

**For information  
on 16 April 2010**

**BOARD PAPER  
AAB/39/2009-10**

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

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF  
THE FRINGE CLUB, SOUTH BLOCK,  
OLD DAIRY FARM DEPOT, 2 LOWER ALBERT ROAD, CENTRAL.**

**PURPOSE**

To present to AAB Members the preliminary findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) Study of the Fringe Club (FC) at the South Block of the Old Dairy Farm Depot.

**HIA MECHANISM**

2. The Hong Kong Festival Fringe Ltd (HKFF), the operator of the FC, has obtained funding support by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trusts for the proposed renovation works of the FC (the proposed renovation) as detailed in paragraphs 5-6 below. Although it is not a government capital works project, HKFF volunteered to conduct an HIA study at the suggestion of the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in view of the heritage significance of this government-owned historic building.

**BACKGROUND**

**The buildings**

3. The Old Dairy Farm Depot (the Depot) was established in 1892 as a central depot for the distribution of milk from the Dairy Farm Company Limited at Pokfulam. The original depot at that time only comprised the South Block. As the business expanded, the Depot was enlarged with further extensions built in 1913, 1917 and 1925, including the new North Block.

4. The Depot remained as the headquarters of the Diary Farm Company Limited until 1970s. Since 1982, the Foreign Correspondent's Club occupied the North Block and HKFF has leased the South Block as their club house since 1984 under a tenancy agreement with the Government Property Agency (GPA). The entire Depot including both the North Block and South Block and its extensions were accorded with a Grade 1 status by the Antiquities Advisory Board at its meeting on 18 December 2009.

### **The renovation works**

5. The renovation works proposed by the HKFF include both works to ensure compliance with statutory safety requirements and conversion works for a better use of the space available in the building. They are explained in paragraphs 6 and 7 below respectively. A reduced copy of the plans for the proposed renovation is provided at **Annex A** for Member's information. The scope of the works is detailed in **Annex B**.

6. As the FC is used as a club, a club licence issued by the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department is required. As part of its usual licensing requirements, the OLA has imposed certain conditions on the Certificate of Compliance issued to the HKFF to ensure compliance with statutory safety requirements. These conditions include the provision of means of escape, opening up of sealed windows, removal of air-conditioning units on the external walls, provision of sprinkler system, etc. The HKFF has therefore proposed works to improve its compliance with these statutory safety requirements.

7. The HKFF has also proposed conversion works for a better use of the space in the building, including the conversion of the existing Fringe Gallery to a theatre, the flat roof to a roof garden with catering facilities and the consequential alteration and structural strengthening works including removal of columns and insertion of steel beams into the existing brick walls at both first floor and roof level.

### **Assessment by Government departments**

8. The Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) and AMO staff met with the HKFF on site to discuss the importance of the conservation of this important historic building in view of its heritage value and community recognition. Staff of AMO,

CHO and the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) also have had several rounds of follow-up discussions with HKFF and its consultants to ensure that every part of the work will have taken due consideration of the protection of this Grade 1 historic building while preserving its status as a renowned arts centre in the city. AMO is satisfied that the compliance works explained in paragraph 5 above will be acceptable in view of the overriding objective to enhance the building safety. Nonetheless, AMO is concerned that the proposed conversion works might involve irreversible disturbance to historic fabrics and alternatives should be worked out. AMO has suggested to the HKFF that it should review the scope of these conversion works with a view to minimising the proposed structural intervention to the historic building and identifying appropriate mitigation measures. With the support of HAB, CHO and AMO, HKFF fully appreciates the need for heritage conservation and has proactively carried out an HIA to assess any possible impact of the works on the building and to provide justification for the works.

9. Separately, the Authorized Person of the HKFF made a building plan submission to the Buildings Department (BD) in June 2009. The building plans were considered as satisfactory from the building safety perspective under the Buildings Ordinance and were subsequently approved by BD in September 2009.

10. In addition to the statutory submission to BD, the HKFF has applied for consent for the proposed renovation works from the Government Property Administrator (GPA) and AMO according to the lease terms. Given the aforementioned impact of the proposed renovation works, in particular the conversion works, the application for consent for the works was rejected by GPA in November 2009.

## **THE HIA STUDIES**

11. Upon the request by AMO and in full appreciation of the heritage value of the Grade 1 building, the FC has engaged the consultants, KCL, FiSEC Limited and The Team Consultant, to conduct an HIA study to consider whether the proposed works will affect the historic building and devise mitigation measures if impact is unavoidable.

12. The initial study report has been submitted to AMO for consideration and AMO subsequently commented on the report findings. The salient points of the study

report are set out in Annex B. The soft-copy of the full study report and AMO's detailed comments on the study report are provided to AAB members in the form of a compact-disc attached.

13. On the whole, the consultants assess that both the compliance works and the conversion works will only cause low impact to the historic building and the works are considered as an optimal solution to provide adequate facilities for the provision of the services by the FC.

14. AMO has also considered the HIA report submitted by the consultant appointed by the HKFF. AMO's comments on the study report have been set out in paragraph 8 above and detailed in Annex C.

15. We would like to brief Members on the results of the initial study report and invite Members' comments. Subject to Members' comments, the HKFF will refine the renovation proposal and the HIA Study Report and submit them to the AAB for endorsement, if Members also consider it necessary.

#### **ADVICE SOUGHT**

16. Members are invited to offer their comments and advice on the findings of the initial report on the HIA Study.

Antiquities and Monuments Office  
Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
April 2010

---

Ref: LCS AM 22/3