Annex A

Heritage Impact Assessment for Conversion of the Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club at No. 12 Oil Street into a Community and Public Art Centre – Artspace @ Oil Street

BACKGROUND

The Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club will be converted into a community and public art centre, named Artspace @ Oil Street. It will be handed over to the Art Promotion Office (APO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) as its main office and a venue for organising exhibitions and education activities for the public in particular the young artists.

2. The Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club was constructed in 1908 as a clubhouse to provide a gathering place for members and yachting facilities in Hong Kong. It was first accorded a Grade 2 historic building status by the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) in 1995. As part of the ongoing assessment exercise of 1 444 historic buildings, AAB confirmed the Grade 2 status of the building in 2009 after review.

3. The Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) will carry out the conversion works as well as future maintenance works.

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

4. The former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club is located at the junction of Oil Street and Electric Road in North Point, which was a district mixed with industrial and recreational facilities in the early twentieth century. The building was used by the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club as its headquarters between 1908 and 1938.

5. Established in 1869, the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, originally known as Yacht Club by that time, was a sports club providing a gathering place for members and yachting facilities in Hong Kong. The Yacht Club was merged with the Hong Kong Corinthian Sailing Club in 1891. Two years later,

the club was honoured with the title of "Royal". It was the first club with such honour in Hong Kong.

6. After the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club had been amalgamated with the Hong Kong Boat Club in 1905, a piece of land in North Point was resumed for them to build the headquarters. The headquarters also served as a clubhouse for their club members, who were mainly Europeans. The building was opened by then Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Frederick Lugard, in 1908. It consisted of two rowing sheds and a gymnasium on the ground floor, and a long verandah and club facilities on the first floor. At the beginning, most of the members were prominent persons, including several members of the Legislative Council.

7. The building was occupied by Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club for thirty years till 1938. The headquarters was then moved to Kellett Island in Causeway Bay due to the reclamation works carried out making the building away from the coast. The building was devolved to the Hong Kong Government and was used as staff quarters and store till 1998. In 2001, the building was used as an archaeological storage by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of LCSD. It has become vacant till now after the opening of a new archaeological storage in Ping Shan in 2006.

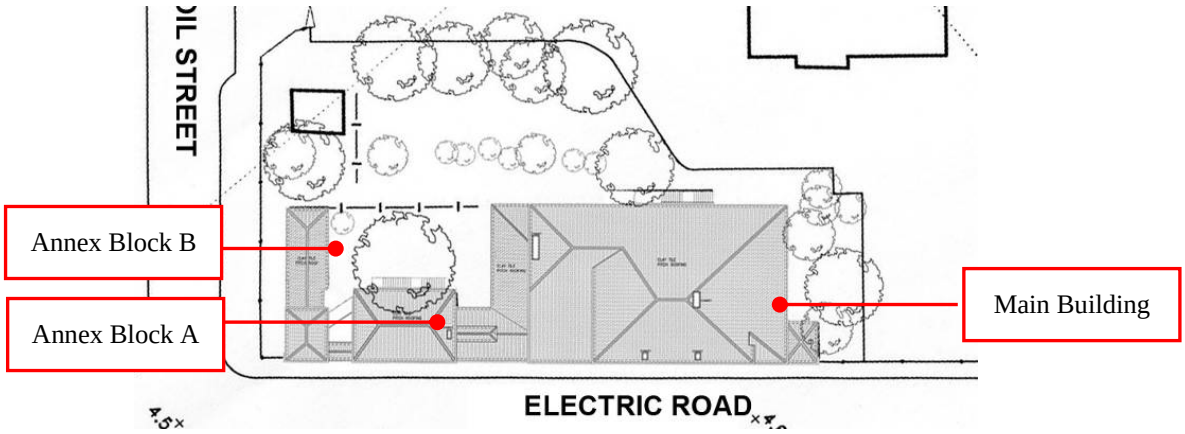
a. Historic and Social Significance

8. The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club was one of the sports clubs established by the Europeans in the early days of colonial Hong Kong. The clubhouse represents the influx of foreign recreational activities and social life in the early twentieth century. It is the only surviving recreational building in the area, reminding us that North Point was once a place for recreational activities. Besides, it is the only extant building along the original shoreline before reclamation works were carried out in North Point in the 1930s. It is also the Club's first permanent headquarters in Hong Kong, signifying a milestone of the Club's history.

b. Architectural and Aesthetic Significance

9. The main façades of the historic building compound form an iconic streetscape along Electric Road, with the rear façades facing the Victoria

Harbour when it was built. The entire compound comprises a main building and two annex blocks (i.e. Annex Block A and Annex Block B). The hierarchy in the building forms and spatial designs reflect the various original functions and activities inside, such as the Main Building with an elaborate entrance porch and entrance lobby, different flooring materials for different zones; and the two annex blocks with a much simpler layout and form.



