

**Antiquities and Monuments Office's Comments
on the Heritage Impact Assessment in respect of
the Revitalisation of Homi Villa into
Centre of National History Education Youyou Villa**

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 Homi Villa (Grade 3) into Centre of National History Education Youyou Villa. AMO considers the proposal agreeable for the following reasons:

- (a) the proposal has adopted the principles of minimal intervention and reversibility, such that changes or disturbances to Homi Villa are kept to a minimum, and through appropriate mitigation measures, the cultural significance of the historic building could be retained;
- (b) the design of the previous later-added Extension is too overwhelming and distracts the appreciation of the Main Building, the existing circulation spaces in particular the stair core is also over-provided. The proposal will re-organise the interior of the Extension to make full use of the space and to enhance the appearance of Extension such that the height of the stair core will be shrunk and the facade will be played down with a more subtle design. The new design will pay more respects to the Main Building and facilitate the visitor to focus on the Main Building, and therefore the approach is agreeable;
- (c) Homi Villa is situated on a small mount. There used to be a vegetated slope serving as a natural screen between Homi Villa and Castle Peak Road before the 1990s alteration of Homi Villa. The alteration replaced the natural screen with a ramp. The project will demolish the ramp in replacement of a new planted slope, reconstruct the main entrance pillars at the original location and modify the north side access path into an accessible ramp with reference to the old access path alignment. These works resemble the original setting and approach to the Homi Villa. The re-location of the accessible ramp can also direct the visitors to the historic Main Building once entering the site. These enhancement

works are therefore commendable;

- (d) the major above-ground addition and alteration works, i.e. the proposed lifting platform and additional external staircases from G/F to R/F, will be located at the west side of Extension, which will be far away from the main façade of the Main Building to minimize the visual impact on the historic building. The new external staircase will also be confined to the recessed corner space at façade of Extension and will not obstruct the existing sightline from the rear entrance to the historic building; and it will be constructed with glass and metal independent structure to minimize the building bulk and maximize reversibility. These approaches are acceptable;
- (e) new hose reel / FS water tank and FS and sprinkler pump room will be constructed underground in order to keep the building bulk of the above-ground ancillary buildings minimal such that the hierarchy of Main Building and ancillary buildings as well as the unique 270 degrees vista to the surroundings could be maintained. The approach is supported;
- (f) restoration of the main entrance pillars and gate at their original locations, a pair of statues at fan-shaped staircase, windows and doors, and cast iron rain water pipes of Main Building, 2 nos. of fireplaces and associated chimney breast, and completion of decorative timber panels at interior of Main Building are proposed. These proposed restoration works are able to recover the architectural significance of the building and are commendable; and
- (g) the proposal has taken into account the preservation of character defining elements of exceptional and high levels of significance in adaptive reuse of internal spaces. The symmetrical spatial design, ceiling mouldings, and original decorative timber panels in the Main Building that could reflect the architectural significance of Homi Villa will be preserved. Display areas and restaurants which are public accessible will be accommodated in the original interior layout of Main Building. These arrangements facilitate public appreciation of the internal features of the Main Building and are commendable; and

- (h) cartographic and photographic surveys to record Homi Villa will be conducted before the 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 about which the project proponent has agreed to undertake:

- (a) to ensure that the mitigation measures recommended in the HIA report are properly implemented, a heritage conservation consultant should be appointed by National History Education Centre (Youyou Villa) Limited to monitor the implementation and record any changes and variations, prepare progress reports or other suitable means for AMO's noting and action as appropriate, and prepare the Interpretation Plan and Maintenance and Management Manual as stated;
- (b) to consult AMO on any deviation of design from the HIA report in future for agreement before commencement of works;
- (c) to follow up on the detailed design of the following works and consult AMO for agreement before commencement of works:
 - (i) design details of the new structures, i.e. the new means of escape external staircase and lifting platform, where the height of the proposed lifting platform should be kept as low as possible;
 - (ii) design details of all restoration works and the modification works to the facades of Extension and the interfacing details between the Main Building and the Extension; and
 - (iii) other enhancement works to suit modern day requirements including new installations for building services and current regulations.