

ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Special Meeting
held on Tuesday, 27 October 2009 at 10:30 a.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
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen
Mr Philip Kan Siu-lun
Ms Lilian Law Suk-kwan
Dr Lee Ho-yin
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen
Professor Bernard Lim Wan-fung, JP
Dr Ng Cho-nam, BBS, JP
Mr Ng Yat-cheung, JP
Professor Simon Shen Xu-hui
Dr Linda Tsui Yee-wan
Ir Dr Greg Wong Chak-yan, JP
Mr Bryan Wong Kim-yeung
Mr Yeung Yiu-chung, BBS, JP
Ms Heaster Cheung (Secretary)
Chief Administration Manager (Antiquities and Monuments)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Absent with Apologies:

Mrs Mariana Cheng Cho Chi-on, BBS, JP
Mr Patrick Fung Pak-tung, SC
Mr Kwong Hoi-ying
Mr Andrew Lam Siu-lo, JP
Professor Lau Chi-pang
Dr Tracey Lu Lie-dan
Mr Almon Poon Chin-hung, JP
Professor Billy So Kee-long

In Attendance: Development Bureau
Mrs Carrie Lam, JP
Secretary for Development

Mrs Jessie Ting, JP
Deputy Secretary (Works)¹

Mr Jack Chan
Commissioner for Heritage

Mr Robin Lee
Chief Assistant Secretary (Works)2

Mr Chris Ng
Assistant Secretary (Heritage Conservation)4 (Acting)

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mrs Betty Fung, JP
Director for Leisure and Cultural Services

Mr Chung Ling-hoi, JP
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 (Education and Publicity)

Ms Fione Lo
Curator (Historical Buildings)

Mr Kevin Sun
Curator (Archaeology)

Ms Wendy Tsang
Principal Marketing Coordinator

Miss Catherine Chiu
Executive Officer I (Antiquities and Monuments)2

Miss Amanda Leung
Senior Executive Assistant (Antiquities and Monuments)

Planning Department

Mr Raymond Lee
Assistant Director (Metro) (Acting)

Architectural Services Department

Mr S W Fong
Assistant Director (Property Services) (Acting)

Mr S L Lam
Senior Maintenance Surveyor/Heritage

Opening Remarks

The Chairman thanked Members and representatives from Government departments for attending the special meeting.

2. The Chairman informed Members that Mrs Carrie Lam, Secretary for Development, would join the meeting later. She would brief Members on the plans of “Conserving Central”. Two agenda items on the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the North Kowloon Magistracy (NKM) and Lai Chi Kok Hospital (LCKH) would be discussed first. A quorum of the meeting was therefore required.

3. Before going through the agenda items, the Chairman raised the issue for sharing with Members on the removal of wooden stairs of “Blue House” which received wide media coverage recently. Mr Jack Chan briefed Members that Blue House was built more than 80 years ago in the early 1920’s. The Buildings Department (BD) did an inspection to Blue House and discovered several structural problems. They included defective drainage system, falling concrete at external façade and crumbly staircases. These problems might pose potential dangers to residents of Blue House as well as pedestrians. BD once issued building orders to the owners of Blue House to rectify these problems. After the ownership of Blue House was surrendered to Government, we had taken prompt action to repair the drainage system and external façade. Regarding the wooden stairs, they were damaged seriously by termites. The space below the stairs was empty and was about 20 feet high. Since Blue House was still being occupied by some residents, Mr Jack Chan emphasised that the dangerous stairs had to be urgently replaced to ensure safety of the residents. AMO’s heritage conservation guidelines were strictly adhered to when the replacement works were carried out. The dismantled wooden stairs would not be disposed of but retained for reuse by the successful applicant of Blue House under the Revitalizing Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme. The stairs were preserved in-situ to continue to perform their original function, conforming to international heritage conservation principles.

4. On technical aspects, Mr Tom Ming supplemented that it was not uncommon to replace building materials like wood or bricks in the course of repair. In the case of Blue House, AMO would assess whether it was feasible to keep the stairs. At least the three timber boards with special markings would be preserved in-situ after conservation treatment.

5. Members suggested Government to maintain amicable communication with the media and relevant stakeholders before the case was reported. In response, Mr Jack Chan informed Members that, before the commencement of the replacement works, a

notice was put up on site for several months and meetings with different stakeholders were also held to explain the scope of work.

**Item 1 Heritage Impact Assessment of the Heritage Site of North Kowloon Magistracy
(Board Paper AAB/25/2009-10)**

6. The Chairman introduced the presentation team:

Presenter

- (i) Mr Eric C M Lee, Director of LCM & Associates Ltd.
- (ii) Mr Bob Dickensheets, Preservation Specialist,
SCAD Foundation (Hong Kong) Ltd.

In attendance

- (i) Ms Molly Mulloy, Director, Edelman Public Relations
- (ii) Ms Phoebe Ho, Manager, Edelman Public Relations
- (iii) Mr Victor Chan, Director of LCK Architects Ltd.
- (iv) Mr Tsui Cheung Wing, Assistant Architect, LCK Architects Ltd

7. Mr Dickensheets presented in Powerpoint to Members the background of SCAD Foundation and the proposed adaptive re-use of NKM to a higher education college of art and design. Character defining elements would be preserved or restored based on “as is” principle as far as possible. SCAD also aimed to create synergy with local organizations.

8. Mr Eric Lee followed up to summarize the main points of the Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Major conservation principles for the NKM included:

- (i) Alteration and addition works would be carried out in such a way to keep the original architectural features and minimize intervention to existing fabrics; and
- (ii) Design of new elements would be compatible with but distinguishable from the original fabric. The changes would be reversible as far as possible.

9. Mr Eric Lee also supplemented by citing a few examples of the proposed works as follows:

- (i) Preserve the main hall staircases and at least one detention cell with original setting;
- (ii) Install a new fireman’s lift/disabled lift by adopting the lift system that did not require a machine room with glazed top to minimize visual impact; and
- (iii) Add new services such as fire services and sprinkler tanks, pump rooms and water cooling towers outside the building at less obstructive location.

10. Mr Eric Lee further explained that the intention to apply for exemption from BD was to avoid unnecessary changes to existing ironwork balustrades and metal grilles/railings such that the original expression could be kept. The Chairman reiterated

that the Board was generally supportive to that issue. A Member also indicated his general support to the proposed application for exemption from the building regulations. He further suggested that AAB might invite the attendance of representatives from BD to give technical input and share their views on related issues. The Chairman echoed the idea as it would also strengthen communication between the Board and BD.

11. A Member expressed concern over the color scheme of the façade. Mr Dickensheets assured that the original color scheme would be maintained.

12. In response to a Member's query on the staircases, Mr Eric Lee clarified that the one situated in the Main Hall, the one connecting the preserved courtroom No.1, the preserved cells and the one connecting the aforesaid courtroom to third floor would be preserved in view of their high patronage. Other internal staircases would be removed for better space utilization.

13. A Member raised the issue of long term maintenance. Mr Dickensheets said that SCAD would seek advice from Development Bureau and consultants on the long term maintenance of the building. In addition, AMO would be consulted on the Maintenance Plan to be prepared.

14. The Chairman asked if it was possible to preserve more court rooms. Mr Dickensheets explained the difficulty as they were striving to create more room space for teaching and related purposes in order to meet the operational requirement of the School.

15. A Member expressed his appreciation to the team's effort and opined that it could be regarded as a showcase in the preservation of historic buildings.

16. The Chairman concluded that Members of the Board generally supported the CMP.

(The presentation team left at this juncture.)

Item 2 Heritage Impact Assessment of the Heritage Site of Lai Chi Kok Hospital (Board Paper AAB/25/2009-10)

17. The Chairman introduced the presentation team:

Presenter

- (i) Mr Curry Tse, Conservation Consultant, China Point Consultant Ltd
- (ii) Prof Lee Chak-fun, Chairman, Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture

In attendance

- (i) Dr K K Wong, Vice-Chairman, Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture
- (ii) Mr David Chan, Deputy CEO & Project Director, Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture
- (iii) Ms Linn Chan, Program Officer, Hong Kong Institute for

Promotion of Chinese Culture

- (iv) Ms Queenie Wan, Lead Architect, P&T Architects & Engineers Ltd.
- (v) Mr Humphrey Wong, Collaborating Architect, Meta4 Design Forum Ltd.

18. Prof Lee Chak-fun gave a PowerPoint presentation on the background of the Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture (HKIPCC) and the proposed revitalization of LCKH as the “Hong Kong Cultural Heritage” for the promotion of arts and culture with hostel, performance space, classrooms, café and gallery. Mr Curry Tse continued to brief Members on the history of the site.

19. With reference to the CMP, he briefed Members that the conservation principle would be stressed on the reversible design in order to keep or revert to the original expression of the architectural features and minimize intervention to the existing significant fabrics. Key works/ mitigation measures included:

- (i) New additions including lifts and bridges connecting various zones would be provided for barrier free access;
- (ii) Alteration and subsequent structural strengthening to Block I would be done by steel structures to provide a reversible and distinguishable intervention; and
- (iii) The original red brick façade would be restored wherever practicable.