Site Plan

10. The former Clubhouse is a fine example of the Arts and Crafts style which is rarely found in Hong Kong. It demonstrates very well the essence of such style, namely the irregular planning and the break down of the building masses, multiple roof forms, the contrasting red brickworks and roughcast external walls, and the prominent chimneys and downpipes. Amongst the known buildings with such style in Hong Kong, it is probably the best example with its considerable scale, high authenticity, well-preserved condition and a great variety of architectural features, as well as its readiness to demonstrate the essence of the Arts and Crafts style. Its integrity and well-preserved condition add to its rarity.

11. The former clubhouse also showed local influence on the choice of local traditional building materials and the construction method of the roof, which is laid with Chinese pan and roll tiles. Such local influence was common in Western style buildings during the colonial period in Hong Kong.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)

12. In accordance with Development Bureau Technical Circular (Works) No. 06/2009 and the AMO's Guidance Note to HIA Submission, an HIA is

required to be carried out to examine the impact of the proposed works on the historic buildings concerned and to devise mitigation measures if adverse impact is unavoidable.

a. Conservation Principles to conserve the cultural significance of the RHKYC

13. The recommended Conservation Principles for devising and implementing necessary mitigation measures to conserve and interpret the Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club are set out as follows:

(a) Building Fabrics

(i) Authenticity and integrity of the Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club and their architectural merits should be maintained with minimum intervention. The key character defining elements (CDEs) should be preserved or repaired, namely:

- The general setting and spatial relationship of the site with landscape areas at the rear of the buildings and the court at the rear of Annex Block A.
- External elements reflecting the Arts and Crafts Style such as multiple roof forms, double-layered Chinese pan and roll tiles, chimneys, fair-faced red brickworks and roughcast external walls, segmental arches/archway, design of combined windows and doors, prominent rainwater downpipes, and iron brackets under eaves.
- Timber structures such as timber roof structures comprising mainly timber rafters resting on beams and king post trusses, timber suspended ceilings, timber floor structures and brick wall structures constructed with Flemish bond and brick columns in Annex Block A.
- Interior elements such as timber framed windows and doors, timber staircases; interior finishes such as encaustic cement floor tiles with borders, timber plank flooring, ceiling cornice; blocked smoke flues and blocked fireplace with chimney breast.

(ii) New additional and alteration works should be kept to the minimum and reversible to the original building fabrics. New works should be properly located to minimize the visual impact on the original building fabrics. New elements should be of compatible design but distinguishable from the existing building fabrics.

(b) Building Services

(i) New building services pipelines should be grouped together when entering the buildings and existing wall openings should be utilized to minimize the number of new wall openings.

(c) Documentation and Monitoring

(i) Cartographic and photographic surveys to properly record the historic buildings should be conducted before, during and after the conversion works.

(ii) Future maintenance works should follow the principles laid down in the HIA report for the operation stage.

b. Key Design Proposals

14. The key proposed works for conservation and adaptive re-use, as well as enhancement works for facilitating public use, are listed as follows :

(a) Conservation and adaptive re-use of existing buildings for community and public art centre

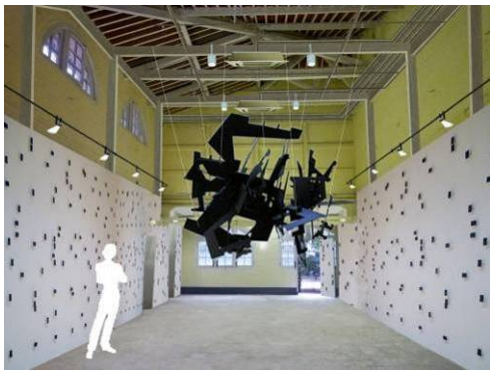
(i) The three existing building blocks, including the Main Building, Annex Block A and Annex Block B, will be conserved, adaptively reused and upgraded for modern day usage and for meeting various current required standards. The G/F of the Main Building will be converted into an exhibition gallery, a multi-function hall, multi-purpose rooms and artwork storage while part of the G/F and 1/F will be the office of APO.

