

**For discussion
on 11 June 2020**

**BOARD PAPER
AAB/20/2019-20**

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
IN RESPECT OF THE YAU MA TEI THEATRE PHASE 2
AT YAU MA TEI, KOWLOON**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment ("HIA") in respect of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre ("YMTT") Phase 2 at Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, as a new venue to support the development of traditional Chinese performing arts and promote this valuable intangible cultural heritage.

HIA MECHANISM

2. The HIA in respect of the YMTT Phase 2 was conducted in accordance with the HIA mechanism introduced by the Development Bureau vide Technical Circular (Works) No. 6/2009. Since its implementation in 2008, the HIA mechanism for capital works projects emphasises that every effort should be made to avoid or minimise adverse impact on "heritage sites"¹. In the submission to the Public Works Subcommittee of the Legislative Council, the works agent is required to include a "Heritage Implications" paragraph to be cleared by the Antiquities and Monuments Office ("AMO"), stating clearly whether the project will affect any "heritage sites" and if so, the necessary mitigation measures, as endorsed by the Antiquities Advisory Board, to be implemented.

¹ Heritage sites include:

- (i) all declared monuments;
- (ii) all proposed monuments;
- (iii) all sites and buildings graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board;
- (iv) all recorded sites of archaeological interest; and
- (v) government historic sites identified by the Antiquities and Monuments Office.

THE PROJECT

3. Proposed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”), the project aims to develop the vacant land adjacent to YMTT, a Grade 2 historic building, into a new venue to support the development of traditional Chinese performing arts, in particular Cantonese Opera, and promote this valuable intangible cultural heritage. There will be spatial and physical connections between YMTT and the YMTT Phase 2.

4. The construction of YMTT was completed in 1930 and is the only surviving pre-World War II purpose-built theatre in the urban area. It ceased operation in 1998. The conversion of YMTT into the Xiqu Activity Centre Phase 1, subsequently known as Yau Ma Tei Theatre Phase 1, was completed in 2011. The YMTT Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects aim to relieve the shortage of venue faced by the Cantonese opera sector through the provision of well-equipped performing and practicing facilities for rehearsal, experimental and traditional performances by budding artists and upcoming troupes who encounter difficulty in hiring suitable venues at easily accessible locations to build up their audience base and elevate their artistic skills.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5. Given the heritage significance of YMTT, AMO confirmed that an HIA would be required for the development works to be carried out at its adjacent site. The Architectural Services Department (“ArchSD”) has engaged a heritage consultant to conduct an HIA which aims to examine the extent of the proposed works which would affect YMTT and devise mitigation measures if adverse impact is unavoidable.

6. ArchSD recently submitted the HIA report to AMO for consideration. Given that all key character defining elements of YMTT will be preserved and the likely impacts of the development at the adjacent site to YMTT can be reasonably mitigated, AMO considers the proposal agreeable from the heritage preservation viewpoint and is satisfied with the recommended mitigation measures. Salient points of the HIA report and AMO’s comments are set out in **Annexes A and B** respectively. The full HIA report can be accessed via the link: http://www.aab.gov.hk/form/HIA_Report_YMTT.pdf.

7. Representatives of LCSD and ArchSD, as well as their project and heritage consultants, will present the HIA report at the meeting. They will further refine the YMTT Phase 2 in the light of Members' comments.

ADVICE SOUGHT

8. Members are invited to offer comments and advice on the findings of the HIA.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
June 2020

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