

**For discussion
on 11 March 2021**

**BOARD PAPER
AAB/4/2021-22**

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
IN RESPECT OF
THE REVITALISATION OF
THE ROBERTS BLOCK, OLD VICTORIA BARRACKS**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment ("HIA") in respect of the revitalisation of the Roberts Block, Old Victoria Barracks ("RB") in Central, Hong Kong.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

2. The HIA in respect of the revitalisation of RB was conducted in accordance with the HIA mechanism introduced by the Development Bureau ("DEVB") 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. The revitalisation of RB is one of the projects under Batch V of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (the “Revitalisation Scheme”) run by DEVB. The Revitalisation Scheme invites non-profit-making organisations with charitable status under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) to apply for the adaptive re-use of selected government-owned historic buildings in the form of social enterprises.

4. Batch V of the Revitalisation Scheme was launched in November 2016 and the selection results were announced in July 2018. Approval-in-principle has been granted by the Secretary for Development to Christian Oi Hip Fellowship Limited (Cooperating Organisation: Art Hub Asia Company Limited) to convert RB into “Roberts Block Open HeArts Centre” which is a creative arts and play therapy centre, aiming to promote psychological and emotional wellness, to provide the public with skills for stress management and to provide people in need with music, drama, arts and play therapy to release their pressure.

5. Given that RB is a Grade 1 historic building which is of outstanding merit, AMO confirmed that an HIA would be required for the revitalisation works. Hong Kong Roberts Block Centre Limited (“HKRBCL”), the entity set up to take forward the project, has subsequently commissioned a heritage consultant to conduct the HIA.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6. The purpose of the HIA is to prepare a Conservation Management Plan with a set of heritage impact assessments which aims at designing mitigation measures to avoid adverse impact on RB in the course of the revitalisation works and outlining the future interpretation, maintenance and management strategies.

7. HKRBCL has submitted to AMO for consideration the HIA report based on AMO’s Conservation Guidelines laid down in the Resource Kit of RB under Batch V of the Revitalisation Scheme. Given that the character defining elements of RB will be repaired as necessary and preserved as far as practicable and the likely impact on the structures will be kept to a minimum through the proposed mitigation measures, AMO, therefore, considers the proposal agreeable from the

heritage conservation perspective and is satisfied with the recommended mitigation measures. The 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_RB.pdf.

8. Representatives of HKRBCL, as well as its project and heritage consultants, will present the HIA report at the meeting. They will further refine the revitalisation of RB in the light of Members' comments.

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. Members are invited to offer comments and advise on the findings of the HIA.

Antiquities and Monuments Office

March 2021

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