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Clerk to Panel  
(Attn: Mr. Simon Cheung)  
Panel on Development  
Legislative Council  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

3 June 2011

Dear Mr. Cheung,

**Legislative Council Panel on Development**

**Hung Lau at Castle Peak, New Territories**

Thank you for your letter of 5 May 2011 on an anonymous submission referred to the Panel on Development by the Panel on Home Affairs on the above subject. In the submission, a member of the public asked the Government to declare Hung Lau at Castle Peak as a monument and explain the heritage preservation plan of the building.

**Historical value of Hung Lau and its Grade one status**

2. Hung Lau is situated at the former Castle Peak Farm, which was founded in 1901 by Mr. Li Ki-tong (李紀堂), an ardent follower of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and an active member of the Xing Zhong Hui (興中會). In the 1900s, the former Castle Peak Farm served as a meeting place of revolutionaries and a haven for disbanded revolutionaries.

3. In view of the historical significance of the former Castle Peak Farm in

the anti-Qing revolutionary movement and, in particular, that Hung Lau is the only structure on the historic site of the former Castle Peak Farm, the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) accorded a Grade one historic building status to Hung Lau in 1981.

4. Following the announcement of the new heritage conservation policy in the Chief Executive's 2007-08 Policy Address, the Government has devoted a more focused effort to heritage conservation. In particular, since December 2009 the AAB has been reviewing the grading of 1 444 historic buildings in the territory, including that of Hung Lau, having regard to the assessments of their heritage value by an independent expert panel and the views and additional information received during the public consultation exercise on the proposed gradings. The review is carried out having regard to six criteria, namely historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity and rarity. The AAB re-affirmed the Grade one status of Hung Lau in December 2009 following review. A heritage appraisal of Hung Lau is at the Annex.

### **High threshold of declared monument**

5. Under the prevailing policy, the list of Grade one historic buildings, defined as "buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible", will be regarded as a pool of highly valuable heritage buildings for consideration by the Antiquities Authority as to whether some of these may have reached the "high threshold" of monuments to be put under statutory protection. However, such a linkage would not oblige the Antiquities Authority to declare all Grade one historic buildings as monuments. Monument declaration is based on a rigorous assessment of all relevant factors, including but not limited to the heritage significance of the sites/buildings concerned.

6. While Hung Lau was accorded a Grade one status, no direct relationship between Hung Lau and the revolutionary activities led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen could be fully established. It was uncertain as to whether the existing Hung Lau, which carried some of the characteristics of architecture in the 1920s and 1930s, was the same original structure that existed on the site in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Should it be a structure that was constructed only after the revolutionary movement, then it may not reach the high threshold to be declared

as a monument.

### **Suggestions of declaring the former Castle Peak Farm as a monument and developing part of it into a historical park**

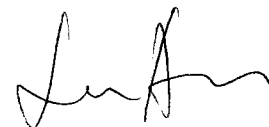
7. There had been suggestions from the local district to declare the former Castle Peak Farm as a monument and develop part of it as a historical park. Since Hung Lau and the open area in front of it comprise some private lots, the development plan would involve complicated private property and land matters. There were also views in the district in recent years to review the scope of the proposed park. Pending such review at the district level, these suggestions have been held in abeyance.

### **Maintenance of Hung Lau**

8. Owners of graded historic buildings are eligible to apply to the Development Bureau for financial assistance for the maintenance of their buildings under the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme (FAS). The FAS seeks to help arrest privately-owned graded historic buildings from deterioration due to lack of maintenance by providing financial assistance in the form of grants of up to \$1 million for each application to their owners for them to carry out minor maintenance works by themselves.

9. As part of the public consultation exercise on the proposed grading of historic buildings, the Antiquities and Monuments Office wrote to the owner of Hung Lau in 2009, informing him of the forms of assistance available to encourage preservation of historic buildings, including the provision of technical advice on the maintenance of the building and financial assistance under the FAS.

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs Laura Aron)

for Secretary for Development

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Hung Lau, near Shek Kok Tsui Village**  
**Castle Peak, Tuen Mun, New Territories.**

The exact year of construction of Hung Lau is not known. Hung Lau is commonly known as the “Red House” (紅樓), although whether this name comes from its revolutionary associations or its reddish colour may be a matter of conjecture. *Historical Interest*

Hung Lau is situated at the former Castle Peak Farm (青山農場). The Farm was originally owned by Mr. Li Ki-tong (李紀堂), alias Li Pak (李柏), a dedicated follower of Dr. Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙 / 孫中山) and a member of the anti-Qing revolutionary society Hsing Chung Hui (興中會). Between 1901 and 1911, the former Castle Peak Farm had been used as a depot for weapon storage, a ground for the manufacture and experimentation of firearms required for the contemplated uprisings, a meeting place of revolutionaries and a haven for disbanded revolutionaries escaping from the Manchu vengeance. Having said that, no direct relationship between the building and the revolutionary activities led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen could be fully established.

Hung Lau, which is more Western than Chinese, is not particularly distinguished. The main part of the house is a two-storey pitched-roof building divided into two units by cross walls, with a two-storey verandah extension at the front and a two-storey kitchen and storeroom annexe at the rear. There is also a single-storey annexe at one end of the building. From the layout it would appear that the building originally was two semi-detached living units. There are few architectural embellishments. Windows are plain metal windows in hooded openings. The balustrade to the first floor verandah is formed of pierced screen blocks, virtually *Architectural Merit*

the only ornamentation. The walls are constructed of bricks and plastered with a faded pink finish. The roof and floor construction is of timber using Western structural methods. Internally, the only items of interest are the glazed and panelled wooden doors to the verandahs.

The present building carries some characteristics of the architecture in the 1920s and 1930s. In comparison of old survey plans, discrepancy is noted on the building's location and configuration. It is uncertain as to whether the existing building is the same original structure that existed on the site in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its present use is residential.

***Built  
Heritage  
Value,  
Authenticity***

Due to its location in the former Castle Peak Farm, Hung Lau is a piece of built heritage with social value and local interest. The former Castle Peak Farm is reminders of Hong Kong's role in the revolutionary movement during a very tumultuous period in Chinese history.

***Social Value  
& Local  
Interest***



Existing Condition of Hung Lau