

**For discussion
on 20 February 2013**

**BOARD PAPER
AAB/5/2013-2014**

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

**ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS
FINALISATION OF THE GRADINGS
OF BUILDINGS AND
RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT OF NEW ITEMS**

PURPOSE

This paper invites Members to consider confirming the gradings of the buildings as detailed in paragraphs 4 and 5 below and endorsing the way forward for the assessment arrangement as set out in paragraphs 8 to 11 below.

BACKGROUND

2. Up to present, Members have endorsed the gradings of 931 buildings of the list of 1 444 historic buildings including -

- (a) 160 Grade 1 buildings;
- (b) 324 Grade 2 buildings; and
- (c) 447 Grade 3 buildings.

Members have also confirmed that 282 buildings do not warrant a grading. Besides, 46 items on the list of 1 444 historic buildings have been declared as monuments with the recommendation of the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB).

3. In addition, Members confirmed that 12 new items for grading assessment should be accorded with gradings listed below –

- (a) Six Grade 1 buildings;
- (b) Two Grade 2 buildings; and
- (c) Four Grade 3 buildings.

Members have confirmed after consideration that two new items do not warrant a grading.

NEW ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

4. At the meeting of 17 December 2012, Members accorded one new item with proposed grading at **Annex A**. After one-month public consultation, no comment on the proposed grading of the new item has been received. Members may wish to confirm the grading of this new item.

ITEMS WITH AAB'S QUERIES REVIEWED BY ASSESSMENT PANEL

5. 10 items, whose proposed gradings were queried by Members in previous AAB meetings, have recently been reassessed by the Assessment Panel. Members are invited to consider confirming the latest proposed gradings of these items at **Annex B**.

ITEMS DEMOLISHED / SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED

6. The Government has an internal mechanism to monitor any demolition of / alterations to monuments / proposed monuments or graded buildings / buildings proposed to be graded. Under the mechanism, the Buildings Department, Lands Department and Planning Department will alert the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) of the Development Bureau and the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) regarding any identified possible threat which may affect privately-owned sites of archaeological interests, monuments and historic buildings that have been brought to departments' attention through applications and enquiries received and in the normal course of duty such as regular inspections. The internal monitoring mechanism enables the CHO and the AMO to take timely follow-up action with the private owners concerned. CHO and AMO have been approaching owners of privately-owned historic buildings to explore conservation options on receipt of alerts from relevant departments under the mechanism that plans are afoot for the demolition or redevelopment of any privately-owned monuments or graded buildings.

7. Under some circumstances, no applications are required for demolition or alteration works of a building. For example, some minor building works do not require prior approval of the Building Authority and building works of the New Territories Exempted Houses in the New Territories are exempted from certain provisions of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) and its subsidiary regulations. Demolition or alteration works of privately-owned historic buildings in these cases may not be caught by the monitoring mechanism unless such works have been brought to the relevant departments' attention through enquiries received or in the normal course of duty such as regular inspections.

8. Since the implementation of the monitoring mechanism, 26 items on the list of 1 444 historic buildings have been demolished or substantially altered which are listed at **Annex C**. While the demolished items can no longer be further assessed, the Assessment Panel has completed the review of the proposed gradings of those substantially altered items and considered that these items do not warrant any gradings since their heritage merits have been greatly diminished. It is therefore suggested that the grading assessment of the buildings demolished and substantially altered as listed at **Annex C** will not be proceeded further.

REMAINING ITEMS PENDING GRADING FINALISATION

9. On the list of 1 444 buildings, there are 185 buildings pending finalisation of grading. Most of them are subject to queries on the proposed gradings or delisting requests from the owners/affected parties. AMO will continue with the assessment work as well as seeking the owner's consent for the grading confirmation, and addressing their concerns about the implications of grading if and when required.

UPDATED NEW ITEM LIST

10. Alongside the grading finalisation exercise of the 1 444 buildings, 202 suggestions received for new items/new categories for grading as listed at **Annex D**. AAB agreed at its meeting on 9 September 2009 that priority be accorded to the assessment of the 1 444 historic buildings before considering the new items, and AAB has been flexibly advancing its discussion on the grading of some new items if there is cogent need.

11. Given that only 185 buildings are left on the original list of 1 444 buildings, and it is anticipated that it would take time to discuss with the private owners/ affected parties to confirm the gradings of the buildings, it is recommended that Members start discussion on the grading of the new items / categories subject to the availability of research information on their heritage value.

ADVICE SOUGHT

12. Members are invited to consider confirming the proposed gradings of the items mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 5 above and also endorsing the way forward for the assessemnt arrangement as detailed in paragraphs 8 to 11 above.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
February 2013

Ref: LCS AM 22/3