

④
From: Katty Law

Date: Tue, 22 Feb 2011 10:03:23 +0800

To: ; Bernard Chan

Chan

; Laurence Li

Nam

Hoyin Lee

; Bernard

; Ng Cho

JOSEPH TING

; lie lu

Cc:

Subject: Government Hill

Dear AAB members,

For your information, the Government Hill Concern Group, which is formed by 19 NGOs and individual professionals and concerned members of the public, has recently submitted a Section 12A application to the Town Planning Board to propose setting up a special protection area for the Central Government Offices and the French Mission Building.

See the link below for the executive summary of the application:

<http://notforsalehk.wordpress.com/zoningapplication/>

We hope we can make a formal presentation to the AAB regarding our application, preferably within the three-week consultation period which will end on March 11.

We would also like to invite all members of the AAB to join a special Government Hill Walking Tour to gain a better understanding of the heritage significance of the area.

Previously we have organized a number of educational tours conducted by renowned academics, architects and writers, and received highly positive response from the participants who remarked that they would not know so much about this place had they not taken the time to walk and listen to its history.

Kindly let me know if this can be arranged - we are happy to offer this tour both on a weekday or weekend.

Sorry for not being able to send this message to all AAB members as this is the only contact list I got. We would be grateful if you can help raise this issues in today's AAB meeting.

See below a SCMP editorial about our town planning application.

Thank you for your kind attention and looking forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Katty Law

Convener, Government Hill Concern Group

Government shown real way to conserve Central

In his 2009 policy address, Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen announced an ambitious "Conserving Central" scheme which was supposed to herald a new government mentality over conservation and heritage issues and reflect the concerns of the public over these areas. "The idea of conserving Central is premised on our respect for the history of the district," said Tsang, adding that

④

"to make the best use of the precious assets of Central, we must create attractions in the district for public enjoyment". Indeed, the hill above Central which currently houses the government offices, the French Mission Building acting as the Court of Final Appeal, and St John's Cathedral is a genuinely pleasant area. A sandwich and coffee under the shade offered by the large trees on Government Hill during summer is often the highlight of a working day in Central. Any policy which might allow greater public use of the area should be supported.

But Tsang's words have been ringing hollow. Public servants will move out. Different public servants will move in. And maybe they will finally reopen the gates so that the public can once again stroll through the open spaces between the government buildings. But otherwise, advice from a government-commissioned consultancy report to legislate for a "special protected area" to protect Government Hill has been ignored, while the West Wing will make way for another high-rise commercial block with the usual shopping mall and car park. It is difficult to see how this fulfils public expectations for the conservation and public use of the area.

Now, an alliance of 20 heritage protection groups has submitted formal plans as an alternative, suggesting the rezoning of Government Hill as a "heritage precinct" - a simple proposal that gives far more meaning to a policy of "Conserving Central" than what has been suggested by the government. By such active participation in consultations and public debates about these issues, the public has shown they mean what they say about wishing to see real conservation of Hong Kong landmarks to preserve our identity. Now let us see the government show it means what it says, too.