(ii) The G/F of Annex Block A will be converted into a preparation room for exhibitions and toilet facilities while the upper floor will be used as store rooms for artists archive, public art models from competitions, equipment for art installation, etc.

(iii) The G/F of Annex Block B will be converted into a cafe/shop/reading corner, a Fire Services Control Room and a baby care room.

(iv) New steel structures will be installed at the multi-functional hall and the exhibition gallery for art display and building services installation.

(v) All existing mature trees will be preserved. The landscape area will be reserved as a tranquil pleasure garden as well as an outdoor art display area.



Proposed steel structure at the multi-functional hall (above) and exhibition gallery (below) for art display and installation

(b) Enhancement works for facilitating public use of the site

(i) Barrier free access will be provided to all public facilities in the site and the office on G/F of the Main Building.

(ii) As 1/F will be used as office without public access, management control will be implemented by putting portable plant or other measures in front of the existing balustrades along the verandah on 1/F and staircase, which are considered not fully in compliance with current safety requirements, to prevent people from leaning on them. Timber windows with the sill lower than the required safety height will be locked for most of the time.

(iii) Structural loading tests will be carried out for the verandah and timber staircases to determine the loading capacity. Structural strengthening works will be provided to the existing localized supporting steel beams of the timber floors at the Main Building.

(iv) A fire engineering approach will be adopted to improve the fire safety of the historic buildings while significant historic fabrics will be preserved. Authentic timber windows/doors and timber structures will be retained in-situ; one of the timber staircases will be enclosed by fire protection boards for upgrading to current standard for the means of escape; the timber roof will be applied with fire-retardant paint and the fire rating of the timber joists of the floor structure will be upgraded.

(v) Building services will be upgraded for new uses. New openings on the existing brick wall and timber windows will be formed.

(vi) Fire services installation such as sprinkler system and smoke detection system will be provided to enhance fire safety. A combined fire services pump room and sprinkler pump room as well as a combined fire services and sprinkler tank are proposed to be located at the rear of and adjacent to the existing guard house subject to the approval of the authorities.

c. Mitigation Measures for the Conversion Works

15. For areas where the possible impact of the conversion works could not be avoided, we have devised the following mitigation measures based on the above-mentioned Conservation Principles:

(a) Conservation and adaptive re-use of existing buildings for community and public art centre

(i) Excessive loading on the existing structure which would cause any extensive strengthening works will be avoided.

(ii) A survey on the structural stability of the existing structures will be conducted before the commencement of any works. The structural survey report will be submitted to AMO for information. In case any defects (such as cracks and deteriorated bricks) are found, they will be repaired prior to any works.

(iii) The structural condition will be monitored during the course of works to ensure that the structural integrity and stability of the historic buildings is maintained.

(iv) The new structural support for artwork display and installation will be kept to the minimum size as far as possible so as not to overwhelm the interior or block the existing windows.

(v) Existing mature trees will be preserved and maintained. Any problems and risks will be identified and addressed.

(b) Enhancement works for facilitating public use of the site

(i) The design and material of the ramps for barrier free access on the G/F will be an independent structure discernible from the original historic fabric. They will be understated in character to minimize the visual impact without overwhelming the elevation of the historic buildings. Light weight materials such as steel/glass reinforced fibre grating in lieu of concrete will be used to avoid additional modification works of the existing drainage system and prevent ingress of water into the buildings. In order to facilitate the transportation of large art work, the handrail/barrier of the balustrades will be made removable.

(ii) The portable plant placed in front of the existing balustrades along the verandah on 1/F and the staircase will not obstruct the passage or reduce the effective width of the mean of escape. The lock of the timber windows will be made reversible and removable in future.

