the current condition of the Building Remains and the tenement houses located in Gutzlaff Street in the 1930s (extracted from the document of the Tenancy Tribunal) and recapped the historical information regarding the owners and related figures of the tenement houses at the location of the Building Remains. He also drew Members’ attention to the records retrieved from the Tenancy Tribunal which provided the information of when the tenement houses at the location of the Building Remains was built. In response to some public views received, he further pointed out that it might not be an appropriate method to

deduce the construction date of a historic building solely based on the years when related ordinances were enacted, as non-compliance of ordinances was not uncommon during those eras according to concrete historical information. Based on the latest research findings, it was concluded that the Building Remains were likely built in the 1930s; and it was unlikely that the Building Remains were directly related to the historical figures of the site in 1916 or before. Besides, as the upper part of the Building Remains had been demolished completely, it would be difficult to identify the back-to-back construction style of tenement houses from the Building Remains.

10. Members then switched to discuss the photocopy of the three photos submitted by the Concern Group right before the meeting. In response to Members' enquiries about the shooting time, date and place of the photos shown, Ms Susanna Siu pointed out that two of the photos were probably the same photos attached to the Tenancy Tribunal document dated 1963, illustrating that the then buildings at Nos. 8 and 10 Gutzlaff Street were built about 30 years ago, i.e. in the 1930s, as indicated in the Architect's Report dated 1963. The report was accepted by the Tenancy Tribunal in 1963, and recommended to the then Governor-in-Council for approval subsequently for redevelopment of the buildings concerned. The Chairman supplemented that the Concern Group had insisted that it was impossible for the buildings shown in these three photos be built in the 1930s. Dr Joseph Ting confirmed that the third photo marked "1894" was a photo taken during the outbreak of plague in 1894. Prof Ho Pui-yin questioned about the location where this photo was taken other than the fact that it was taken in 1894. Mr Stephen Chan also queried if the third photo marked "1894" was taken at Gutzlaff Street which was a narrow street, very different from the street scene shown in the photo.

11. In response to Mr Tony Lam's enquiry on the source of the findings, Mr Ng Chi-wo reiterated that AMO had conducted a thorough research from all possible sources for available historical information about pre-war buildings, such as land lot records, rates records, building plans, old photos, historic documents etc. He added that the rates records for several years after 1930 were not available from the government archives.

12. The Chairman pointed out that the construction year of the Building Remains mentioned in the latest heritage appraisal was different from the previous one. Mr Ng Chi-wo explained that after the Board had decided that grading

assessment should be carried out for the Building Remains at its meeting on 8 September 2016, AMO critically reviewed all the historical records related to the Building Remains in hand and found the report dated 8 November 1963 from the Tenancy Tribunal which had not been studied. An in-depth research was therefore conducted in line with this report, which was found to be a solid evidence to throw light on the construction year of the Building Remains. Ms Susanna Siu added that this report was very reliable and crucial as it was officially accepted by the Tenancy Tribunal and recommended to the then Governor-in-Council for approval to redevelop the buildings concerned, and the on-site assessment was made by a contemporary authorised architect on the then buildings.

13. Regarding the concern of Prof Ho Puay-peng, the Chairman stressed the importance of deducing the construction year of the Building Remains before considering the heritage significance. The Board should consider the reliability of the report retrieved from the Tenancy Tribunal and whether this should form the basis for the Board's deliberation of the proposed grading.

14. Prof Ho Pui-yin opined that it was technically more feasible to construct a 3-storey residential building by concrete in early 20th century than in late 19th century, coupled with the fact that Cochrane Street was steep and the buildings there were prone to typhoon attacks.

