

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

**REAFFIRMATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION TO DECLARE  
TANG KWONG U ANCESTRAL HALL AND KOM TONG HALL  
AS MONUMENTS**

**PURPOSE**

To seek Members' reaffirmation of the recommendation for declaration of Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall (廣瑜鄧公祠) at Shui Tau, Kam Tin, Yuen Long and Kom Tong Hall (甘棠第) at Castle Road, Mid-levels, Central as monuments under section 3(1) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53).

**BACKGROUND**

2. In recognition of the historical and architectural values of the buildings, the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) accorded a Grade 2 status to Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall and Kom Tong Hall in 1994 and 1990 respectively. Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall was deemed as a monument<sup>1</sup> in 1994 for 15 years until 2009. AAB endorsed the recommendation to declare Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall and Kom Tong Hall as monuments in 1994 and 2004 respectively.

3. The previous grading status of Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall and Kom Tong Hall, given by AAB based on their historical and architectural merits, was reviewed by the Expert Panel as part of the assessment of the 1,444 historic buildings based on the updated and elaborated assessment criteria. After reviewed by the Expert Panel, the two buildings were proposed to be given a Grade 1 status, which were subsequently

---

<sup>1</sup> Deemed monument is an administrative system implemented since 1981 as a temporary measure to encourage the owners to preserve the historic buildings under their ownership and to open them for public access. Under the system, the then Governor could grant historic buildings the status of deemed monuments and accordingly public funds would be allocated for the repair and upkeep of these deemed monuments, provided that the owners agree: a) not to demolish or alter the building during the deemed period (either for 10 years or 15 years); b) to maintain the designed use and c) to allow public access during reasonable time. Without a legal status this administrative system does not serve the purpose of protection of historic buildings in the long run and hence the Government has decided that no more historic buildings should be declared as deemed monuments since 1994. Since then, the Government has continued to proactively seek owners' support for monument declaration under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (the Ordinance). Upon such a statutory declaration, these historic buildings meeting a high threshold will receive the legal protection under the Ordinance.

endorsed by the AAB at its meetings on 17 May 2010 and 18 December 2009 respectively.

## HERITAGE VALUE

### Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall

4. Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall, also known as Loi Shing Tong (來成堂), was built by Tang Tseung-luk (鄧像六), alias Tang Chik-kin (鄧直見), in the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Kangxi (康熙) Reign (i.e. 1701) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). It was built to commemorate the ancestor, Tang Kwong-u (鄧廣瑜), alias Tang Chung-fung (鄧松峯), the seventeenth generation of the Tang clan. According to a stone tablet in the ancestral hall, it underwent a large scale renovation in the 47<sup>th</sup> year of the Qianlong (乾隆) reign (i.e. 1782) of the Qing Dynasty with the donation from the clansmen. Apart from being used as an ancestral hall, it was once adapted into a shop and later a factory. The ancestral hall remained vacant until it was deemed as a monument in 1994 and restored in 1995. The ancestral hall is now open for public visits.

5. Architecturally, the ancestral hall is a Qing vernacular building, having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. Side chambers are located on both sides of the open courtyard. The ancestral hall is constructed of green bricks with timber rafters, purlins and a clay tiled roof. The ridges, wall friezes and fascia boards are richly decorated with auspicious patterns and carvings. A brief history, architectural account and photographs of the Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall are at **Annex A**.

### Kom Tong Hall

6. Kom Tong Hall was built by Ho Kom-tong (1866 - 1950), a prominent businessman, as well as a well-known community leader and philanthropist who was at the centre of the Chinese and Eurasian commercial community at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and one of the most influential figures of his time. Kom Tong Hall remained the residence of the Ho family until 1959, when a merchant surnamed Cheng took possession of the building. In the following year, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints purchased the building from the Chengs' and used it as a genealogical centre and religious education institute. In 2004, Kom Tong Hall was acquired by the Government and then converted into the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum. The museum was open to the public in December 2006.

7. The building is built in an Edwardian classical style, featuring red brick walls, granite dressings around windows and doors and ornate ironwork on balconies. The building is one of the first structures in Hong Kong to have been built with a steel frame and concealed in-wall electrical wiring. Internally, the building is richly decorated in composite classical style borrowing architectural features from the four Classical Orders. Rich teakwood paneling abounds everywhere and the ceilings of the main rooms are ornately decorated with moulded plaster panels highlighted in gold leaf. Colourful

stained glass windows in Art Nouveau patterns of the period are situated overlooking the main staircase and in other notable positions. A brief history, architectural account and photographs of Kom Tong Hall are at **Annex B**.

## **GRADING AND MONUMENT DECLARATION**

8. The AAB at its meeting on 26 November 2008 endorsed the establishment of a formal relationship between the statutory monument declaration system and the administrative grading system for historic buildings. Under the endorsed arrangements, Grade 1 buildings are defined as ‘buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible’. These will serve as a pool of highly valuable heritage buildings and will be considered by the Authority as to whether some may have reached the ‘high threshold’ of a monument, for statutory protection under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance.

9. The Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall and Kom Tong Hall have demonstrated that they have reached the ‘high threshold’ with significant heritage value as explained in paragraphs 4 to 7 above.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

10. Members are requested to reaffirm the previous recommendations made in 1994 and 2004 for declaration of Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall and Kom Tong Hall as monuments under section 3(1) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance. The boundaries of the items intended for declaration as monuments, which are subject to final confirmation by the relevant government departments, are shown at **Annex C**.

Antiquities and Monuments Office  
Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
June 2010

---

Ref: LCS AM 22/3  
LCS AM 52/5/11  
LCS AM 51/8/5