

Proposed Gradings of the Post 1950 Former CGO

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2012/08/31 下午 05:01
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From: Andrew Li

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Dear Sir,

I express my grave concern and reserve over the proposed grading of the West Wing of Central Government Offices (CGO).

As a postgraduate student of Hong Kong History and former employee working on 12/F of the West Wing, I understand the strategic importance of CGO's location. Looking from the former Governor's House, the CGO (West Wing and East Wing combined) and the CBD in Central forms a harmonious planning of the Central District. Indeed, West Wing is an indispensable part of the whole CGO. The CGO without West Wing is imbalanced.

The CGO is praised for its sound architectural design and indeed the Wing is well-maintained even after more than half a century of use. Rooms were perfectly partitioned and interior spaces were well designed. It reflects the typical norms of the buildings in 1950s, many of which in Hong Kong has been torn down.

West Wing and its plaza is also a collective memory of Hong Kong people. It is the destination of numerous social movements and demonstrations since 1970s. The lift annex of West Wing is also remembered for the press conferences held by government officials. The integral design is a harmonious miniature showing how the government and people were interacted and integrated.

The effectiveness of converting West Wing into commercial buildings is very much doubted. Given the limited spaces of the plot of land, the supply of commercial land use in Central will unlikely increase significantly. This also gives speculations on "government-business collusion", which is a sensitive topic in the community. It is very unwise to sell it to developers now.

I urge the Administration to acknowledge the historical importance of the whole CGO and to **rank it as Grade 1** historical building. It is highly politically-motivated and unprofessional to give Grade 2 of West Wing alone and subsequently a green light for redevelopment there.

Yours faithfully,
Andrew Li