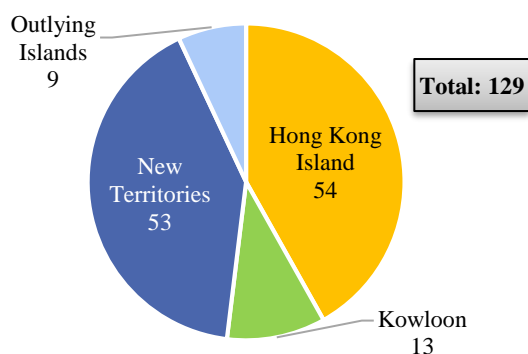


Heritage conservation

Figure 1 – Declared monuments by location⁽¹⁾



Note: (1) As at July 2021.

Figure 2 – Grading of historical buildings by AAB⁽¹⁾

Status	Number of buildings ⁽²⁾
Declared as monuments before assessment completed and grading confirmed	46 (3%)
Buildings with confirmed grading after assessment	1 188 (75%)
<i>Of which:</i>	
<i>Grade 1: Buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible</i>	199 ⁽³⁾ (13%)
<i>Grade 2: Buildings of special merit; efforts should be made to selectively preserve</i>	392 (25%)
<i>Grade 3: Buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means should be considered if preservation is not practicable</i>	597 (38%)
No grade assigned after completion of assessment	332 (21%)
Assessment not further processed due to demolition or substantial alteration	26 (2%)

Notes: (1) As at 9 December 2021.

(2) Figures in brackets – as % of 1 592 items handled by AAB.

(3) Includes 34 buildings declared to be monuments after being graded.

Figure 3 – Number of graded historical buildings demolished⁽¹⁾



Note: (1) Up to December 2021.

Highlights

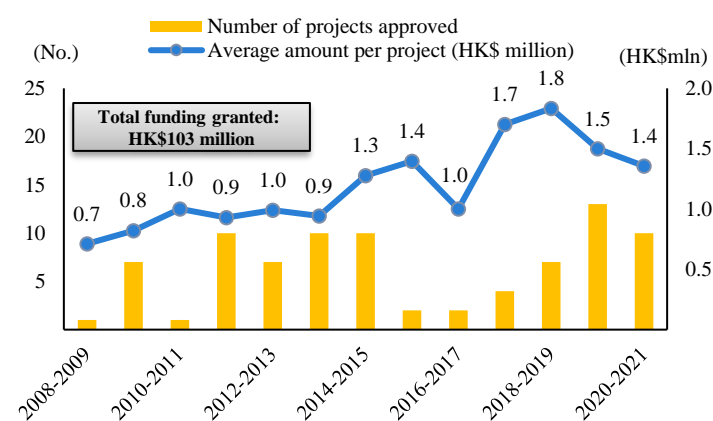
- In Hong Kong, historic buildings, places or structures with the highest heritage value are protected under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53). The work of heritage conservation is overseen by the Development Bureau (“DevB”), with a view to striking a balance between development and conservation. Under the Ordinance, the Antiquities Authority (i.e. Secretary for Development) may, after consulting the statutory body Antiquities Advisory Board (“AAB”) and with the approval of the Chief Executive, declare a place, building, site or structure as a monument. The Authority is then empowered to prevent alterations, or to impose conditions upon any proposed alterations as he/she thinks fit, in order to protect the monument. As at July 2021, there are 129 declared monuments in Hong Kong (Figure 1). Many of such declarations arose from the territory-wide survey and assessment kicked off in 1996 and 2005 respectively regarding historic buildings built before 1950.
- Among the 8 800 buildings covered by the territory-wide survey, 1 444 buildings with higher heritage value were selected for in-depth assessment by AAB under a grading system, with the support of the Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”; the executive arm of the Antiquities Authority). Together with other buildings as proposed by the public from time to time, a total of 1 592 items were handled by AAB as at end-2021. About 3% (46 buildings) had been declared as monuments before grading confirmation; 75% (1 188 buildings) were considered to be of historical merit and hence graded (including 34 buildings that were also declared as monuments); the remnant were either considered to have insufficient heritage value to warrant a grade (21% or 332 buildings) or had been demolished or substantially altered before the grading process was completed (2% or 26 buildings) (Figure 2).
- However, the grading system serves only as an administrative guideline for the preservation of historic buildings. It has no statutory status and therefore does not affect the ownership, usage, management and development rights of the buildings. Under the internal monitoring mechanism, the Buildings Department, Lands Department and Planning Department will notify DevB of any possible threats to historic buildings when it comes to their attention in the course of duty (e.g. enquiries received). DevB will then proactively approach the private owners to explore conservation options with them, for example by offering incentives to encourage them to conserve their historic buildings. Despite the monitoring mechanism, 24 historic buildings with confirmed grading listed in Figure 2 have been demolished as at end-2021 (Figure 3).