15. Mr Philip Liao, Prof Ho Puay-peng, and Mr Tony Lam raised some examples of buildings, like religious buildings, that were 3-storey high or higher and built in late 19th century and early 20th century. The Chairman clarified that there was no conclusion on whether 3-storey residential buildings could only be built in 20th century (after 1900) at the moment. Nevertheless, should the Board consider that the report retrieved from the Tenancy Tribunal was a reliable document and assuming that the Building Remains were built in or after 1930, also by making reference to the photos provided by the Concern Group, Members could assess the heritage significance of the Building Remains accordingly.

16. Per the suggestion of Mr Tony Lam to conduct further research, the Chairman asked Mr Lam to specify clearly the scope of the further research he requested. Mr Tony Lam responded that the first thing came to his mind was whether 3-storey tenement buildings were common at that time and what were the environs around the Building Remains. He considered the Tenancy Tribunal

document reliable, but he did not trust the architect's judgement in his report. Prof Ho Puay-peng expressed that he also had no trust in architects who made judgment according to visual inspection only. The Chairman followed up by asking Mr Ng Chi-wo to elaborate whether there was other concrete evidence to show that the Building Remains were not constructed in late 19th century, but in early 20th century. Mr Ng Chi-wo stated that records of 1895 showed that the then tenement buildings at Cochrane Street had basements, whereas the records from Tenancy Tribunal showed that the buildings on the subject site at between 1960s and 1970s had no basements. Such differences had indicated that there was redevelopment at the site after 1895.

17. In response to Mr Tony Lam's further enquiry on the possibility for the construction date be fallen between 1878 and 1903, Ms Susanna Siu reiterated that as reported by Mr Ng Chi-wo, the Building Remains were located at the centre of the area and affected by the fire disaster in 1878, in which the buildings in the subject site were entirely burnt down and the owners were all exempted from rate payment for the whole year in 1879. Furthermore, there were contemporary reports that the ruins after being burnt down, were pulled down for safety purposes with volunteers drawn from sailors and Western prisoners. It was, therefore, reasonably believable that the Building Remains were not ruins of buildings constructed before the fire of 1878. In addition, due to the poor quality and short life-span of the buildings built in late 19th century to early 20th century, it was not uncommon for tenement buildings to be reported as having collapsed in contemporary news. It was also common for the buildings in the areas near the Building Remains being re-built during the 1930s as reported in contemporary news, which was about three decades after the collapse of the tenement buildings in Cochrane Street in 1901 as reported in newspapers. Prof Ho Pui-yin echoed that the buildings constructed near the site in early 20th century were very fragile and with many unauthorised structures, such that they were very susceptible to collapse, especially under adverse weather. There were actually many collapse cases at Cochrane Street.

18. After thorough deliberation among Members, the Chairman suggested Members to consider whether the new evidence, i.e. the architect's report on Nos. 8 and 10 Gutzlaff Street dated 8 November 1963 included in the file of Tenancy Tribunal was reliable; and if the answer was affirmative, Members might consider the proposed Nil Grade of the Building Remains if the tenement buildings were built after 1903, or even after 1930s. Members unanimously raised no objection

to adopt the new information presented by AMO, and agreed to accord a proposed Nil Grade to the Building Remains (Serial No. N262). As such, the proposed Nil Grade was endorsed.

19. Mr Stephen Chan mentioned that the Urban Renewal Authority (“URA”) had promised in the Central and Western District Council meeting to preserve the Building Remains by salvaging and reassembling the bricks for further historical interpretation to the public.

20. Prof Ho Puay-peng opined that although there was no concrete information to prove the exact construction date of the Building Remains, the Building Remains were an example of the pre-war construction style, particularly for the Central District. He proposed to highlight this aspect for URA’s reference in drawing up the conservation proposal. The Chairman added that a one-month public consultation would be conducted for the proposed grading of the Building Remains, as per the usual practice. Members of the public, including the Concern Group, could provide further information for the Board to consider before confirming the grading. He also believed that URA would honour its promise to preserve the Building Remains for public education purpose.

21. Dr Joseph Ting commented that the heritage significance of the Building Remains would be lowered if they were built in or after 1903. However, the change of ownership of the buildings in the area was a mirror of the transfer of ownership from the Westerners back to the Chinese in the course of the development of the Central District.

