

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN RESPECT OF  
THE REVITALISATION OF THE FORMER FANLING MAGISTRACY**

**BACKGROUND**

Batch III of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (Revitalisation Scheme) was launched in 2011. In 2013, the Secretary for Development approved in-principle the proposal to adaptively reuse the site of the Former Fanling Magistracy (FFM) as The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG) Institute for Leadership Development (the Institute) submitted by the HKFYG (the Applicant). Government funding for capital works will be sought for this project. The project will be financially self-sustainable in revitalising the FFM site into an institute for leadership development tailored for youths.

2. The FFM site comprises a 1961-built magistracy building (the FFM itself), and other later-added buildings, including a 1983-built Annex Court Building, and a 1997-built Duty Lawyer Office building with two individual plant rooms. The FFM was one of the civic buildings initiated by the New Building Scheme proposed by the then colonial government in 1957. The design of the court was outsourced to a local private architectural practice Messrs. Palmer & Turner. The FFM was designed in Stripped Classical style, which was a popular architectural style for civic buildings in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

3. The FFM is two-storey high and originally housed two court rooms and an individual juvenile court. The building was officially opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1961 by the then Chief Justice and had serviced the territory for 40 years until 2002. The court was the first law court building constructed in the New Territories and had witnessed the judicial development in the territory. In recognition of the heritage value of the FFM, the Antiquities Advisory Board has accorded a Grade 3 status to the historic building.

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)**

4. In accordance with the Development Bureau Technical Circular (Works) No. 6/2009, the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO)

considered that a HIA is required to be carried out with the objective of drawing up a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP shall be a baseline study of the FFM site to provide guidelines for its future adaptive reuse and conservation. It shall also outline the future interpretation, maintenance and management strategies for the FFM site. Based on AMO's Conservation Guidelines as contained in the Resource Kit of the Revitalisation Scheme, a set of heritage impact assessments shall be conducted to outline the proposed project scope and design and set out the mitigation measures to avoid adverse impact on the historic building in the course of conversion. The HIA for the FFM site was completed and a report has been submitted to the AMO for consideration. Key points of the HIA report are summarised below:

#### **A. Project Proposal**

5. Under the Consolidated Project Proposal (CPP) submitted by the Applicant, the site will be adaptively reused as a training institute campus. The campus will accommodate a training centre (reusing the FFM) and a new hostel block with catering services. The existing surrounding greenery and open spaces will form a landscaped garden to enhance the environment of the site.

6. The Institute will offer different leadership training courses including programmes which involve overnight stay for local and overseas youngsters. It will also provide programmes for training Heritage Conservation Young Leaders for promoting local cultural heritage by means of tours, exhibitions and activities to enhance public interest in and understanding of the local cultural heritage, especially in the North District.

#### **B. Conservation Principles**

7. According to the CMP, the recommended Conservation Principles to conserve and interpret the FFM are as follows:

##### (a) Building Use

The new use of the FFM should be compatible with its original use, which means that the new use should not jeopardize the image of a law court and any unnecessary interventions to the

historic building should be avoided.

(b) Interpretation

Interpretation in the form of guided tours and displays should be provided to promote the cultural significance of the FFM site to the general public.

(c) Preservation of Building Fabrics

- i. The identified key character defining elements (CDEs) should be preserved or repaired with minimal intervention.

The CDEs which should be preserved or repaired include: –

EXTERIOR

- The original design of all the elevations (including the entrances, granite base, stucco wall finishes, tiled spandrels, architectural features, window and door openings, steel casement windows with security grilles, timber doors and metal gate).
- The original fencing with two pairs of granite entrance posts with light fitments and the metal ornamental fence with granite base.

INTERIOR

- The public lobby on G/F and 1/F (including their original wall dado and floor tile finishes, the T-shaped staircase with metal balustrades).
- The shroff office on G/F (including the counter, the gate and the safe).
- The defendants' area (including the carport, one of the holding cells and one of the staircases to the law courts).

- The magistrate's area (including the staircase, the magistrate's corridor and the spatial setting of one of the old magistrate's offices).
  - No.2 law court on 1/F with authentic setting keep intact.
  - Central light well.
- ii. Alteration to the identified original building fabrics should be kept to the minimum. Any new additional/alteration works should be properly placed in less prominent areas to minimise physical damage and visual impact.

(d) Setting

- i. The 1997-built Duty Lawyer Office and the two plant rooms will be demolished to facilitate public appreciation of the rear façade of the FFM. The 1983-built Annex Court Building will also be demolished to facilitate the construction of a new two-storey hostel block.
- ii. The proposed new hostel block will be designed in such a way that the view from the FFM towards the roundabout of the Jockey Club Road will not be obstructed. Elements of the new structures would be compatible with and distinguishable from the existing building fabrics of the FFM.

**C. Key Design Proposals**

8. The key proposed works for the revitalisation, as well as enhancements to support the proposed use by the Applicant are listed as follows –

(a) Overall Site Approach

- i. The project is intended to renovate and adaptively reuse

the existing FFM building to accommodate a new training institute. The 1983-built Annex Court Building will be demolished and a new two-storey hostel block with catering services will be built on a similar footprint.

