

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**DECLARATION OF
TWO HISTORIC BUILDINGS AS MONUMENTS**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' advice on the proposal to declare:

- (a) Lo Pan Temple (魯班先師廟), No. 15 Ching Lin Terrace, Kennedy Town, Hong Kong; and
- (b) The Residence of Tang Pak Kau (鄧伯裘故居), No. 20 Tsz Tong Tsuen, Kam Tin, Yuen Long, the New Territories;

as monuments under section 3(1) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (the "Ordinance").

JUSTIFICATIONS

Lo Pan Temple

2. Lo Pan Temple ("the Temple") is a well-recognised historic temple in Hong Kong dedicated to Lo Pan, the patron saint of the workers of *Sam Hong* (三行, literally meaning "three trades"), which traditionally refers to carpentry, masonry and bricklaying. The Temple was first built in 1884 and was rebuilt at the same site in 1928. Its construction was made possible by donations from many companies and individuals related to the construction industry. In this regard, the establishment of the Temple reflects the booming construction business in Hong Kong at the time.

3. As a symbol of the construction industry in Hong Kong, the Temple was fantastically built and embellished with intricate murals, mouldings and ceramic decorations. Its distinctive gable walls, with five pointed and sharp-angle wings (poetically called the "Five Peaks Paying Tribute to Heaven" (五岳朝天)), are extremely rare in Hong Kong. The main ridge of the Temple is decorated with supreme-quality Shiwan (石灣) ceramics produced by the famous Junyu (均玉)

kiln. The Temple contains representative examples of the design, techniques and craftsmanship of traditional carpentry, moulding and ceramics production.

4. Since the establishment of the Temple, local builders and owners of construction-related businesses have been following the traditional practice of paying homage to Lo Pan on his birthday, commonly known as the “Master Festival” (師傅誕). Thus, the Temple not only bears unique testimony to a cultural tradition that the construction industry has carried on year after year, but it also helps reinforce the bonds among the different trades of the Hong Kong construction industry.

5. At its meeting on 15 September 2004, the Antiquities Advisory Board (“the Board”) recommended the declaration of the Temple as a monument. The declaration process was subsequently put on hold due to the need to clarify certain procedural matters. Considering the exceptional heritage value of the Temple as stipulated in paragraphs 2 to 4 above, the declaration of the Temple as a monument is recommended in order to exemplify Lo Pan Temple’s heritage significance.

The Residence of Tang Pak Kau

6. The Residence of Tang Pak Kau (“the Residence”) was probably built in the early 20th century. Tang Pak Kau (1876-1950) was a businessman and a distinguished member of the Tang clan in Kam Tin. He made remarkable contributions to the development of Kam Tin, Yuen Long and the New Territories as a whole, in particular in the areas of education and medical services.

7. The Residence is a rectangular-shaped single-storey grey brick building with an extreme length-to-depth proportion and a conspicuous watchtower of three-storey height. It is noteworthy that Tuscan columns and archways are consistently adopted in the Residence for both decoration and support of the pitched roofs constructed of timber purlins, battens and tiles. The Residence incorporates security considerations in its design, in particular through the erection of a watchtower. Among all the important features of the watchtower, the staircase and the floor finished with finely crafted red and green terrazzo are extraordinary.

8. The Residence is very special as traditional Chinese elements are juxtaposed with Western structural components inside the building. In addition, most of the original building fabric, finishes and decorations remain intact in the building. The Residence testifies to the development of Kam Tin and Yuen Long, and it serves as a witness to Tang Pak Kau’s achievements.

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9. The appraisals and photographs of the two historic buildings are at **Annexes A to D**.

GRADING AND DECLARATION

10. In recognition of their heritage values, the Board accorded Grade 1 status to the Lo Pan Temple on 18 December 2009 and to The Residence of Tang Pak Kau on 7 September 2023.

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”, are included in a pool of highly valuable heritage buildings for consideration by Antiquities Authority (i.e. 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 two historic buildings, i.e. the Lo Pan Temple and The Residence of Tang Pak Kau 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 intended declaration has been obtained from the management party of the Lo Pan Temple and the owners of The Residence of Tang Pak Kau.

ADVICE SOUGHT

13. In accordance with section 3(1) of the Ordinance, “the Authority may, after consultation with the Board and with the approval of the Chief Executive, by notice in the Gazette, declare any place, building, site or structure, which the Authority considers to be of public interest by reason of its historical, archaeological or palaeontological significance, to be a monument, historical building or archaeological or palaeontological site or structure.”. In view of the lapse of time since the Board last considered the proposed declaration of the Lo Pan Temple as a monument, Members’ views are sought again on the proposed declaration. Members’ advice is also sought on whether The Residence of Tang Pak Kau should be declared as monument. The intended monument boundaries of the declaration

are shown in **Annexes E and F**.

NEXT STEP

14. Subject to the Board's advice, the Antiquities and Monuments Office will take the matter forward in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

Antiquities and Monuments Office
March 2024

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