22. In response to Ms Janet Pau’s enquiry about the assessment details of the Building Remains by the Assessment Panel, Ms Susanna Siu explained that after conducting an on-site visit and reviewing the latest research findings of AMO, as well as taking into consideration all the information provided by the Concern Group, the Assessment Panel had undergone a thorough discussion and proposed to accord a Nil Grade status to the Building Remains, based on the six prevailing grading assessment criteria. The assessment was also based on the fact that the Building Remains only showed a small part of the then tenement buildings and the Building Remains had undergone substantial and incompatible repairs by applying concrete to the face.

23. The Chairman concluded that through this case, he had studied a large

quantity of historical information, and thanked the Concern Group for its interaction with the Board which had greatly enriched the sources of research materials for conducting grading assessment of the site.

Former State Theatre (Serial No. N46)

24. The discussion moved on to the grading assessment of the former State Theatre. Mr Ng Chi-wo reported that per Members' advice in the previous Board meeting, AMO had reviewed all the historical information concerning the building. At the meeting on 8 September 2016, AMO briefed the Board on the updated research findings of the former State Theatre. Site visits were also arranged to facilitate Members and the Assessment Panel to have a better understanding of both the interior and exterior conditions of the building.

25. Mr Ng Chi-wo gave a brief account of the history of the former State Theatre (originally operated as Empire Theatre and later as State Theatre), including the historical significance of the provision of covered car parking facilities for customers in a standalone theatre, the architectural significance of the provision of reinforced concrete arch beam roof structure, its vertical hangars, as well as its cultural importance of being a venue for various performances. He further pointed out that the alteration works for converting the building to State Theatre had affected the symmetry of the building façade. The setting and ambience as a theatre had long since ceased to exist, although the building structures generally remained the same as shown in the layout plans kept by the Buildings Department. The shopping mall was still in operation but most of the operators had changed over the years. After examining all the newly available information, the Assessment Panel reviewed the grading assessment of the former State Theatre and recommended to upgrade its proposed grading to Grade 2.

26. Ms Susanna Siu provided further information on the grading status of other theatres in Hong Kong, including the former Yau Ma Tei Theatre (a Grade 2 historic building), Cheung Chau Theatre (a Grade 3 historic building) and the former Fanling Theatre (a Grade 3 historic building), for Members' reference.

27. As per the enquiry of the Chairman, Mr Ng Chi-wo advised that apart from the former State Theatre, there were other theatres in Hong Kong equipped with a stage for performance and could also be used as a cinema hall at the same

time, such as the Lee Theatre, Tai Ping Theatre and Yau Ma Tei Theatre.

28. Sr Wong Bay pointed out that the former State Theatre was an outstanding combination of architectural, engineering and surveying techniques, with remarkable architectural design to facilitate future maintenance and adaptable use. He therefore supported to accord a proposed Grade 1 status to the building.

29. In response to the enquiry of the Chairman regarding the architectural style of the roof structure of the building, Ms Susanna Siu said that the Assessment Panel had visited the building and agreed that the reinforced concrete arch beam roof structure with vertical hangars, suspending a reinforced concrete paneled roof over the auditorium, were remarkable features of the building. The Chairman explained that it was necessary to clearly identify the character-defining elements of the building, i.e. the architectural design of the roof, whether the design of the roof was unique or was a common design for the buildings constructed in the 1950s. Prof Ho Puay-peng, Mr Tony Lam and Mr Rex Wong commented that this architectural design was common in constructing bridges, but not for buildings. Mr Philip Liao added that it was also not common for the arch beam structure to be built above the roof and be left exposed to the weather.

30. Mr Rex Wong and Dr Sharon Wong opined that some interior features and fabrics of the theatre were still preserved in good condition, such as the staircases, and agreed to accord a Grade 1 status to the building.