20. Dr Linda Tsui declared interest as a Member of the Board of Directors of the HKIPCC and was involved in the promotion of Chinese culture. Dr Lee Ho-yin also declared interest as he was the advisor to the project and had participated in the preparation of the resource kit. The Chairman considered that their participation in the discussion would not give rise to any conflict of interest.

21. In response to the use of hostel, Dr K K Wong said that it would be open to the public for generating more income for the center’s operation. In addition, those hostels would also be used to accommodate visiting/ guest lecturers.

22. A Member queried the arrangement of air-conditioning system and the connecting bridges. Mr Humphrey Wong responded that all components would either be located outside the building or be covered by some building fabrics to minimize the visual effect.

23. To address the concern of a Member on the kitchen setup, Mr Humphrey Wong explained that they would continue to use the existing kitchen area where refurbishment works would be carried out.

24. In response to a Member’s enquiry on the boundary stone situated nearby, Mr Curry Tse said that he would follow up to study its history in further detail. Mr Humphrey Wong supplemented that the boundary stone was outside the boundary of project site. They would nevertheless be pleased to offer assistance if and where necessary.

25. The Chairman noted that Members of the Board generally supported the mitigation measures proposed in the HIA.

(The presentation team left at this juncture.)

Item 3 Briefing on “Conserving Central” by Secretary for Development

26. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Carrie Lam for giving a briefing to the Board on the “Conserving Central” plan. Having regard to the importance of conserving the historical and cultural features of Central as a business center while maintaining its sustainability and development, Mrs Carrie Lam highlighted the following:

- (i) Government took the initiative to conserve several Government-owned buildings. On the other hand, support from the private sector was equally important to make the conservation work more effective. All these projects bore heritage theme except the New Central Harbourfront project. Government would consider comments from Members and incorporate them where appropriate during implementation of these projects;
- (ii) The conservation plan of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) would become a showcase indicating Government’s readiness in assisting the private sector in pursuing development cum conservation projects. The Development Opportunities Office would provide one-stop service in relation to the proposed development;
- (iii) Murray Building, though of a relatively short history, was selected for inclusion in the conservation plan due to its architectural merits. AAB would be consulted on the grading assessment of the Central Government Offices Complex; and
- (iv) Government was working with the Hong Kong Jockey Club in preserving the Central Police Station Compound with a view to meeting various public expectations.

27. Members supported in general the “Conserving Central” plan and appreciated Government in taking an active role in improving the quality of life.

28. Dr Anissa Chan declared interest that she was the supervisor of Sheng Kung Hui Kindergarten. She expressed appreciation in respect of the inclusion of conserving HKSKH compound in the plan under CE’s Policy Address. Through revitalising the building clusters of HKSKH, the development in Mount Butler could be accelerated thereby benefiting the general public from its service. A Member suggested paying a visit to HKSKH to understand more of the site. AMO undertook to arrange the visit.

29. Major views, suggestions and questions on the subject matter raised by Members were summarized as follows:

- (i) apart from heritage conservation, effort should be made to improve

- environmental quality in Central;
- (ii) consideration might be given to including other buildings/ areas for preservation including:
 - post-war buildings, such as Bank of China Tower, HSBC Headquarters Buildings and the shophouses along SoHo (South of Hollywood Road);
 - old streets such as Ladder Street; and
 - Hong Kong City Hall and Edinburgh Place;
- (iii) similar conserving measures should be adopted in other districts; and
- (iv) the possibility of adopting a holistic approach in public engagement.

30. Mrs Carrie Lam thanked Members for their views and suggestions. She expressed that “Conserving Central” demonstrated Government’s commitment on heritage conservation. She was also optimistic to the introduction of similar conservation measures in other districts, such as Wan Chai, Kai Tak Development Area and Sham Shui Po, in the future. She stressed the importance of the engagement of non-government organizations or private sectors in pursuing conservation plans in the long run. She reaffirmed that Government would attach great importance in greening and connectivity when implementing conservation plans. Lastly, she emphasised that it was the right time to take action and implement these projects.

31. Mrs Carrie Lam concluded by appealing to AAB’s continual support which was crucial to the success of conservation plans. The Chairman assured that the Board would strive to extend its maximum support to the initiatives and thanked her efforts and endeavors in the conservation and revitalization work.

Item 4 Any Other Business

32. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
 Leisure and Cultural Services Department
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