Heritage conservation (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Projects in operation under the Revitalisation Scheme

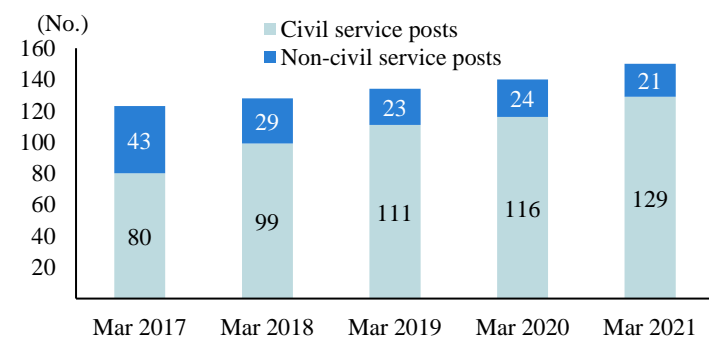
	Government subsidies granted (HK\$ million)	Operation commencement (month/year)	Cumulative number of visitors as at end-Mar 2021
Batch I			
Old Tai O Police Station	Not required	2/2012	1 695 000
Lui Seng Chun	1.87	4/2012	503 000
Mei Ho House	4.80	12/2013	1 437 000
Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital	4.48	6/2014	1 524 000
Batch II			
Stone Houses	2.24	10/2015	943 000
Old Tai Po Police Station	1.72	11/2015	270 000
Blue House Cluster	0.81	7/2017	191 000
Batch III			
Former Fanling Magistracy	0.76	9/2018	159 000
Bridges Street Market	5.00	12/2018	64 000
Haw Par Mansion	Not required	4/2019	53 000

Figure 5 – FAS projects approved by fiscal year⁽¹⁾



Note: (1) Maximum funding amount per project was increased from HK\$600,000 to HK\$1 million in April 2009 and to HK\$2 million in November 2016. Projects are funded in form of reimbursement.

Figure 6 – Manpower of Antiquities and Monuments Office



Highlights

- The Government introduced two schemes in 2008 to support preservation of historical buildings. To adaptively re-use suitable government-owned historic buildings, the Government launched the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (“Revitalisation Scheme”), under which non-profit-making organisations (“NPOs”) are invited to submit applications for using designated historic buildings to provide services or run business in the form of social enterprise. Six batches of projects have been rolled out so far, involving a total of 22 historic buildings. Of these projects, 10 projects under the first three batches were in operation as at end-March 2021 (Figure 4). Projects under the fourth batch were set to commence operation in 2022 while the remaining batches were still in planning/renovation stage.
- Meanwhile, the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme on Built Heritage (“FAS”) introduced also in 2008 aims to provide subsidies for private owners of graded historic buildings for maintenance work. FAS subsidies are also open to NPOs that are leasing government-owned historic buildings under the Revitalisation Scheme. The subsidy cap was raised twice, to HK\$2 million per project in 2016-2017. As at end-March 2021, a total of 84 applications had been approved, involving a total grant of HK\$103 million (Figure 5).
- AMO, established in 1976, comprises professional staff to undertake specialized tasks including identifying items with historic interest, overseeing heritage impact assessment of capital works, managing restoration and maintenance projects, and organizing publicity programmes. Previously under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, AMO was transferred to DevB in April 2019. As at March 2021, AMO’s headcount stood at 150, up by over 20% compared with four years ago, with a rising proportion in civil servants (Figure 6). According to DevB, the headcount growth reflects the need to cope with new work projects such as the setting up of 3D Laser Scanning Survey subunit, while the replacement of non-civil service contract staff with staff hired on civil service terms commensurate with the long-term operational needs as more activities and initiatives on built heritage conservation are rolled out.

Data sources: Latest figures from Development Bureau, Antiques Advisory Board, and Commissioner for Heritage’s Office.

Research Office
Information Services Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
18 February 2022
Tel: 3919 3181

Statistical Highlights are compiled for Members and Committees of the Legislative Council. They are not legal or other professional advice and shall not be relied on as such. Statistical Highlights are subject to copyright owned by The Legislative Council Commission (The Commission). The Commission permits accurate reproduction of Statistical Highlights for non-commercial use in a manner not adversely affecting the Legislative Council. Please refer to the Disclaimer and Copyright Notice on the Legislative Council website at www.legco.gov.hk for details. The paper number of this issue of Statistical Highlights is ISSH04/2022.