

Heritage and Tourism Development Project at the Central Police Station Compound

Referring to the letter from the Action Group on Protection of the Central Police Station Historical Compound, we have the following response:

In preparing for this Project, we have fully consulted the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) and with its assistance, the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) has drawn up a set of very stringent preservation requirements and guidelines to ensure that the historic setting and the integrity of the site will be well preserved and to avoid any inappropriate or non-reversible alternations/additions which would undermine its historic value.

In response to the call from the “Action Group on Protection of the Central Police Station Historic Compound” to preserve the entrance building at the Victoria Prison (F Hall), the AAB has further considered the case. Having regard to its relatively low preservation value in comparing with other historical buildings, the AAB decided to retain the classification of the F Hall as a non-historic building. The AAB considered that its decision would not adversely affect the historic integrity of the Victoria Prison compound, but would enhance the flexibility for future development and allow for innovative design compatible with the historical buildings.

To provide sufficient degree of flexibility in design and in order not to limit the development potential of this Project, we have no intention to limit the Project for non-profit-making use only, or to specify the development model for it. We welcome all parties interested in this Project, including commercial and non-profit-making organizations alike, to participate in the tender exercise. However, in view of the significant cost to be incurred on restoration and maintenance of this sizable heritage compound, irrespective of whether it is for cultural, academic, tourism or other commercial uses, the development must, to some extent, be able to generate stable revenue so as to ensure that it is self-sustainable and would not require Government subsidy.

As heritage conservation is the major objective, the tender assessment mechanism will give more weight to the qualitative aspects of the proposal, to ensure proper preservation of the historic buildings

within the Compound. The tender assessment will be a two-stage process. To pass the first stage of assessment, tenders must meet the mandatory preservation requirements prepared by the AAB and AMO. In the second stage of assessment, tenders would be assessed in respect of performance in heritage conservation, technical, environmental and traffic issues as well as community and tourism benefits. Since heritage preservation is the prime objective of this project, tenders will not be further assessed unless they have secured the passing score in the criterion on heritage conservation.

We are aware of the views from various sectors of the community on the weighting for premium versus qualitative aspects of the assessment criteria for this Project. We will consider these views with an open mind, and hope to find a weighting that is acceptable to most.

On tender assessment, an Assessment Panel comprising representatives from relevant bureaux and departments including the Home Affairs Bureau, the Antiquities and Monuments Office, the Tourism Commission, the Architectural Services Department, the Planning Department and the Transport Department will be set up. District Officer/ Central & Western has also been invited to join the Assessment Panel so that he can reflect the views of the local community during the assessment process. Representatives of the AAB and the Hong Kong Tourism Board will serve as non-scoring members to give advice to the Assessment Panel. This is a highly representative panel that can take into account various concerns, including those on heritage conservation, traffic and environmental consideration and community benefits, into consideration. Such an arrangement has already struck a balance among the needs for public participation, ensuring the fairness of the tendering system and avoiding conflict of interest.

We also agree that a proper mechanism for communication should be established for exchange of views between the successful tenderer and the local community on the implementation of this Project. We believe that through active participation by the community, the concerns of the public can be more effectively addressed by the successful tenderer.

Tourism Commission
Economic Development and Labour Bureau
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