(iii) Destructive test will only be conducted in the structural survey if necessary and the number of tests will be kept to the minimum in order to minimize the damage. The location, sample size and the reinstated method will be agreed with AMO prior to the conduct of the test. If necessary, the number of people at the verandah and the timber staircases will be controlled by management approach, or the structural stability of the timber staircases will be improved by adding new support members underneath without causing significant visual impact. Strengthening to existing steel beams of the timber floors will not

damage the adjoining brick structures such as welding additional steel plates underneath the existing beams in lieu of replacing or removing them.

(iv) The installation of the new fire protection to the timber staircase and floor structures will be made reversible so that the removal in future will cause no great damage to the existing structures. Subject to the approval of the authorities, the feasibility to expose all or part of the timber floor joists by investigating the charring rate of the existing timbers and the adoption of advanced fire services installation through a fire engineering study will be further explored. Alternatively, if exposing the timber joists is not technically accepted by authorities, the existing timber floor could be covered up by fire resisting materials on both sides and such covering will be made reversible.

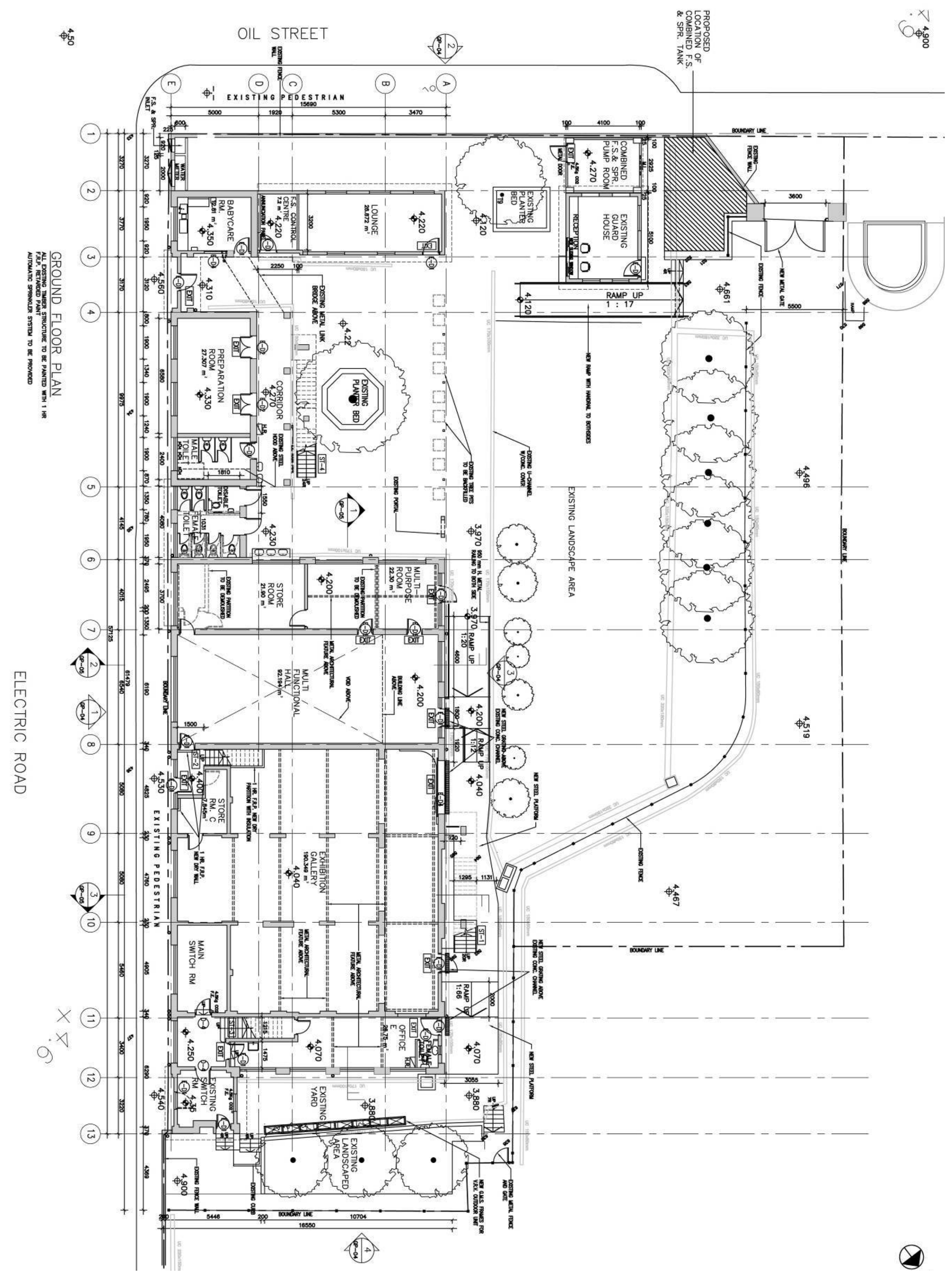
(v) Building services will be well organized and will make use of existing wall openings as far as practicable. They will be located above the existing suspended ceiling to minimize the visual impact on the interior. New brick openings will be formed by removing whole pieces of brick one by one in order to minimize the damage on individual bricks. The removed historic bricks will be salvaged for future restoration where necessary. New openings for louvre installation at the existing timber windows will be made by replacing the existing glazing without affecting the timber frames as far as it is technically possible while maintaining the symmetrical window design.

