

For discussion on
1 June 2007

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
The Queen's Pier**

Purpose

This paper sets out the considerations and justifications underlying the decision of the Secretary for Home Affairs (“SHA”) (in his capacity as the Antiquities Authority (“AA”)) not to declare Queen's Pier (“the Pier”) as a monument under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (“the Ordinance”).

Background

2. There are places, buildings, sites or structures (“buildings”) within Hong Kong which warrant preservation by different strategies by reason of their historical, archaeological or palaeontological value. The Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”), the executive arm of the AA, is the office which carries out the functions, amongst others, to deal with matters relating to the examination and preservation of such buildings. The Office is headed by its Executive Secretary and comprises professional staff (curators) organized into four sections with expertise in handling historical, archaeological and palaeontological matters. There is also a separate section to provide secretariat and administrative support to both the AAB and the AMO.

3. At present, there are two distinct mechanisms in operation in connection with the preservation of historical buildings, one statutory and the other administrative.

Preservation by declaring a building to be a monument under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance

4. The statutory mechanism for preserving a historical building is by way of declaring such a building to be a proposed monument under section 2A(1) or a monument under section 3 of the Ordinance. Once declared a monument, any demolition, alterations or disruptions may only take place with permits granted by the AA under section 6 of the Ordinance or by way of exemption under the same provision.

5. The SHA is the “Authority” designated under the Ordinance. Administratively, SHA is referred to as the AA. According to section 3(1) of the Ordinance, if the AA considers any building to be of public interest by reason of its historical, archaeological or palaeontological significance, he may, after consultation with the AAB and with the approval of the Chief Executive, by notice in the Gazette, declare such building to be a monument.

6. Under the Ordinance and in line with AMO’s usual practice, if the historical, archaeological or palaeontological significance of any building reaches the threshold to merit a monument status, the AMO would, acting as the executive arm of the AA, initiate statutory process with a view to seeking AA’s ultimate decision to have the relevant building declared to be a monument under section 3(1), including consultation with AAB. The discretion to declare a building to be a monument under the Ordinance lies solely with the AA.

7. At present, only a total of 63 historical buildings have been declared to be monuments in Hong Kong. All of them are pre-war buildings with relatively long building age and significant historical value. Using such historical buildings which have been declared to be monuments as a yardstick, it is plain that the threshold of historical, archaeological or palaeontological significance qualifying a building as a monument is very high indeed. A full list of the 63 historical buildings which have been declared monuments is at the [Annex](#).

The grading system

8. Historical buildings are graded primarily on the basis of their heritage values. The grading system¹ is an internal mechanism of the AAB with no statutory status. AMO has been engaged to undertake background research to facilitate the grading assessment by the AAB of buildings based on their heritage value. The aim of the grading is to identify and compare the heritage value of historical buildings and to facilitate AMO's consideration on whether and how a particular building should be preserved and on whether the historical, archaeological or palaeontological significance of any particular building has crossed the threshold to justify the AA's consideration to declare it as a monument under the Ordinance.

9. In the past 27 years, AAB had graded 607 buildings, of which 57 had been declared as monuments² and 54 demolished. At present, we have 496 graded buildings, including 118 Grade I buildings, 184 Grade II buildings and 194 Grade III buildings³. Grading of historical building is in fact an on-going exercise in that some 1,440 buildings have already been identified by the AMO where grading could be given by AAB to rate their heritage value in future for reference.

10. Though there is no specific requirement under the grading system on how the relevant historical buildings (once graded) should be preserved, AMO has all along taken administrative measures to ensure that graded buildings would be protected or preserved in such a way which is commensurate with the merits of the building concerned. The actual preservation arrangement for any graded historical building would have to depend on such factors as the structure, condition and features of individual building, as well as the technical feasibility.

¹ Historical buildings are classified into three grades with the following definitions for internal reference:

Grade I Buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible.

Grade II Buildings of special merit; efforts should be made to selectively preserve.

Grade III Buildings of some merit, but not yet qualified for consideration as possible monuments. These are to be recorded and used as a pool for future selection.

² Of the 57 declared monuments which have been previously graded by AAB, 28 were Grade I buildings, 26 Grade II buildings and 3 Grade III buildings.

³ Once buildings are declared or demolished, we will remove them from the grading list.

Grade I historical buildings are not necessarily significant enough to be declared a monument

11. Not all graded buildings would ultimately be declared to be monuments under the Ordinance and there is no automatic linkage between graded buildings and monuments. Even for Grade I buildings, they may not be subsequently declared monuments. Of the 607 historical buildings graded by the AAB up to May 2007, 151 buildings have been accorded with Grade I historical building status and out of such number of Grade I buildings, only 28 buildings have been declared to be monuments. In other words, a total of 123 Grade I buildings are not declared to be monuments. As mentioned earlier, ever since the Ordinance came into operation, only a total of 63 pre-war buildings with very significant historical value have been declared to be monuments. Any new monument to be declared must be of comparable significance.

