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**BOARD PAPER  
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**MEMORANDUM FOR THE  
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**DECLARATION OF  
THREE HISTORIC ITEMS AS MONUMENTS**

**PURPOSE**

This paper seeks Members' advice on the proposal to declare the following three items as monuments under section 3(1) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (the "Ordinance"):

- (a) Masonry Bridge of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir (薄扶林水塘石橋), Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong;
- (b) Tung Wah Coffin Home (東華義莊), Sandy Bay Road, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong; and
- (c) Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings, Yau Ma Tei (油麻地天后古廟及其鄰接建築物), Kowloon.

**HERITAGE VALUE**

**Masonry Bridge of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir**

2. Pok Fu Lam Reservoir is the first public reservoir in Hong Kong. The construction of the reservoir commenced in 1860 and water supplies to the city began at the end of 1863. Several extensions were undertaken between 1866 and 1877. Prior to the construction of Tai Tam Reservoir in the 1880s, Pok Fu Lam Reservoir was the only reservoir providing fresh water supplies to the Central and Western Districts.

3. The Masonry Bridge is one of the oldest surviving historic structures of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir. The bridge is situated at the east end of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir and carries Pok Fu Lam Reservoir Road, which runs along the northern

side of the reservoir. It spans the mouth of one of the feeder streams that run off the surrounding hillsides. The bridge is built of granite and features an elegant semi-circular arch. It is neatly finished with granite copings with chamfered margins and reticulated surfaces. Apart from routine maintenance and repair works, the bridge does not appear to have been altered. This bridge, together with the other four masonry bridges on Pok Fu Lam Reservoir Road, provide not only indispensable linkage with the reservoir's other waterworks facilities, but also the access for maintenance and visitation.

### Tung Wah Coffin Home

4. Tung Wah Coffin Home (東華義莊) was established in 1899 and the first group of buildings were completed in 1900. It is believed that the predecessor of Tung Wah Coffin Home was a coffin home near the slaughter house in Kennedy Town, which was established in 1875 with funds from the Man Mo Temple in Sheung Wan. The management of the coffin home was later handed over to Tung Wah Hospital. A plot of land in Sandy Bay was granted by the Government for the rebuilding of the coffin home in 1899. The coffin home has been officially named the Tung Wah Coffin Home since then. It is the only example of its type in Hong Kong that is still serving its original purpose as a place for the deposition of coffins and human remains. It is also a testimony to the contribution of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals to the global network of Chinese charities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

5. Standing on Sandy Bay Road for over a century, the coffin home now consists of two halls, 72 rooms, gateways, pavilion and gardens built in different periods. Although the coffin home was built for charitable purposes and largely adopted the principles of economical and functional design, some decorative elements can still be found in some buildings. Moreover, as the buildings were constructed and renovated in different periods, the coffin home reflects a variety of architectural styles, ranging from traditional Chinese vernacular architecture, to modern Western-style elements, and others that are a hybrid of both.

### Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings

6. Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings are significant in the history of Kowloon as a multi-functional place for worship, arbitration and study. The temple established by the boat people and land dwellers serves as an important religious focus and marker of collective cultural identity for the local community. It is the largest surviving Tin Hau Temple compound in Kowloon,

and also bears witness to the development of the physical and cultural landscape of Yau Ma Tei.

7. The Tin Hau Temple, which was the first building constructed within the site, replaced an earlier Tin Hau Temple probably built in 1865 by the local community at around the junction of today's Pak Hoi Street and Temple Street. The temple was relocated to its present site in the second year of the Guangxu (光緒) reign (1876) of the Qing dynasty and was completed in 1878. The other four buildings adjoining the temple, i.e. Kung Sor (公所), Fook Tak Tsz (福德祠) and the two Shu Yuen (書院), were constructed subsequently in phases between 1894 and 1920.

8. Among the five buildings, Tin Hau Temple is the largest and most elaborately decorated one. Fronted by an entrance porch with drum platforms to either side, the temple is a Qing vernacular two-hall-three-bay building with an open courtyard between the two halls. The drum platforms have granite columns with exquisitely carved bases. Exquisite historic Shiwan (石灣) ceramic figurines can be found on the main ridge of the entrance hall. The ridge was made by Junyu in Shiwan (石灣均玉造) in 1914. On the upper tier of the main ridge are a set of double dragons with a pearl finial (雙龍戲珠), flanked by a pair of dragon fish (鰲魚). The lower tier mainly consists of figurines portraying Chinese folk stories. The front gable ridge ends are decorated with a pair of ceramic figurines of the God of the Sun (日神) and the Goddess of the Moon (月神).

9. The Masonry Bridge of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir is situated on government land whereas the Tung Wah Coffin Home, and Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings are situated on private lots under the ownership of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and Secretary for Home Affairs Incorporated respectively. The appraisals and photographs of the three historic items are at **Annexes A to F**.

## **GRADING AND DECLARATION**

10. In recognition of the heritage value of the Masonry Bridge of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir in Pok Fu Lam, Tung Wah Coffin Home in Pok Fu Lam, and Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings in Yau Ma Tei, the Board accorded Grade 1 status to them on 13 June 2019, 16 April 2010 and 17 May 2010 respectively.

11. At the meeting on 26 November 2008, the Board endorsed the establishment of 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.

12. The three historic items, i.e. the Masonry Bridge of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir, Tung Wah Coffin Home, and Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings, as set out in paragraphs 2 to 9 above, have significant heritage value. They have reached the “high threshold” to be declared as monuments for permanent protection under the Ordinance. Consent for the proposed declaration has been obtained from the respective owners or management department.

### **ADVICE SOUGHT**

13. 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 or structure to be a monument. Members’ advice on whether the Masonry Bridge of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir, Tung Wah Coffin Home, and Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings should be declared as monuments is, therefore, sought. The intended monument boundaries of the declaration are shown in **Annex G**.

### **NEXT STEP**

14. Subject to Members’ endorsement of the proposal to declare the Masonry Bridge of Pok Fu Lam Reservoir, Tung Wah Coffin Home, and Tin Hau Temple and the adjoining buildings as monuments, the Antiquities and Monuments Office will take the matter forward in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

Antiquities and Monuments Office

March 2020

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