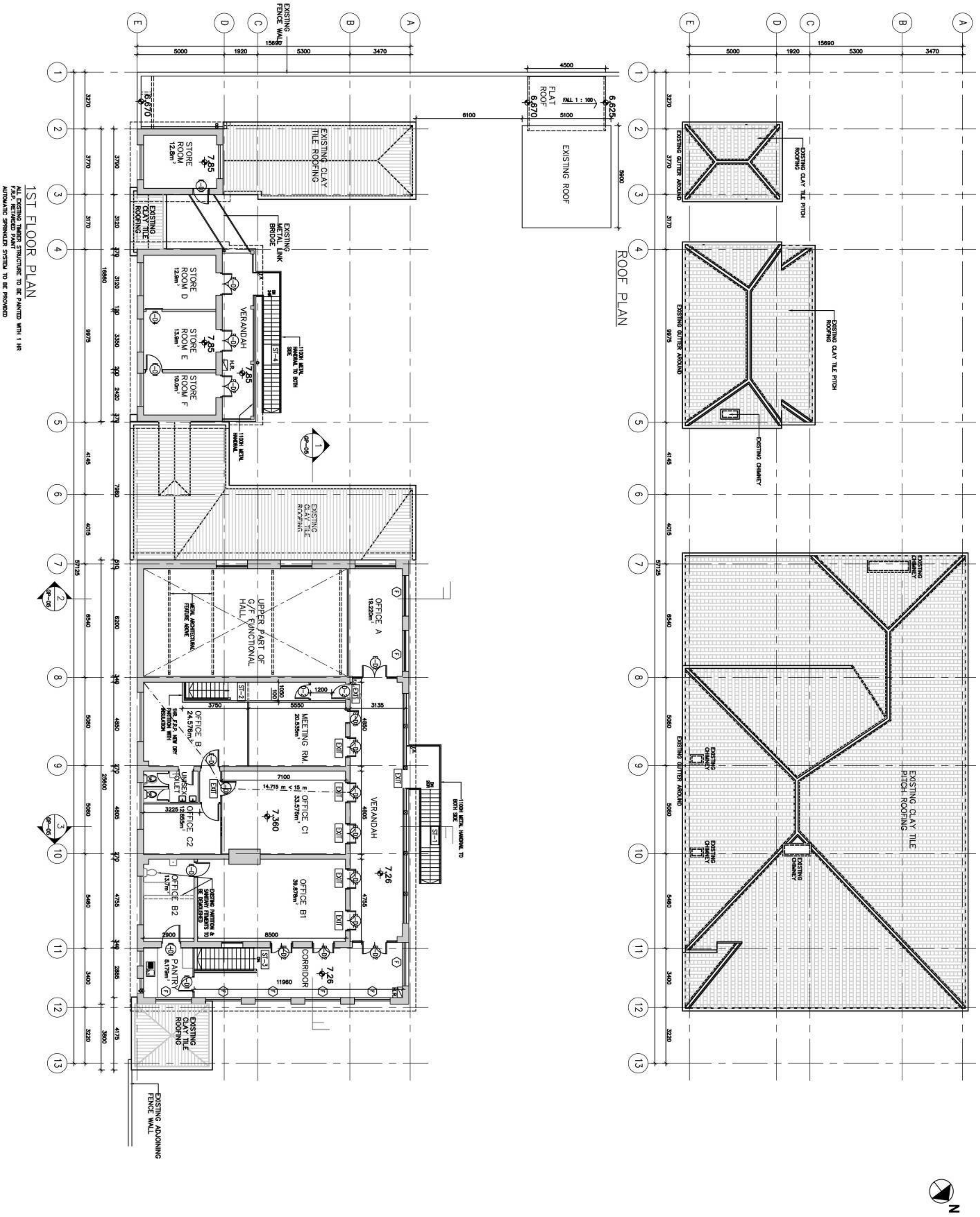
(vi) The construction of the combined fire services and sprinkler pump room and the corresponding water tanks at the rear and adjacent to the guard house will allow sufficient maintenance space for the external wall. The proposed combined water tank, which is subject to the approval of the authorities, will be kept to the minimum size as far as possible and will be screened off by decorated panels in order to mitigate the visual impact. Alternatively, the feasibility of omitting the water tank by obtaining direct feed from the town main water supply will be explored in order to further mitigate the visual impact.

