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Subject: Objection to Relocation of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum to the Central Star Ferry Pier

Dear Mr Chan,

Thank you for your e-mail of 16 February 2008 expressing your view on the proposed relocation of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) to Central Pier 8 and suggesting the merger of HKMM with the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (HKMCD).

First of all, we would like to point out that the HKMCD's theme is different from that of the HKMM. The former is a museum dedicated to introducing the history of coastal defence in Hong Kong for the past 600 years covering the Ming and Qing dynasties, the British period and the Japanese invasion up to the period after Hong Kong's reversion to Chinese sovereignty whereas the latter is a museum that features Hong Kong's maritime history - the foundation of modern Hong Kong and the key to its growth and development with the coverage of the early China's maritime story and China trade between 17th century and 19th century. In view of the fact that the exhibits and themes of the two museums are different in nature, it would not be appropriate to merge the two museums.

Regarding the HKMM's proposal, you may wish to note that the Home Affairs Bureau informed the Legislative Council's Panel on Home Affairs on 11 January 2008 that the Government was considering the HKMM's proposal. The Panel Members were supportive of the HKMM's proposal having regard to the quality of the HKMM's services and the community-driven initiative that is worthy of public support. The relevant Panel paper can be found at the following link:
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0111cb2-746-1-e.pdf>

While the HKMCD has a total area of about 34,200 sq.m, the site is mainly hilly and there is not much flat land for further expansion. Owing to its historical significance, the architectural structure of the Redoubt of the former Lei Yue Mun Fort has been preserved and converted into the permanent exhibition galleries staging the 600 Years of Hong Kong's Coastal Defence. Any further alteration to the Redoubt for incorporating the exhibition of the HKMM would be technically undesirable and unduly disturb the fine setting of the historical site.

With regard to your idea of displaying the exhibits of the HKMM at an individual exhibition hall at the HKMCD, we would like to point out that the HKMCD is already suffering from the lack of space for presenting large scale exhibitions. At present, the only area available for staging thematic exhibitions at the HKMCD is the Upper Gallery of about 250 sq.m, which can only accommodate small scale exhibitions. The limited space available at the Upper Gallery would be insufficient to exhibit the present collections of the HKMM, not to mention an expansion of its collection to better showcase the maritime history of Hong Kong.

In any case, we would like to thank you for your concern and suggestions. We look forward to your continuous support for our museum services and programmes.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Rosa YAU

for Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

c.c.

Clerk to LegCo Panel on Home Affairs

SHA (Attn: Ms Lynn Ho)

HKMM (Attn: Dr. Stephen Davies)