

**Antiquities and Monuments Office's Comments  
on the Heritage Impact Assessment in respect of  
the Revitalisation of the Roberts Block, Old Victoria Barracks**

The Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”) has reviewed the findings set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment (“HIA”) report in respect of the revitalisation of the Roberts Block, Old Victoria Barracks (“RB”) into “Roberts Block Open HeArts Centre” and has the following comments:

- (a) the proposal has adopted the principles of minimal intervention and reversibility for the new additions such that changes / disturbances to RB can be kept to a minimum. As such, the proposal is agreeable;
- (b) the main façades including the front (northeast) and the entrance (southeast) façades which carry the distinctive open verandahs will be kept intact except for removal of later-added wire mesh above the verandah balustrades, while the rear (southwest) façade will be restored with original arched openings with windows or louvres. These approaches are able to revive the openness of the verandahs at the front portion and to reveal the original Edwardian Classical Revival building façade design which is a key character defining element to demonstrate the architectural value of RB, and is therefore commendable;
- (c) a new external staircase and a lift will be constructed at the northwest side of the Roberts Block Site (the “Site”), the new structure will be independent and located at the same location to replace the existing later-added external staircase but further set back from the north corner of RB, the approach is able to minimise the visual impact on the front façade and is agreeable;
- (d) it is noted that there are geographical constraints to construct the new fire services and sprinkler tanks with plant rooms to meet the current requirement completely underground at the northwest open space, and the current design with the tanks and plant rooms partly protruded above ground is already an optimum design after balancing cost and construction works. Hong Kong Roberts Block

Centre Limited (“HKRBCL”) should ensure that the protruding height of new structures be kept to a minimum and its top finishes floor level (“FFL”) should not exceed the current design (i.e. FFL+81.02mPD for sprinkler tank and FFL+81.47mPD for fire services tank), and reduce the visual impact on RB as far as possible by incorporating the protrusions into landscape design of the open space in detailed design stage;

- (e) the proposed structural strengthening of RB is considered a balancing result in meeting current structural safety standards to suit new use and at the same time keeping to a minimum visual impact and physical disturbance to the original interior architectural features, as well as avoiding disturbance to existing footings after comparison of various options. The new recasting and replacing works will be carried out in such a way that the original appearance of recasting or replacing elements in terms of size and materials could be maintained as far as practicable so as to minimise the visual impact on the interior. The approach is therefore acceptable;
- (f) the original middle portion with 4-central-core-room-setting and the internal blocked door openings will be restored as far as practicable when fitting into new use, and one of the rooms on G/F will be restored with a fireplace to show an Edwardian Classical Revival interior. These approaches, which help the public understand the original layout of RB as a military married quarters and the interior Edwardian Classical Revival style design of the period, are commendable;
- (g) the construction of new accessible lift cum staircase tower and the link bridge at the Ancillary Site are necessary to provide barrier free access to the Site, with the site location carefully chosen and the proposed subtle design of the tower structure, it is able to keep the disturbance to the setting of RB to a minimum, ensure least visual impact to RB as a separate and distance structure, as well as to keep the original vistas from RB to the Old Victoria Barracks at Hong Kong Park and Admiralty. The approach is therefore agreeable; and

- (h) cartographic and photographic surveys to record RB will be conducted before commencement of the proposed works, and the findings will be sent to AMO for record.

2. In addition to the mitigation measures devised in the HIA report, AMO has further suggested the following enhancement measures which the project proponent has agreed to undertake:

- (a) design details of the new structures at the northwest open space i.e., the new external staircase and lift, the raised deck and ramp, the new semi-underground fire services and sprinkler tanks with plant rooms, and the associated dog houses, including but not limited to the appearance, building mass, height, finishes and colour scheme of the new structures and all interfacing details between the new structures and RB, should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (b) details of restoration of arched openings at the rear façade and replacement of windows and louvres at rear and side façades including alterations of existing metal grilles and additions of fixed lights at interior should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (c) details of all structural strengthening works to the existing slabs, beams, steel joists and brick arches including the interfacing details between the new elements and the historic fabrics of RB should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (d) design details of the upgrading works to comply with current regulations on means of escapes including but not limited to the modification of existing internal steel staircase and the alteration to existing landing and steps at the rear lane should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (e) details of the restoration and modification of door openings, doors and fanlights should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (f) interior design of the Edwardian Classical Revival Style room on G/F including the details of restoration of fireplace should be submitted for AMO's agreement;

- (g) other alteration and addition works to suit modern day requirements including but not limited to the installation of raised deck and new glass balustrades at verandahs, installation of fall arrest system at roofs, modification works to cast iron rain water down pipes, etc., if any, should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (h) landscape design of all the open spaces within the Site including any enhancement works to existing balustrades should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (i) design details of the new accessible lift cum staircase tower and the new link bridge at Ancillary Site including but not limited to the appearance, building mass, height, finishes and the colour scheme of the new structures, the associated slope upgrading works, and the slope surfaces treatment, and the connection details between the new link bridge and the Site, should be submitted for AMO's agreement;
- (j) the installations and ducting for the building services facilities should be at less prominent locations to minimise the visual impact on RB. The routings should also be carefully designed to minimise the damage to the existing building fabrics. Details of the works including any architectural screening, false ceiling and bulkhead installations should be submitted for AMO's agreement; and
- (k) to ensure that the mitigation measures recommended in the HIA report are properly implemented, a heritage consultant should be appointed by HKRBCL to monitor the implementation and record any changes and variations. Progress reports should be prepared by the heritage consultant for AMO's noting and action as appropriate.