

HKICON

Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists
香港建築文物保護師學會

20 August 2012

Our Ref.: HKICON/ADMIN/CGO/1201

Executive Secretary
Antiquities and Monuments Office,
136 Nathan Road,
Tsim ShaTsui,
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Dear Sirs,

Conservation of the Post-1950 Former Central Government Offices Complex (CGO)

Our Institute welcomes Government's public consultation on the conservation of the post-1950 former Central Government Offices Complex (CGO) and would like to make the following comments:

- 1) The CGO, as the centre of Hong Kong governance from the 1950s until very recently, is significant and carries a number of values, including architectural, contextual, group, historical and social values. All of these cultural and natural heritage values should be recognized and respected during the future conservation and adaptive reuse of the complex. If not, the overall significance of the place will be diminished.
- 2) It is important to understand that the overall significance of the CGO does not depend on the significance of a single building or any two buildings. The current evaluation of individual buildings is a piecemeal approach and does not reflect the overall significance of the place, which must include its built and natural heritage attributes (components).
- 3) Given the aforementioned comments, we urge the government to evaluate the significance of the CGO as a cultural landscape. By virtue of the definition of a cultural landscape, all buildings, structures and their associated landscape would be included – Government Hill in its entirety rather than the more narrowly defined CGO.

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- 4) Given the significance of the CGO and its surroundings (Government Hill) as a cultural landscape, future use(s) should be as close to the original use as possible - essentially, and as broadly defined, for the public good. Physical changes should be compatible with - and sympathetic to - existing components.
- 5) Since the CGO and Government Hill have cultural and natural heritage significance at the community level, it is essential that there is comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

It must be emphasized that HKICON is not against the revitalisation of CGO and Government Hill. The purpose of our comments is to help provide a defensible basis for the adaptive reuse of CGO and Government Hill. Our hope is that such a basis will lead to a development-cum-conservation proposal that is socially acceptable and politically defensible.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Lynne D. DiStefano,

President, The Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists