

**MEMORANDUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE FORMER MOUNTAIN LODGE
AT THE VICTORIA PEAK GARDEN**

PURPOSE

To inform Members of an archaeological survey on the remains of the Former Mountain Lodge at the Victoria Peak Garden.

BACKGROUND

2. The Victoria Peak Garden with a pavilion was built by the then Urban Council in the 1970s. In 1978, a boundary stone with the inscription of “GOVERNOR’S RESIDENCE” was discovered on Mount Austin Road. The stone is now on display at the lawn near the pavilion (Annex A). In 1979, another boundary stone was discovered above Harlech Road, which was then re-sited outside the former Government House at Upper Albert Road.

3. In October 2005, the Tourism Commission launched the Peak Tourism District Enhancement Programme (the Programme) to upgrade the facilities at the Peak. During the investigation work by the Architectural Services Department (Arch SD) in December 2006, some relics which are believed to be the original foundations of the former Mountain Lodge were found in some trial pits excavated by Arch SD’s contractor. The trial pits were backfilled for the sake of public safety and the AMO was informed of the findings. Location plan of the former Mountain Lodge and the Victoria Peak Garden is at Annex B.

4. After studying the initial findings reported by Arch SD, the AMO decided to carry out an archaeological survey to assess the heritage value of the site with the following objectives:

- a) To re-open the trial pits excavated by Arch SD’s contractor and study the remains collected from the trial pits;
- b) To conduct field investigation to ascertain the preservation conditions of the foundations of the Lodge and the related building facilities (e.g. water supplies, drainage, gas lamp and electric bell as recorded in the historical archives);
- c) To conduct fieldwork to identify any remains at the site in accordance with the historical photographs and archives.

HISTORY OF FORMER MOUNTAIN LODGE

5. There were three buildings purposely built for the former Governors of Hong Kong on the Peak as summer residence. The first and second ones, constructed in 1867 and 1892 respectively, were badly damaged during typhoons. The 12th Governor Sir Henry Blake invited Palmer & Turner to design the new Mountain Lodge, which was completed in 1902. It was equipped with billiard room, schoolroom, bedrooms, dressing rooms, fireplaces, gas lighting, tessellated verandahs, and a lightning conductor on each of its four towers. The building was once described as “the largest and handsome building at the Peak”. The building plan of the lodge of 1903 is at Annex C.

6. However, the house was not frequently used and abandoned in the 1930s. Another Governor’s lodge in Fanling was completed in 1934. It was completely pulled down in 1946 due to the high maintenance costs. In 1970, the site was redeveloped as the Victoria Peak Garden. Only the Gate Lodge of the Mountain Lodge is preserved in-situ and was declared as a monument in 1995.

PRESENT POSITION

7. Upon the completion of hoarding erection by the Arch SD, the survey commenced on 30 January 2007. According to the preliminary fieldwork assessment, the foundation of Mountain Lodge is well preserved, while disturbances resulted from the construction of Pavilion and the associated facilities, e.g. lighting and drainage, were noted. Two pairs of stone lions donated by Mr. Chiu Yau (周有) and the Lions Clubs in 1979 and 1990s respectively were also well kept at the northwest and southeast entrances of the Pavilion.

8. The fieldwork of the survey will last for two months. An archaeological report with findings and recommendations will be available in late April 2007 to Members and the relevant departments for consideration on the way forward.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
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