Whether to declare Queen's Pier to be a Monument

Previous views of the historical value of the Pier

12. In November 2000, AMO was consulted in the context of the Central Reclamation Phase III ("CRIII") project and decided to commission a heritage consultant to produce the "Survey Report of Historical Buildings and Structures within the Project Area of CRIII" ("2001 Survey Report") for consideration in consultation with AAB. The 2001 Survey Report was published by AMO in February 2001 and its aim was to do a searching of all existing pre-1950 and selected post-1950 buildings and structures having historical interest within the area and to discuss any preservation strategy where appropriate.

13. As regards Queen's Pier, the 2001 Survey Report recognized it had historical value in connection with the colonial past. At para. 4.3.1, it states that "[n]ot only has the pier been used by the public since its construction in 1961, it was the landing pier for new Governors after arriving at the Kai Tak Airport. They then made their oath to serve as Governors of Hong Kong at the City Hall Concert Hall" and at para. 5.3.1,

it mentions that –

“The pier and Edinburgh Place are not merely an ordinary public pier and public open space for community use. They have been for many years two of the very few open spots suitable for breathing the sea air comfortably in Central and viewing the beautiful harbour. To a certain degree, they performed some civic and political functions in the colonial period of post-war Hong Kong after their completion in 1961. Their demolition for reclamation would scrap forever the concrete link to a brief past of local development.”

14. However, despite the sentiment expressed above regarding the prospect of its demolition, the “2001 Survey Report” did not find it necessary or justified to recommend any preservation of the Pier either in-situ or by relocation. This should be contrasted with the treatment of other historical buildings within the project area: for example, the “2001 Survey Report” recommended that the whole City Hall Complex should be kept intact and consideration should be taken to relocate the clock tower at the Star Ferry Pier, if not the whole pier building, to a new home suitably in harmony with its surroundings.

AAB’s deliberations on the Pier

Meeting of 13 March 2002

15. At the AAB meeting held on 13 March 2002, members were invited to consider the recommendations by the former Territory Development Department (“TDD”) and the Planning Department (“PlanD”), amongst others, on the Pier, i.e. “the Pier will need to be relocated due to reclamation works. A detailed photographic and cartographic record will be undertaken and a commemorative plaque will be erected at the existing site”. Different views were expressed at the meeting regarding different methods to preserve the Pier other than the one recommended by the TDD and PlanD. However, at no point in time did any member of AAB ever suggest that the historical or any other significance of the Pier was such that it should be graded administratively, not to mention the possibility of being declared a monument.

Meeting of 12 December 2006

16. In response to the controversial issue relating to the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier reported by the press, AAB held a meeting on 12 December 2006 to clarify its stance regarding the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier. During the meeting, the Chairman invited members' views about the relocation plan of Queen's Pier. While a member urged the Government to re-consider in-situ preservation of the Pier, no other members expressed any views on the suggestion of the PlanD that as the "previous studies revealed that in-situ preservation of the Pier was not feasible" and "in response to the views from the public and concern groups", Government "would consider ways to incorporate the special features of the Pier into the new design framework as far as practicable."

Grading of the Pier by AAB

Meeting of 9 May 2007

17. Having regard to the submissions on the preservation of the Pier by the various concern groups, including one from the Hong Kong Institute of Architect ("HKIA") made on 28 February 2007, AAB decided at its meeting on 6 March 2007 that a review on the heritage value of the Pier should be conducted. AMO was tasked by the AAB to assist in carrying out further research on the Pier's heritage value for consideration by AAB of its grading at the next meeting scheduled for 9 May 2007. The decision to proceed with the grading of the Pier was actually initiated by AAB.

18. During the meeting on 9 May 2007, AAB discussed for the first time the grading of the Pier. Taking into account the views of various non-governmental concern groups and professional bodies expressed at the public hearing session held before the AAB meeting, in addition to the research report submitted by the AMO, AAB accorded the Grade I historical building status to the Pier, which, according to the internal guidelines of the AAB, is a "building of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible".

Review of the assessment of the historical significance of the Pier by AMO

19. The AMO considers that the Pier bears a testimony to the colonial history of Hong Kong with some association with important historical events such as the arrival of new Governors, and thus should be preserved appropriately. However, the AMO has never taken the view that the historical significance of the Pier was such that the AMO should recommend to the AA that the Pier should be declared a monument. Nor did and does the AMO consider that the Pier has any or any sufficient archaeological or palaeontological significance.

20. In the light of AAB's decision at its meeting on 9 May 2007 to accord Grade I historical building status to the Pier, and in response to calls from some quarters of the public for declaring the Pier as a monument under the Ordinance (including a letter from the HKIA to the AAB Chairman and a letter to SHA from Heritage Watch), SHA instructed AMO to review the position and to make recommendation on whether AMO's previous position that the Pier should not be declared to be a monument was still valid.

Justifications and considerations

21. As mentioned in paragraph 11 above, not all graded buildings are significant enough to be declared monuments under the Ordinance.