16. The HIA concluded with the observation that the proposal will meet its primary objectives of properly conserving the Former Clubhouse of Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club while providing sufficient facilities for a community and public art centre through revitalization.

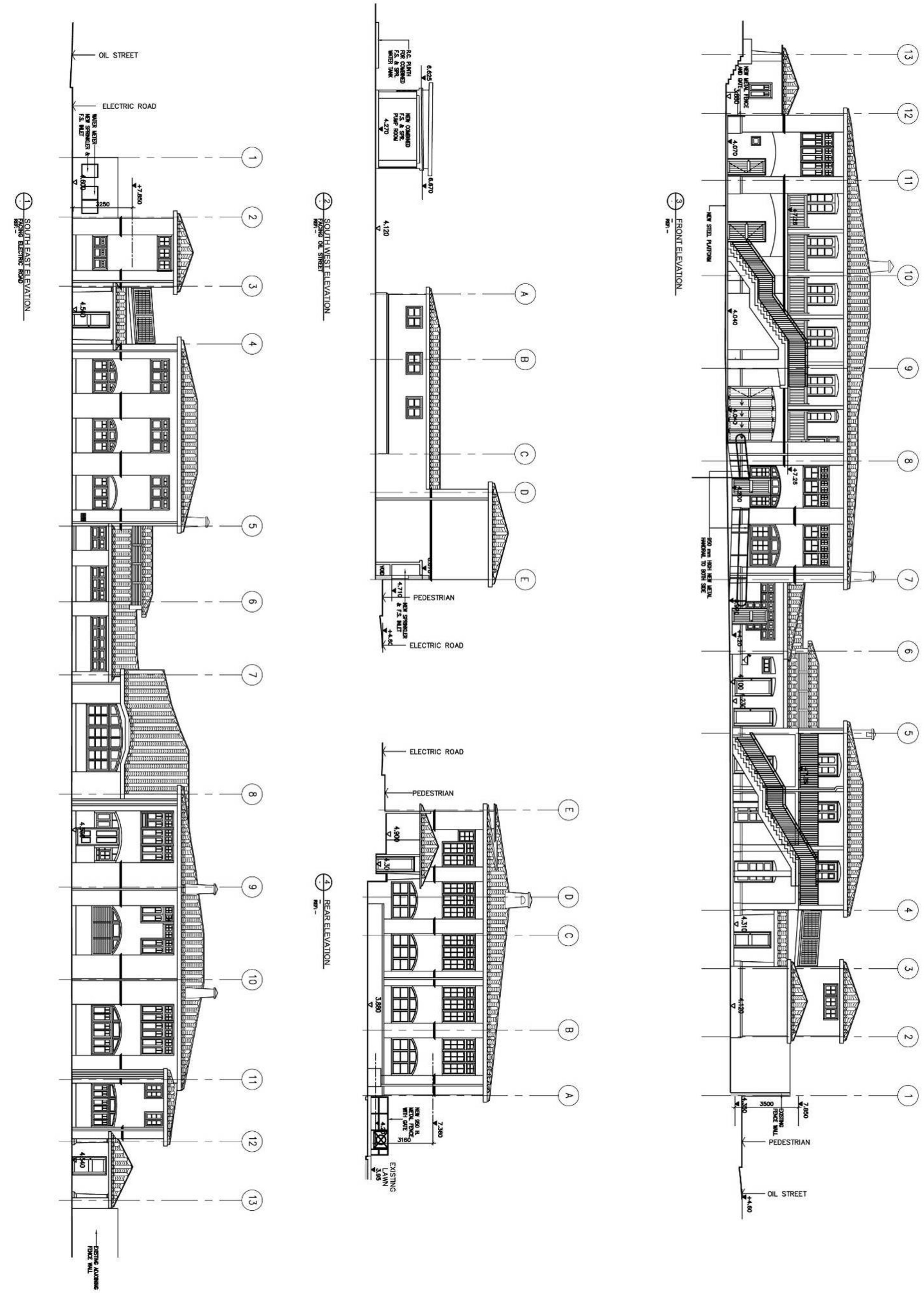
Art Promotion Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