31. Dr Winnie Tang showed concerns on whether it was due to its relatively lower social value that the proposed grading of the building was only Grade 2, instead of Grade 1. Prof Chung Po-yin raised that Harry Oscar Odell, the managing director of the company constructing the building, was also an important person who introduced entertainment performances to Hong Kong.

32. Mr Ng Chi-wo mentioned that among the six prevailing assessment criteria, the Assessment Panel accorded a relatively higher score for the building's architectural merit, yet the Panel considered that the social impact of the former State Theatre was regional and the score in this aspect was therefore relatively lower.

33. Both Mr Stephen Chan and Dr Joseph Ting opined that the building had a social value to Hong Kong in that it demonstrated the development of stage

performance and film industry, after the emergence of television broadcasting in Hong Kong; and, being operated as Empire Theatre, the building also served as a very important venue for entertainment performances before the opening of the Hong Kong City Hall. They both supported the building to be accorded a Grade 1 status. Prof Ho Puay-peng also supported the grading proposal by making reference to its architectural merit, social value and design for maintenance.

34. In response to the concerns raised by Prof Rebecca Chiu, Ms Yvonne Shing, Mr Kenny Lin and Ms Janet Pau on the justifications to upgrade the proposed grading of the former State Theatre to Grade 1, with reference to other graded theatres in Hong Kong, such as Yau Ma Tei Theatre (a Grade 2 historic building), Ms Susanna Siu mentioned that before a Grade 2 status was proposed to the former State Theatre, the Assessment Panel had examined all research findings of AMO and the reference materials provided by the public, as well as the information gathered during the on-site visit. In addition, various factors such as the confirmed grading of other graded theatres in Hong Kong, the evolution from Empire Theatre to State Theatre, and the conversion of the covered car parking spaces to shops had also been taken into consideration by the Assessment Panel. The Chairman supplemented that according to previous discussions of Members, further research studies might be necessary for the modern buildings, such as those post-war ones.

35. Prof Ho Puay-peng considered that Yau Ma Tei Theatre was smaller in scale and few historic buildings had similar architectural structures, whereas the former State Theatre as a representative example of the buildings in the 1950s, could demonstrate the Art Deco architectural design. He added that a fully preserved interior decoration was not a prerequisite for a historic building to be accorded a Grade 1 status. Prof Ho Pui-yin added that the former State Theatre, with its much larger scale as an entertainment venue, as compared with those pre-war ones, had played an important role in showcasing the development of a new business and residential center in Hong Kong Island, apart from the Central District, which was included in the urban planning initiative of the Government. Ms Theresa Ng and Prof Ho Puay-peng echoed her view. Sr Wong Bay also commented that the former State Theatre had a status comparable to the Lee Theatre, rather than just a cinema likened to Yau Ma Tei Theatre.

36. After Members' deliberation, the Chairman concluded that the fact that the building was operating as a shopping mall should not be a decisive factor in

considering the proposed grading of the former State Theatre. By means of voting, a Grade 1 status for the former State Theatre (Serial No. N46) was endorsed by Members, as 14 out of 20 Members supported the proposal. A one-month public consultation would be conducted accordingly.

37. Before discussing the proposed grading for the next item, the Chairman raised the issue of public concern over the transparency of the Assessment Panel in assessing the heritage value of historic buildings. Ms Susanna Siu explained in detail that the Assessment Panel, comprising 5 Members, would assess the grading of historic buildings in accordance with the six prevailing assessment criteria, which were also available on the website of the Board. According to the prevailing mechanism, AMO would conduct an in-depth research on the historic building and submit its research findings, together with the information provided by the public, if any, to the Assessment Panel for consideration and on-site visit would be arranged, if needed. The Assessment Panel would then discuss and assess the grading according to the six prevailing assessment criteria. The proposed grading would subsequently be provided to the Board for discussion. After deliberation, the Board would decide whether to accept the proposed grading, adjust the grading, or request the Assessment Panel to review the grading again. After the Board's endorsement, a one-month public consultation would be conducted for the proposed grading, with the heritage appraisal uploaded onto the website of the Board. The Board would take into account all views and information received during the public consultation before confirming the proposed grading. Besides, the Board welcomed the public to provide any new information concerning the graded historic buildings. AMO would conduct study on any new information received, and if justified, would submit to the Assessment Panel and then the Board for a review of the confirmed grading.