- ii. The 1997-built Duty Lawyers' Office and two plant rooms at the rear obstruct the views to the FFM, and therefore they will be demolished to amplify the open space and to facilitate public appreciation of the rear façade of the FFM.
- iii. Existing trees will be preserved as far as possible. A new paving and lawn will be designed to enhance the surrounding landscape; the existing Emergency Vehicular Access will be reused with enhancement to suit the new uses. The original fencing with the two sets of granite entrance post and light fittings will be repaired and preserved.

(b) Conservation and Conversion Works for transforming the FFM into a New Training Centre

- i. Exterior
  - No alteration works will be carried out on the front elevation façade. Minor alteration to the back and the two side façades will be carried out to cater for the new building services provision (at the original carport for the provision of electrical and mechanical (E&M) room on the north façade), means of escape (MOE) requirement and the new uses (construction of new glass enclosures for multifunction rooms at the loading areas on the north and south façades).
  - The existing window-type air conditioners with enclosure will be removed and the corresponding steel casement windows and grilles will be restored or replaced by new ones to match the existing windows and grilles.

- The later-added access ramp at the front elevation will be relocated to the rear for barrier free access.
- ii. Interior
- The interior will be redesigned for the new training uses.
  - The No. 1 Court Room will be converted into the Mock Legislative Council Chamber for training purpose.
- iii. Preserved Features for Heritage Interpretation

The following spaces in the FFM will be preserved and interpreted by guided tours:

- The G/F and 1/F central lobbies will be restored and preserved, including its spatial setting, original wall dado and floor finishes.
- The T-shaped grand staircase with ornamental balustrades connecting the two floors will be preserved.
- The defendants' carport, defendants' corridor and one of the four cells will be preserved and interpreted by guided tours, while the other three cells will be preserved and incorporated with new use.
- The No. 2 Court Room together with its associated defendants' staircase will be preserved for heritage interpretation.
- The magistrates' staircase and covered corridor will be preserved. The staircase will be slightly modified to suit the MOE requirement.
- Spatial setting for one of the magistrates' chambers will be preserved for interpretation.

- The shroff office and the safe on G/F will be preserved and used as the conservation corner for interpretation purpose.
- iv. Enhancement Works for Complying With the Statutory Requirements of the Buildings Ordinance or other modern day's requirements
- One new lift platform will be provided in the light well to provide barrier free access. Several existing window openings towards the light well will be converted as the doorway for the lift.
  - In order to enhance the acoustic performance of the existing windows for the new use to fulfil the environmental requirement, the existing glass pane on the existing steel frame will either be replaced by thicker ones, or inner layer windows will be added. The new addition will not impair the original steel framed windows and their external outlook.
  - One of the defendants' staircases and the magistrates' staircase will be modified to comply with the current statutory standards.
  - Protective barrier of the existing central staircase has to be upgraded to comply with the statutory standards.



Artistic impression of the FFM and the new hostel block

#### **D. Mitigation Measures for the Conversion Works**

9. For areas where possible impact of the conversion works could not be avoided, the following mitigation measures are to be implemented based on the previously stated Conservation Principles:

- i. Any newly added windows will be installed at the inner side of existing steel casement windows in order not to cause negative visual impact to the building exterior and not to impair the windows.
- ii. New building services installations will be carefully designed in order not to affect the CDEs and the exterior outlook. They will be placed in less prominent locations. Existing openings for the building services will be utilised as far as possible. Any internal service ductworks and machinery will be placed at inconspicuous locations and hidden above the false ceiling.
- iii. The proposed new lifting platform in the central light well will be of compatible but distinguishable design with minimum size and will not cause disturbance to existing building footing.
- iv. Modifications to the existing staircases will be of compatible design and to minimise the disturbance caused to the identified

CDEs.

- v. For internal renovations, existing door openings will be utilised as much as possible. Removal of walls and new openings will be kept minimal and be placed at less prominent locations to preserve the integrity of the building. Newly formed openings and newly designed doors and gate will be compatible with and distinguishable from the old ones.
- vi. New hostel block will be designed with minimum visual impact to the FFM site. It will be compatible with and distinguishable from the FFM, and of a height lower than the FFM. The service rooms, lift shaft and staircase hood on the roof will be set back from the front façade facing the road and the FFM to minimise the visual impact to the FFM site. The building footprint will be similar to the existing Annex Court Building to ensure minimum disturbance to the existing trees.
- vii. Cartographic and photographic surveys to record the FFM site will be conducted before commencement of the conversion works. A set of record drawings will be prepared and furnished to the AMO after completion of the conversion works.
- viii. Regular site monitoring and precautionary measures will be implemented to protect the CDEs against damage.
- ix. Any renovation and maintenance works during the conversion and in future operation should follow the principles laid down in the HIA.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

10. The Applicant will ensure that all works to be carried out for heritage conservation are in strict compliance with the requirements stipulated in the HIA as endorsed by the AMO.