

保 護 海 港 協 會
Society for Protection of the Harbour

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*The Chairman & Members,
Antiquities Advisory Board,
C/- AAB Secretariat,
136 Nathan Road,
Tsim Sha Tsui,
Kowloon, Hong Kong*

31st August 2012

Dear Sirs & Mesdames,

Re: Central Government Offices West Wing

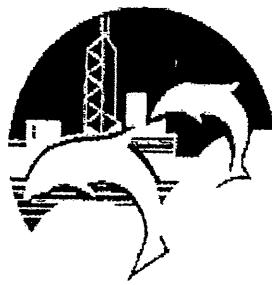
Our Society support the decision of the Antiquities Advisory Board confirming Heritage Grade 1 for the Central Government Offices site and all its buildings and the Board's recommendation of Monument Status to the Antiquities Authority.

We adopt the following reasons:

1. *This heritage site has been Hong Kong's seat of governance since the 1840s and deserves the highest respect and grading from our heritage protection legislation and administrative criteria.*
2. *The present Main, East and West Wings of the Central Government Offices were designed and built as a "harmonious, integral cluster" and all three wings must be preserved intact and thus treated as of equal architectural importance.*
3. *The three wings of the Central Government Offices are unique and a significant example of modernist, functional architectural design that is the precursor of many similar buildings built in the 1950s and 1960s.*
4. *As a place of governance and public administration this site and these buildings witnessed an unprecedented range of historic legislative, administrative and public decision-making and interaction with the public.*

Harbour Manifesto: *To protect and preserve the harbour and enhance the harbour-front to provide a healthy environment and a good quality of life for the people of Hong Kong*

維港宣言: *保護及保存維港，並優化海濱，為香港市民，提供一個健康及優質的生活環境*



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We also respectfully point out the following important points:-

1. *There is no site in Hong Kong of greater historic and cultural significance than Government Hill of which the Central Government Offices is the focal point.*
2. *There is no logical reason to isolate the West Wing which is an essential part of the WHOLE Central Government Offices for separate treatment or to demolish it to make way for commercial and office development.*
3. *We also adopt the arguments set out in the enclosed article entitled "Government must change plans for west wing to avoid claims of collusion" published in the South China Morning Post on 5th August 2012.*

Yours faithfully,

Winston K.S. Chu, Adviser

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5th August 2012

Government must change plans for west wing to avoid claims of collusion

As a concerned Hong Kong citizen, I have followed closely the public debate over the government's proposal to co-operate with a private developer to develop the west wing of the former central government offices which forms part of Government Hill.

The whole of this hillside comprises not only the former government complex but also other important buildings and grounds, including Government House and gardens, the botanical gardens, the Bishop's House and gardens, the American consulate, St John's Cathedral and the Court of Final Appeal building.

The low-rise, low-density and green characteristics of this enclave provide a much needed green lung for the Central district of Hong Kong. This special area formerly also used to include the government's Beaconsfield House and its car park at the back of the former Hilton Hotel, but in a private deal without consulting the public the administration sold its two public assets to Cheung Kong (Holdings) Limited for the development of the Cheung Kong Center in the mid-1990s.

Government Hill has been the seat of government ever since Britain took over Hong Kong in 1841. There is simply no other site in Hong Kong of greater importance in historical and heritage terms.

The proposed demolition of the west wing for commercial and office development by a private developer does not make sense. As the government certainly does not need the money, what is the justification for such a decision? Does the administration have any particular developer in mind? Is there a hidden agenda that the former central government offices will eventually be converted into another commercial plaza similar to Pacific Place in Queensway?

The central government offices site has always been zoned "government, institution, community" on the outline zoning plan. If the government has no use for the west wing, it must first offer it to the community. The building is in as good a condition as the main and east wings which the government has decided to retain and renovate. Many community organisations and public institutions can make very good use of this extremely central and convenient building.

If the administration proceeds with its present proposal, it will only have itself to blame if it is once again accused of collusion with real estate developers.

L. C. Chan, Causeway Bay