

From: Katty Law
To: Carrie LAM, Tom Ming, Bernard Chan
Date: 14/03/2012 09:40
Subject: Central Government Offices, Government Hill

Dear Carrie, Tom and Bernard,

As said, the Government Hill Concern Group organized a West Wing workshop last Saturday and it was attended by architects, planners and others. A lady architect, with a very international cv, wrote me the following afterwards and I would like to share this with you:

After watching the interview and the construction videos (in the GHCG website), I have to say the building is extremely powerful symbolically in several ways :

- 1) It is a truly "Hong Kong" endeavor, its step towards an embrace ideas of modernism, of societal and political awakening, made with Hong Kong materials, conceived by architects who were passionate about the simple but challenging design and built by Hong Kongers, carving the hillside with their hands, built one stone at a time.
- 2) It is conceived parallel to the social ideology of that time, a time when government and the civil service were tasked with a more straight forward mandate. The humble, simple, honest "no-frills" architecture reminds us of a more idealistic era when "government" seemed closer to the ordinary lives of people as mirrored in its modest, streamlined architecture.
- 3) It suggests Hong Kong's first steps towards an image of the City as reflected by the "International Style" movement, characterized also by a lot of new social and political ideals. This is a breakaway from many colonial traditions, abandoning the neo-classical European conservative architecture with its obvious class structure for a different, more egalitarian aesthetic.
- 4) The aesthetic of simplicity and humility is understandably anathema to the current vogue for flashier architecture, such as can be found at the Tamer site. It evokes a different nostalgia, of a different Hong Kong society. In other words, it offers a provocative contrast.

I think ordinary Hong Kongers hold this historic era of change very dear to their hearts.

Indeed we have a lot to learn from this building, or the CGO complex and Gov Hill as a whole. I have invited this architect to write a formal submission to the AAB and she has agreed to do so. The knowledge that we can put together about this site will be invaluable heritage for the present and future generation. We hope the conservation exercise of the CGO can be combined efforts of the govt and the public which will make it a truly meaningful process.

Best regards,
Katty Law
Government Hill Concern Group