38. Ms Yvonne Shing and Ms Ava Tse considered that to facilitate Members' discussion and maintaining consistency, it would be useful to provide further information concerning the detailed scoring among the six prevailing assessment criteria and analysis for the grading proposed by the Assessment Panel, as well as those for comparable precedent cases. Mr Kenny Lin echoed and added that the detailed scoring could help the Board adopt a consistent approach in handling grading assessment.

39. Mr Stephen Chan appreciated the effort of the Assessment Panel in the grading assessment and opined that Members could make use of the proposed

grading by the Assessment Panel as a basis for discussion.

40. Prof Ho Puay-peng pointed out that the prevailing mechanism provided two levels of grading assessment, i.e. a technical assessment by the Assessment Panel which assessed buildings based on the six established criteria, followed by a review of the grading proposal by the Board, which supposedly represented different sectors of the society. Sr Wong Bay shared the view that the Board could offer a qualitative analysis, on top of the quantitative analysis made by the Assessment Panel. Prof Rebecca Chiu and Mr Tony Lam also agreed that the Board could play a role in offering views from other perspectives, based on the professions and social experience of individual Members.

41. Mr Joseph Ngai suggested that a summary of justifications for a proposed grading could facilitate Members to make decision before confirming the grading proposal by way of voting.

42. Mr Kenny Lin said that he had not voted to support the upgrading proposal because the current condition of the building was totally different from that in his memory when the building was still operated as a theatre. Prof Rebecca Chiu opined that the current usage of the historic building might not be a decisive factor for its grading assessment, as preservation by revitalising historic buildings was a welcomed approach, of which the new usage was usually different from the original ones.

43. Dr Sharon Wong pointed out that it was necessary to make it clear to the public the detailed procedures of the grading assessment and the respective roles of the Assessment Panel and the Board.

44. The Chairman commented that the Board had been operating with a very high degree of openness and Members also participated actively in the interactions with the public, say attending informal meetings with the relevant concern groups, even though such activities were outside the period of normal public consultation. Independent professional assessment by the Assessment Panel was an essential part of the system and the Board could always provide views different from those of the Assessment Panel. Nevertheless, to facilitate better public understanding of the decisions made by the Board and to foster greater consistency in grading the historic buildings, he considered that the grading assessment process could be further improved by the provision of more

in-depth comparative analysis of historic buildings in the same group or category when an item was put to the Board for deliberation of the proposed grading. Yet he fully understood that it was subject to the availability of resources of AMO to undertake the relevant research work.

No. 6 Stewart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong (Serial No. 686)

45. The meeting moved on to discuss the proposed Grade 3 status of No. 6 Stewart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. Mr Ng Chi-wo briefed Members that No. 6 Stewart Road was accorded a proposed Grade 3 status by the Board in 2009 and objection from the owner was subsequently received during public consultation. In 2009, the Board decided to accord priority to process cases without objection received during public consultation. Nevertheless, as demolition threat of No. 6 Stewart Road was recently noted, Members were invited to review and confirm its proposed grading. He continued to elaborate the heritage value of the building, and the justifications of the owner's objection. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Mr Ng Chi-wo confirmed that no new information had been received so far.

