

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

PRESERVATION OF THE WANCHAI MARKET

PURPOSE

To inform Members of Urban Renewal Authority (URA)'s proposal for the preservation of the Wan Chai Market.

BACKGROUND

2. Constructed in 1937, the Wan Chai Market (the Market) was rated as a Grade III historical building by the AAB in 1990. In 1991, the AAB considered that the Market was not of great historical significance but efforts should be made to salvage useful parts of the building before demolition. In 1991, the then LDC proposed a development scheme to redevelop three sites in the Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street area, which included, among other things, the relocation of the market stalls in the Market to a purpose built facility and the demolition and redevelopment of the existing Market. The then LDC had entered into a contract with a private developer in 1996 to redevelop the three sites into a new residential development. In 2001, the URA took over the Wan Chai Road/Tai Yuen Street project from the then LDC.

3. The private developer has already completed construction at two of the sites and has launched sales of the flats in these sites which are known as "The Zenith". The relevant planning approvals have been obtained for redevelopment of the Market in the remaining site into a residential block.

4. In response to a letter from the Hong Kong Institute of Architects appealing for the preservation of the Market, the AAB met in September 2004 and concluded that no Members recommended declaring the Market as a Monument. However, many Members supported the proposal of writing to the developer, appealing to him to consider the community's view of preserving the Market in whatever way possible. Subsequently, the Chairman of the AAB wrote to the developer accordingly. A table outlining the previous discussions of the AAB on the Market is at Annex A for Members' information.

5. At the meeting of 10 October 2007, Members were informed that the URA had been working closely with the developer to explore feasible options to preserve the Market having regard to the legal implications and contractual obligations of all parties concerned, the financial implications for URA and the technical feasibility of the

conservation proposals.

PRESERVATION PROPOSAL

6. With the developer's agreement in-principle, the URA has put forward a Core Elements Preservation Scheme for the Market with the residential tower being constructed over the existing Market building. The major façade, including the main entrance, the curved canopy and fins, and part of the front portion of the structural form will be preserved. Details of the scheme can be found in a paper prepared by URA and Development Bureau at **Annex B**.

AMO'S VIEWS

7. In the past decade, the AMO has been in discussion with the URA to explore different options for the preservation of the Market. The following preservation options were put forward for consideration: (a) in-situ preservation; (b) retaining part of the external façade; and (c) adopting building style of the existing market façade in the new development design. After carefully weighting relevant factors such as community aspiration, legal duty, contractual obligations as well as technical feasibility, the URA has come up with a feasible preservation scheme as described in Para. 6 above. The AMO is of the view that the proposed scheme is in line with AMO's previous recommended preservation approaches toward the Market. The scheme is basically consistent with the principles and practices of international conventions and charters on heritage conservation whilst in-situ preservation of the entire historic building is infeasible. The proposed conservation approach aims at preserving key elements of the market building, including the façade and its supporting structural frame behind, which are considered important to signify the heritage value of the building. The adoption of the original architectural style of the Market in the design of the new development on top of the market building, which integrates the old and new in a sensible manner, is also supported.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
April 2008

Ref: LCS AM 22/3