September 2011

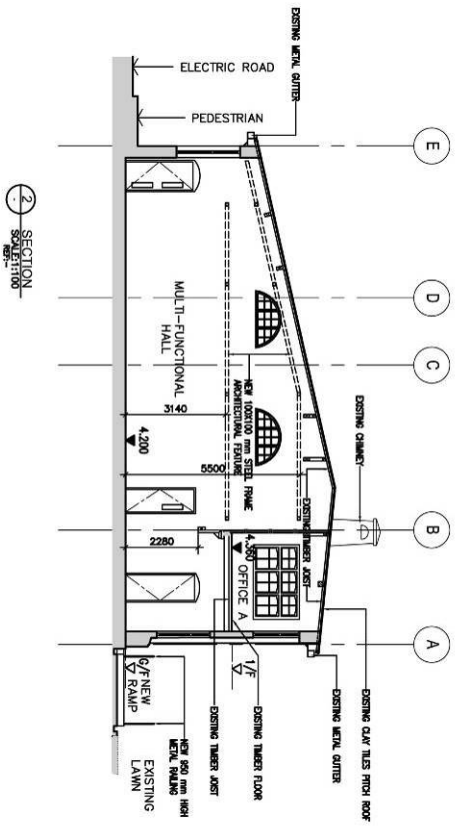

GROUND FLOOR PLAN
OIL STREET
ELECTRIC ROAD
EXISTING LANDSCAPE AREA
MULTI FUNCTIONAL HALL
EXHIBITION GALLERY
LOUNGE
PREPARATION ROOM
BABYCARE RM.
STORE ROOM
MAIN SWITCH RM
EXISTING GUARD HOUSE
EXISTING YARD
EXISTING LANDSCAPED AREA
PROPOSED LOCATION OF COMBINED F.S. & SPR. TANK
RAMP UP 1 : 17

