

**For information
on 20 February 2013**

**BOARD PAPER
AAB/3/2013-14**

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

**CONCEPT DESIGN FOR INTERPRETATION OF
THE FORMER MOUNTAIN LODGE AND
IMPROVEMENT TO ITS SURROUNDING AREAS**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' advice on the concept design for the interpretation of the Former Mountain Lodge (FML) and improvement to its surrounding areas.

FORMER MOUNTAIN LODGE

2. The FML on the Peak was built between 1900 and 1902 as the summer residence of the Governors of Hong Kong. Owing to a long period of vacancy and neglect during the war years, the main buildings and servant quarters of the FML were in a state of disrepair and were eventually pulled down in 1946 leaving only the Gate Lodge. In the 1970s, the site of the FML was redeveloped and opened to the public as part of the Victoria Peak Garden with a pavilion built by the then Urban Council. The Gate Lodge was declared a monument in 1995.

3. In October 2005, the Tourism Commission launched a Peak Tourism District Enhancement Programme to upgrade the facilities on the Peak. Remains of the foundation of the FML were discovered during the ground investigation conducted by the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) in December 2006. After studying the findings provided by ArchSD, the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) decided to carry out an archaeological survey in 2007 to assess the heritage value of the site. The findings of this survey were reported to Members vide Board Papers

— AAB/9/2007-08 and AAB/53/2007-08 at **Annexes A and B**. To ascertain the extent of underground features of the FML, a further investigation was arranged by AMO in 2008. The progress of this investigation was reported to Members vide the progress reports for the Board Meetings on 25 February 2009, 21 May 2009 and 9 September 2009. The fieldwork confirmed that the archaeological remains could indicate the building style of typical Victorian country houses in the early 20th century and ascertained the extent of all archaeological features. A report on the fieldwork has been uploaded in AMO's website onto http://www.amo.gov.hk/form/fmlver_2013_en.pdf.

INTERPRETATION STUDY

4. Having considered the heritage value of the site of the FML, AMO commissioned an interpretation study in 2009 to examine possible options for the display of the identified archaeological remains and features, to formulate an interpretation strategy and to propose a site interpretation plan for the FML and its surrounding areas.

5. With inputs from government departments concerned, the interpretation study was completed in December 2011 with the recommendation of three Scheme Options. Scheme Option 1 acts as the base scheme which adopts a minimal intervention approach to the site of the FML and its surrounding areas. Scheme Option 2 represents a midway between the limited intervention of Scheme Option 1 and the more extensive site development of Scheme Option 3. The progress of the interpretation study was reported to Members vide the progress reports for the Board Meetings on 21 May 2009 and 9 September 2009. The report has also been uploaded onto AMO's website at http://www.amo.gov.hk/form/executive_summary.pdf.

6. Given that the recommendations from the interpretation study are only principles and guidelines, it is agreed after deliberation among the Commissioner for Heritage's Office of the Development Bureau, as well as AMO and the Central and Western District Leisure Services Office of LCSD that a concept design should be worked out to illustrate the interpretation of the FML and the improvement to the surrounding areas. Scheme Option 1 has been adopted as the basic reference in the concept design developed by ArchSD due to its minimal intervention to the site.

THE CONCEPT DESIGN

7. A full set of the concept design for interpretation of the FML and improvement to its surrounding areas worked out by ArchSD is at **Annex C** with highlights listed below:

A) Presentation of the unearthed architectural features to enhance visitors' understanding of the history of the FML

- (a) Display of the unearthed mosaic floor tiles and old staircase at the main entrance of the FML main building; and
- (b) Display of the two portions of the unearthed foundation of the FML main building with three design options. The concept design plans and artist impression images are at **Annex C**. The design options are:

- Design Scheme 1

The two portions of the foundation of the FML in ventilated glass display showcases

- Design Scheme 2

The two portions of the foundation of the FML behind glass balustrade

- Design Scheme 3

The two portions of the foundation of the FML behind metal railing.

B) Improvement works within the site of the FML to facilitate visitors' appreciation of the architectural relics and features of the FML

- (a) Reminiscent of the layout of internal rooms and partitioning walls of the FML main building with timber decking and brick paving materials;

- (b) Reminiscent of the layout of verandahs of the FML main building with patterned tiles floor finishes;
 - (c) Modification of the existing stonewall built on top of the exposed stone footing of the FML main building; and
 - (d) Provision of two metal staircases at the main entrance of the FML main building site to facilitate public appreciation of the mosaic floor tiles and old staircase as well as public access to the FML.
- C) Enhancement works at the periphery of the site to harmonise the environment of the FML and its surrounding areas
- (a) Repaving of the immediate surrounding of the FML main building site and the toilet block up to the car park and the front of 40 Mount Austin Road;
 - (b) Upgrading of the public toilet adjacent to the FML main building site with provision of the disabled toilet behind the public toilet block;
 - (c) Upgrading of the kiosk adjacent to the FML main building site;
 - (d) Provision of ramps next to the kiosk for barrier free access to the site;
 - (e) Minor landscaping works in the surrounding areas of the FML;
 - (f) Provision of information panels and directional signages in respect of the FML at both FML main building site and open area surrounding the Gate Lodge; and
 - (g) Replacement of the existing lamp posts at the FML main building site and nearby surrounding area with the Victorian style lamp posts.

8. The concept design will be further refined with reference to Members' comments. The Central and Western District Council will also be consulted. Upon finalisation of the concept design, AMO will follow up with the ArchSD and other offices concerned to implement the proposal. It is anticipated that actual works can commence in 2014.

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. Members are invited to offer their comments on the concept design for interpretation of the FML and improvement to its surrounding areas.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
February 2013

Ref: LCSD/CS/AMO 22-3/0