46. Regarding the Chairman's enquiry on the latest position of the assessment of 1 444 historic buildings, Ms Susanna Siu reported that in 2009, after the endorsement of the proposed grading of the 1 444 historic buildings and the subsequent public consultation, the Board decided to firstly process cases without objection before processing those with objections unless there was demolition threat. As at the day of the meeting, the Board had confirmed the proposed grading of 87 historic buildings with objections received, whereas the proposed grading of 99 historic buildings with objections received had yet to be confirmed. In total, the proposed grading of 1 340 out of 1 444 historic buildings and new items had been confirmed by the Board. Mr José Yam supplemented that under the prevailing monitoring mechanism, if applications or enquiries about demolition or alteration works on graded historic buildings or buildings pending for grading were received by the relevant government departments, the Commissioner for Heritage's Office ("CHO") and AMO would pro-actively contact the owners concerned to discuss and explore possible preservation-cum-development proposals.

47. Mr Tony Lam expressed that the prevailing grading mechanism could

not prevent the historic buildings from demolition, unless they were declared as monuments. Mr José Yam reiterated that the prevailing grading mechanism was administrative in nature, aiming to provide an objective basis for assessing the heritage value, and hence the preservation need, of historic buildings in Hong Kong. Apart from preserving historic buildings *in-situ*, there were other ways of preservation, for which the Government could liaise with the owners concerned having regard to the grading status. He continued to explain that in liaising with the owners on the preservation of Grade 1 historic buildings, land exchange would be considered when other means, such as relaxation of development restrictions (e.g. plot ratio and building height restrictions) had been found not feasible.

48. The Chairman emphasised the importance of the Board to clearly define the character-defining elements of the historic buildings being graded, particular for those with Grade 3 status, as this could facilitate the Government to liaise with the owners on the preservation proposals.

49. In reply to Ms Ava Tse's enquiry, Mr Ng Chi-wo advised that the same verandah type shophouse located at No. 190 Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon also had a proposed Grade 3 status, pending confirmation as owner's objection was received.

50. Prof Ho Puay-peng opined that No. 6 Stewart Road had a special architectural design being a verandah type shophouse and was a representative of the buildings in 1930s and 1940s.

51. After deliberation, Members unanimously agreed to confirm the proposed Grade 3 status of No. 6 Stewart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong (Serial No. 686).

Maryknoll House, No. 44 Stanley Village Road, Stanley, Hong Kong (Serial No. 187)

52. The discussion continued with the proposed Grade 1 status for Maryknoll House, No. 44 Stanley Village Road, Stanley, Hong Kong. Mr Ng Chi-wo briefed Members that the building was accorded a proposed Grade 1 status by the Board in 2009 and objection from the owner was received during public consultation. He then highlighted the historical interest of the building in

that it served as the headquarters of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and also as a summer rest home and a language school for priests. He further pointed out the architectural merit of the building's Chinese Eclectic style, and quoted examples of similar graded historic buildings. Ownership of the building was changed in October 2016. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, he confirmed that no new information had been received so far.

53. Prof Ho Puay-peng declared that he had previously carried out a research on historic buildings in Chinese Eclectic style, including Maryknoll House. He then shared with Members his findings concerning the heritage significance of the building from the perspective of religion and social value, and supported to accord a Grade 1 status to the building. Dr Joseph Ting supplemented that the building had witnessed the historical significance of Hong Kong, being a springboard for the preaching of Western religions in China before they were prohibited.

54. The Chairman pointed out that under the prevailing mechanism, change of ownership was not a justification for conducting a fresh round of public consultation, particularly in the absence of the provision of new information by the new owner so far. He reiterated that the Board welcomed the public to provide any new information concerning graded historic buildings. If justified, the Board would consider reviewing the confirmed grading based on the new information received.