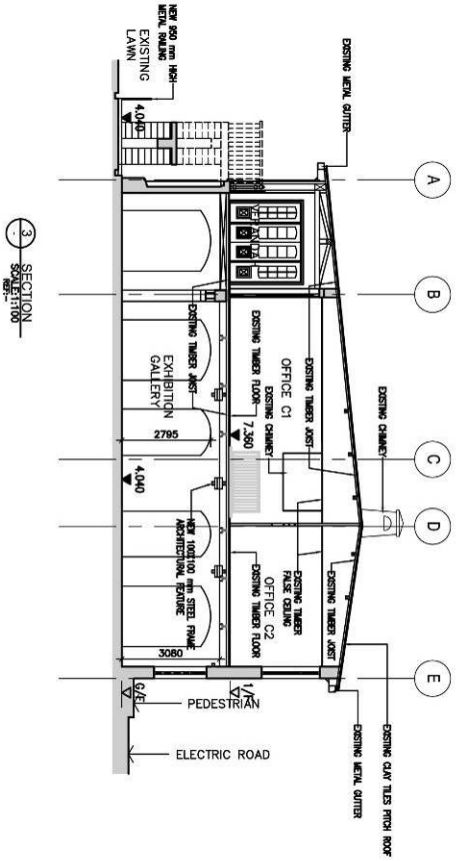

1ST FLOOR PLAN
ALL EXISTING TIMBER STRUCTURE TO BE PAINTED WITH 1 HR F.R.P. RETARDED PAINT
AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM TO BE PROVIDED
ROOF PLAN
EXISTING FENCE WALL
EXISTING ADJOINING FENCE WALL
EXISTING CLAY TILE ROOFING
EXISTING METAL LINK BRIDGE
FLAT ROOF
EXISTING ROOF
STORE ROOM
STORE ROOM D
STORE ROOM E
STORE ROOM F
VERANDAH
UPPER PART OF G/F FUNCTIONAL HALL
OFFICE A
MEETING RM.
OFFICE B
OFFICE C1
OFFICE C2
OFFICE B1
OFFICE B2
UNISEX TOILET
PANTRY
CORRIDOR
EXISTING CLAY TILE PITCH ROOFING
EXISTING GUTTER AROUND
EXISTING CHIMNEY

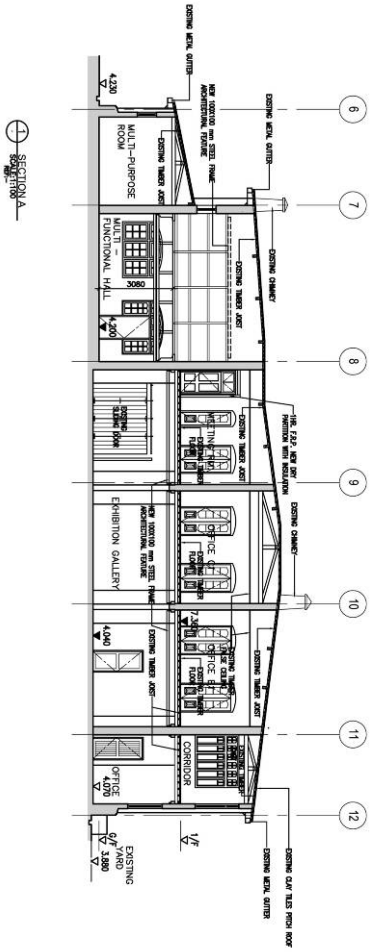
Annex A


SOUTH EAST ELEVATION
FACING ELECTRIC ROAD
OIL STREET
ELECTRIC ROAD
SOUTH WEST ELEVATION
FACING OIL STREET
PEDESTRIAN
ELECTRIC ROAD
REAR ELEVATION
ELECTRIC ROAD
PEDESTRIAN
EXISTING LAWN
FRONT ELEVATION
NEW STEEL PLATFORM
PEDESTRIAN
OIL STREET

Annex A


ELECTRIC ROAD
PEDESTRIAN
EXISTING METAL GUTTER
MULTI-FUNCTIONAL HALL
3140
4.200
5500
NEW 100X100 mm STEEL FRAME ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE
EXISTING CHIMNEY
2280
OFFICE A
4.360
EXISTING TIMBER JOIST
EXISTING TIMBER FLOOR
EXISTING METAL GUTTER
EXISTING CLAY TILES PITCH ROOF
NEW RAMP
EXISTING LAWN
NEW 950 mm HIGH METAL RAILING
SECTION
SCALE 1:100


EXISTING METAL GUTTER
EXISTING LAWN
NEW 950 mm HIGH METAL RAILING
4.040
EXHIBITION GALLERY
2795
OFFICE C1
OFFICE C2
EXISTING TIMBER JOIST
EXISTING TIMBER FLOOR
EXISTING CHIMNEY
7.360
NEW 100X100 mm STEEL FRAME ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE
EXISTING TIMBER FALSE CEILING
3080
PEDESTRIAN
ELECTRIC ROAD
EXISTING METAL GUTTER
EXISTING CLAY TILES PITCH ROOF
SECTION
SCALE 1:100


EXISTING METAL GUTTER
4.330
MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
MULTI-FUNCTIONAL HALL
3080
4.200
EXHIBITION GALLERY
4.040
CORRIDOR
OFFICE
4.070
EXISTING YARD
3.880
EXISTING CLAY TILES PITCH ROOF
SECTION A
SCALE 1:100

Annex A

Existing elevation facing Electric Road will be maintained.

Annex A

Proposed accessible ramp leading from the site entrance and in front of the existing guard house.

Proposed accessible ramp leading from the site entrance with the proposed combined F.S. and sprinkler tank beside the existing guard house, which would be screened off by decorated panels.

Annex A

Proposed accessible ramp in front of the Main Building.