

**For information
on 16 April 2008**

**BOARD PAPER
AAB/54/2007-08**

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

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF
HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN HONG KONG**

PURPOSE

To inform Members of the progress of the assessment of historic buildings in Hong Kong.

BACKGROUND

2. A Territory-wide Historic Building and Structure Survey in Hong Kong was carried out in 1996-2000 (the Territory-wide Survey) to identify and record historic buildings and structures, most of which were built before 1950. Experienced local historians and architects were commissioned to conduct the Territory-wide Survey. About 8,800 buildings and structures were recorded. A more in-depth survey of 1,440 buildings with higher heritage value selected from the 8,800 surveyed items was carried out by the AMO in 2002-2004 to tie in with the Review of Heritage Conservation Policy. A statistical analysis of the 1,440 buildings is prepared at Annex A.

3. Members were informed of the progress of the Building Survey at the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) meetings of 13 December 2004, 2 March 2005 and 29 November 2005 respectively. As recommended by Members at the meeting of 13 December 2004, a building assessment panel (panel), composed of historians and representatives from the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Hong Kong Institute of Planners and Hong Kong Institute of Engineers, was formed. Members were informed of the composition of the assessment panel at the meeting of 2 March 2005. Assessment work has started since then.

4. A two-tier assessment approach and an assessment form formulated by the panel were endorsed at the AAB meeting of 29 November 2005. The assessment form was further refined by the panel in December 2005 at Annex B. According to the two-tier assessment approach, the 1,440 buildings are first assessed against six criteria: historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity and rarity at Stage 1. The overall heritage value of each building will be given a score. The scores of all the buildings will be reviewed at Stage 2 when a comparative rating of the 1,440 buildings will be carried out using the following three parameters:

-
- (a) Historical - illustrating a particular historical development with a specific theme. The proposed historical themes are shown at **Annex C**.
 - (b) Typological - being the key exemplars of particular building types and buildings styles. The proposed building types and architectural styles are listed at **Annex D**.
 - (c) Contextual - building group able to reflect the development of a settlement/cluster, and its social, cultural and economic lives.
-

Buildings not given a high score when evaluated on an individual basis may be rated higher due to their relative significance in the three parameters.

5. According to the original schedule, around 40 buildings would be assessed each month. In response to the rising concern of the public about heritage conservation, the assessment exercise has been expedited since January 2008 with more manpower from AMO to assist in the assessment work. Meetings are now held twice a month, with about 60 buildings assessed at each meeting

PRESENT POSITION

6. From 7 March 2005 to 7 January 2008, the panel, through monthly meetings and site visits, completed the assessment of 783 historic buildings of Chinese and mixed styles, which account for approximately 60% of the 1,440 items, at Stage 1. The assessment of the Western-style buildings has commenced since 29 January 2008. As at 14 March 2008, 1,016 historic buildings have been assessed.

7. The current plan is to complete the Stage 1 assessment of the remaining items, mainly residences and shophouses, military sites and commercial buildings around mid-2008, and the Stage 2 assessment in late 2008.

8. Upon completion of the whole process, there would be a clear picture on the type, quality and heritage value of the selected historic buildings.

SUBSEQUENT GRADING

9. In response to Members' previous enquiries on whether the Stage 1 assessment results of the buildings by the panel would be submitted to the AAB for grading, the panel is of the opinion that the results of Stage 1 should be reviewed at Stage 2 to ensure accuracy of the assessment. As mentioned above, some buildings not given a high score at Stage 1 may be rated higher due to their relative significance in the three parameters at Stage 2. It is therefore not appropriate to carry out the grading before an overall comparison and review.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
April 2008

Ref.: LCS AM 22/3
LCS AM CON 21/5/5