

**For discussion
on 8 June 2023**

**BOARD PAPER
AAB/8/2023-24**

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN RESPECT OF
ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHINESE HISTORY
AND CULTURE IN KOWLOON PARK**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment ("HIA") in respect of Activity Centre for the Promotion of Chinese History and Culture in Kowloon Park by the Architectural Services Department ("ArchSD").

HIA MECHANISM

2. The HIA in respect of the Activity Centre for the Promotion of Chinese History and Culture in Kowloon Park was conducted in accordance with the HIA mechanism introduced by the Development Bureau vide Technical Circular (Works) No. 1/2022. 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 ("AAB"), to be implemented.

¹ Heritage sites include :
(i) all declared monuments;
(ii) all proposed monuments;
(iii) all sites and buildings / structures graded by AAB;
(iv) all sites, buildings / structures in the list of new items pending for grading assessment by AAB;
(v) all sites of archaeological interest; and
(vi) Government sites identified by AMO.

THE PROJECT

3. The Project Proponent is the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) and the Project aims to convert the Block 58 of the Former Whitfield Barracks to the Activity Centre for the Promotion of Chinese History and Culture in Kowloon Park. The Works Agent is ArchSD. Block 58 was accorded a Grade 1 historic building in December 2009 by the AAB.

4. The Project comprises three sites in Kowloon Park. Site 1 houses the Block 58 of the Former Whitfield Barracks and the open space to it north, while Sites 2 and 3 are two nearby open spaces. In Site 1, the revamped Block 58 would accommodate the reception and the major multi-purpose rooms/classroom for the Activity Centre; while a New Annex Building would be added and connected to Block 58 to house ancillary services for the Activity Centre like plant rooms and barrier free access, etc.. Landscape works in Sites 2 and 3 would provide landscape facilities for Kowloon Park under the same Project.

5. The Former Whitfield Barracks was first established in 1864; while Block 58 was built in 1891-1895 as one of the very first batch of permanent barrack buildings constructed in the Barracks for accommodating the increased garrison. By the 1920s, over a hundred buildings were erected in the Barracks. It was believed that the Barracks was used as an internment camp during the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), and it then temporarily housed the prisoners of war after the War before returning to barracks use. Block 58 was used for Office & Stores/ Living Accommodation by that time. The British Ministry of Defence started to hand over the Barracks to the Hong Kong Government in 1969 for converting the Barracks into Kowloon Park.

6. Stage 1 construction of Kowloon Park was completed in 1970 and Kowloon Park was officially opened in the same year. In the 1970s, Block 58 was used to support services by the then Urban Services Department. Since the 1980s, it has supported the operation of the Museum of History as storage and workshops.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7. Given the heritage significance of the Former Whitfield Barracks Block

58, AMO confirmed that an HIA would be required for the proposed works. ArchSD has engaged a heritage consultant to conduct an HIA with a view to examining the impact of the proposed works to the historic structures and devising suitable mitigation measures to avoid or minimise the adverse impact.

8. ArchSD has submitted the HIA report on the Activity Centre for the Promotion of Chinese History and Culture in Kowloon Park with a Conservation Management Plan for assessing the heritage impact of the proposed project scope and design. Given that the graded structure within the proposed site will be preserved and converted with mitigation measures to alleviate possible impacts and recommendation on the future implementation of the Project. AMO, therefore, considers the works proposal agreeable from the heritage conservation perspective. 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/filemanager/aab/common/201meeting/ACPCH_C_HIA_report.pdf.

9. Representatives of LCSD, ArchSD and its project and heritage consultants will present the HIA report at the meeting. They will further refine the proposal in the light of Members' comments.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to comment and advise on the findings of the HIA.

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