

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

DECLARATION OF THREE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AS MONUMENTS

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' advice on the proposed declaration of the following three Grade 1 historic buildings as monuments under section 3(1) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (the "Ordinance"):

- (a) Tung Lin Kok Yuen (東蓮覺苑) on Shan Kwong Road, Happy Valley;
- (b) Kowloon Union Church (九龍佑寧堂) on Jordan Road, Yau Ma Tei; and
- (c) Yeung Hau Temple (楊侯古廟) at Po Chue Tam, Tai O.

HERITAGE VALUE

Tung Lin Kok Yuen in Happy Valley

2. Completed in 1935, Tung Lin Kok Yuen is a Buddhist temple founded by Lady Clara Ho Tung (何張靜蓉), a devout Buddhist, and her husband Sir Robert Ho Tung (何東爵士) as a permanent institution to preach Buddhism and promote education. When the building was first opened, it housed Po Kok Free School (寶覺義學校) and Po Kok Buddhist Seminary (寶覺佛學社), which were two educational institutions for girls founded by Lady Clara in the early 1930s. Since its establishment, Tung Lin Kok Yuen has played a significant religious and educational role in the Chinese community for its strong association with the early development of girls' education, and the development and teaching of modern Chinese Buddhism. It remains an important centre for Buddhist activities as well as for the education and training of monastic clergy to this day.

3. Tung Lin Kok Yuen, which was designed by Fung Tsun (馮駿), an architect trained in Hong Kong and London, is an excellent example of the

mixed Chinese and Western style of the 1920s and 1930s. This style generally comprises Western structural forms and engineering, combined with traditional Chinese designs, details and decorations, such as flying eaves, brackets and glazed tile roofs. Internal decorations, down to the minute details of aisle railings, wall and ceiling moulding, door frames and panels, stained glass windows, etc., are also in strong Chinese colours and design.

4. The “arrow head” shaped building plan of Tung Kin Kok Yuen symbolises a great ship that takes with it all beings seeking enlightenment. The building follows the sequence of space in Chinese Buddhist Monastery design, starting with the Entrance Gate (山門), then followed by the Skanda Hall (韋馱殿) and the Main Hall (the Grand Buddha Hall 大雄寶殿).

Kowloon Union Church in Yau Ma Tei

5. Kowloon Union Church was built by the London Missionary Society with financial support from Sir Paul Chater. The foundation stone was laid on 27 May 1930 by the then Colonial Secretary, The Hon. W.T. Southorn C.M.G., and the church was officially opened on 10 April 1931 by the then Governor Sir William Peel. During the Japanese Occupation, the church ceased to function and the building was converted into a horse stable by the Japanese army and suffered severe looting and damage. The church was opened again for public worship with a rededication service held on 19 October 1947 and continues to serve the community until now.

6. The church was built in basic “Perpendicular Gothic” style, with pitched Chinese-tiled roof, red load-bearing brick walls and contrasting grey granite steps and window surrounds. The square battlemented tower at the west end of the building, which has pointed arch doorway surround and foundation stone at the base, is designed to serve as the main entrance to the church. The windows of the church are set in decorative granite framing in the form of trefoil-headed tracery.

7. The elegant double hammer-beam timber roof trusses with carved granite corbel supports are a rare and dominant feature of the spacious interior of the main hall of the church. There is also an arched alcove with gilt cross at the east end of the main hall.

Yeung Hau Temple in Tai O

8. Yeung Hau Temple at Po Chue Tam, Tai O was probably built in 1699 or earlier with reference to the oldest relic at the temple, an iron bell cast in the 38th year of Kangxi (康熙) reign (1699) of the Qing dynasty (清朝) dedicated to the deity of Hau Wong (侯王). The temple is now the oldest temple in Tai O and has long been patronised not only by fishing folks and fisheries merchants in Tai O, but also by merchants from the neighbouring places and the Qing soldiers along the coast.

9. The temple is also popular for its strong association with the Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade which is a traditional festive event with a history of over one hundred years and was inscribed onto the third national list of intangible cultural heritage of China in 2011.

10. The temple compound consists of the main temple building and side halls constructed of grey brick, granite and timber. The main temple building is a Qing vernacular two-hall-three-bay building, with a courtyard covered with a pavilion in-between the two halls. The recessed façade is supported by granite columns. Exquisite historic Shiwan (石灣) ceramic figurines portraying Chinese folk stories can also be found on the roof ridge of the entrance hall and the two parapet walls of the covered courtyard. It is noteworthy that there is a pair of historic couplets of 1877 and a plaque of 1881 made in lead-tin alloy hanging inside the temple, which are unique artefacts in Hong Kong.

11. Tung Lin Kok Yuen, Kowloon Union Church and Yeung Hau Temple are situated on private lots under the ownership of Tung Lin Kok Yuen, the Trustees of the Kowloon Union Church and the Secretary for Home Affairs Incorporated respectively. The appraisals and photographs of the three historic buildings are at **Annexes A to F**.

GRADING AND DECLARATION

12. In recognition of the heritage value of these three historic buildings, the Board accorded Grade 1 status to Tung Lin Kok Yuen on 18 December 2009, Kowloon Union Church on 10 September 2013 and Yeung Hau Temple on 17 May 2010.

13. At the meeting on 26 November 2008, the Board endorsed the establishment of a formal relationship between the statutory monument declaration system and the administrative grading system for historic buildings. Under the endorsed arrangement, Grade 1 buildings, defined as “buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible”, will be included in a pool of highly valuable heritage buildings for consideration by the Antiquities Authority (i.e. the Secretary for Development) as to whether some of these may have reached the “high threshold” of monuments for statutory protection under the Ordinance.

14. The Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”) considers that with the significant heritage value as set out in paragraphs 2 to 10 above, the three historic buildings have reached the “high threshold” to be declared as monuments for permanent protection under the Ordinance. Consent to declare the three historic buildings as monuments has been obtained from the respective owners and management parties.

ADVICE SOUGHT

15. In accordance with section 3(1) of the Ordinance, the Antiquities Authority may, after consultation with the Board and with the approval of the Chief Executive, by notice in the Gazette, declare any historic building to be a monument. Members’ advice on whether the subject three historic buildings should be declared as monuments under section 3(1) of the Ordinance is therefore sought. The intended monument boundaries of the declaration are shown in **Annex G**.

NEXT STEP

16. Should Members support the proposal to declare the subject three historic buildings as monuments, AMO will take the matter forward in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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