55. In response to the enquiries from Mr Kenny Lin, Mr Stephen Chan and Mr Philip Liao concerning the latest position of the discussion with the new owner, the feasibility of stating the grading information in the land records kept by the Land Registry, as well as declaring the building as monument, Mr José Yam explained that CHO had proceeded to engage the new owner as regards preservation-cum-development proposals upon the change in ownership, and the new owner was fully aware of the proposed grading status of the Maryknoll House before the purchase of the building. He added that the one-stop search for individual historic buildings under the full list of 1 444 historic buildings and new items in addition to the 1 444 buildings was available on the website of the Board. Such arrangement could facilitate the public to check the grading status of historic buildings before effecting any purchase. He emphasised that the grading system was administrative in nature and it would not affect the ownership and development rights of the buildings/structures that had been graded or were

pending grading assessment. It was therefore not necessary to state the grading information in the land records. Mr Kenny Lin agreed that the land records would only state information that would affect the ownership of the property. The Chairman believed that further measures could be considered in enhancing the dissemination of grading information to the public. He trusted that the Government would consider the options available in the course of negotiating with the owner including monument declaration, if necessary.

56. In response to Ms Janet Pau's enquiry, Mr Ng Chi-wo said that the previous owner objected the proposed grading on grounds of the difficulty to open the building to the public, which was unrelated to its historical significance.

57. After deliberation, Members unanimously agreed to confirm the proposed Grade 1 status of Maryknoll House, No. 44 Stanley Village Road, Stanley, Hong Kong (Serial No. 187).

No. 27 Lugard Road, The Peak (Serial No. N18)

58. Members then discussed the grading assessment of No. 27 Lugard Road, the Peak. Mr Ng Chi-wo reported that No. 27 Lugard Road, The Peak, was accorded a Grade 2 status by the Board in September 2013. Recently, new information was received from its owner who also requested a review of the grading status of the building. The Assessment Panel had examined the new information based on the six prevailing assessment criteria, and proposed to adjust the Grade 2 status of the building to Grade 1.

59. Mr Ng Chi-wo continued to brief Members the historical interest and architectural merits of the building, as well as the new information submitted by the owner, including details of the interior alterations, evidence indicating that it was the first building constructed in 1914, when the first section of Lugard Road was completed, and the historical information of its first owner and his brother. He also highlighted the group value of the building given the number of graded historic buildings located on The Peak.

60. Prof Ho Puay-peng agreed with the proposed Grade 1 status, even though there were alternations inside the building. Mr Stephen Chan shared the same view but expressed that the grading status had minimal impact on the

preservation of the building.

61. At the request of the Chairman, Mr Ng Chi-wo confirmed that the new information was provided by the owner of the building. Mr José Yam supplemented that the application for a hotel development at No. 27 Lugard Road was approved by the Town Planning Board (“TPB”) in 2013 with conditions on traffic management measures. While the owner had expressed that the hotel development project would be difficult to pursue due to the stringent conditions stipulated by TPB, CHO would keep liaising with the owner to facilitate any preservation-cum-development proposal for conservation of the building.

62. In response to the concern raised by Ms Yvonne Shing, Prof Rebecca Chiu, and Dr Annissa Lui about the owner’s request for a grading review and the development proposal of the building, the Chairman remarked that the source and accuracy of the new information, instead of the motive of the submission, should be the consideration in assessing the heritage value and grading of a historic building.

63. Both Mr Tony Lam and Prof Ho Puay-peng declared that they were involved in processing the planning application for the hotel development in 2013. Mr Tony Lam considered that the building was worth according a Grade 1 status, adding that the grading assessment should be independent from its preservation. Prof Ho Puay-peng supplemented that the hotel development plan was approved on the consideration that it could better preserve the building, or else the building might be demolished, giving way to the construction of new houses at the site. A Grade 1 status might help further justify and support the proposal to preserve the building.

64. The Chairman emphasised again that the motive of submission should not affect the grading consideration by Members. After deliberation, Members endorsed the upgrading of the Grade 2 status of No. 27 Lugard Road, The Peak, to Grade 1. A one-month public consultation would follow.

65. In response to the Chairman’s enquiry, Mr José Yam confirmed that he had no further comment on the development plan of the site.

Item 4 Any Other Business

66. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

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