22. In conducting the review, AMO took into account views presented in submissions and requests from professional organizations, heritage groups and other concerned parties for preserving the Pier from January 2007 onwards as well as deliberations of AAB at its meeting on 9 May and AMO's justifications and considerations are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

23. In particular, it is noted that the Pier was built in 1953-54 following the demolition of the first Queen's Pier (completed in 1925) to make way for the reclamation of Victoria Harbour in the 1950s. Apart from its use as a public pier, the Pier was a landing place for the Governors of Hong Kong and the Royal family upon their arrival in and

departure from the colony until 1997. The AMO has also borne in mind the AAB's deliberations during their meeting on the grading of Queen's Pier which took into account factors such as group value, social value and local interests, authenticity and rarity, as listed in the AAB's historical building grading form. Though there is no dispute that it has some historical value, AMO remains of the view that such value is not of such significance that warrants the Pier to be declared to be a monument under the Ordinance having regard to the following –

(I) Historical significance

- (a) The Pier only testifies to about 44 of the 156 years of the colonial rule, which is a much shorter duration when compared with other century-old buildings also reflecting the colonial history. Currently, all the declared monuments are pre-war buildings.
- (b) In terms of association with the arrival of new Governors in the colonial period, the historical significance of a place of “landing” is clearly considerably less than say, the place for “oath taking” which formally marked the beginning of governorship and which was the core procedure for establishing a Governor's terms of office. In this connection, the present LegCo Building (former Supreme Court) and City Hall where the Governors took their oath of office are considered more historically significant than the Pier.
- (c) There are other pre-war historical buildings which are testimonies of the colonial authority but with greater historical significance than the Pier. The very outstanding examples that have been declared as monuments include the Government House, Former Central Police Station Compound, Former Central Magistracy, Flagstaff House, and Old Supreme Court. There are also buildings of greater historical merit, which were only accorded a grading but not declared as monuments. They include but are not limited to the Former Explosives Magazine of the Old Victoria Barracks (a Grade I building, built between 1843 and 1874), five of the barrack blocks of the Old Lyemun Barracks Compound (Grade I buildings, built in 1880s-1890s) and five barrack buildings of the Old Victoria Barracks Compound (Grade II buildings, built in early

1900s) and the Old South Kowloon District Court (a Grade II building, built in 1936), just to name a few. These buildings command a much higher representation in the colonial administration than the Pier.

- (d) In considering whether a historical building should be declared to be a monument for the purpose of reconstructing the history of the colonial administration in Hong Kong, a holistic approach by considering aspects including its relationship to colonial administration, and its contributions in areas such as economic, religious, educational and medical developments of the colony should be adopted. The historical significance of the Pier as a ceremonial pier is relatively peripheral in this broad historical context.

(II) Architectural merits

- (e) The architectural style of the Pier is modern utilitarian. The simple and functional design reflects the typical modernist architecture of the 1950s and 1960s. The architectural merits of the Pier, in terms of design, plan forms, decoration and craftsmanship, compare less favourably with other similar structures or structures belonging to the same period in terms of its impact on and importance for the architectural development in Hong Kong. There are quite a number of post-war Government buildings, which are of similar architectural style but with greater historical significance such as City Hall Complex, former North Kowloon Magistracy, former Western Magistracy, Central Government Offices, etc. They are neither graded buildings nor declared monuments under the Ordinance.

(III) AAB's voting results on grading of the Pier

- (f) Based on the result of 12 AAB Members voting for Grade I, 10 for Grade II and 3 for Grade III, the AAB Chairman concluded at the AAB meeting on 9 May that the Pier should be accorded a Grade I historical building status. This means over half of the AAB Members present did not support according the Pier Grade I status:

taken all the voting results together, in fact those Members not in favour of a Grade I status exceed those in favour by one. The voting results indicate that AAB Members held different opinions on the historical significance of the Pier.

- (g) By way of comparison, in the deliberations of the AAB on the grading of Mei Ho House (美荷樓) and Yu Yuen (娛苑), Members unanimously gave the buildings Grade I status. It is uncommon that Members' views were so diverse. The different views on the Pier indicate that not all Members agreed to the historical significance of the Pier.

Decision of SHA in its capacity as the AA

24. Having carefully and personally considered the above review made by AMO together with all the relevant papers, SHA, as the AA, decided that Queen's Pier does not possess the requisite historical, archeological or palaeontological value for it to be declared a monument under the Ordinance.

Timing of disclosure of the AA's decision

25. As explained above, the AA will take appropriate action as required under the Ordinance if he considers that a particular building should be declared to be a monument. This includes consulting AAB and the related publicity. Where the AA considers that a particular building does not warrant a declaration, no particular action is required. In the case of Queen's Pier, given the calls from some quarters of the public for the consideration that it should be declared a monument immediately after the AAB's Grade I status decision on 9 May 2007, and in view of the public interest generated, AA found it appropriate to request the AMO to conduct another review to enable the AA to make a formal decision on the matter.

26. As the AA's decision was made on 22 May 2007, there was no sufficient time to disclose the AA's decision any earlier to the Public

Works Subcommittee (PWSC) Members at the meeting held in the morning of 23 May 2007. Officials from the Home Affairs Bureau and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department attending the PWSC meeting stood ready to answer any Members' query on the AA's position. In response to a Member's request, the Administration readily undertook to provide supplementary information on the matter before the PWSC recommendation is to be considered at Finance Committee and issued an information note to PWSC on 31 May 2007.

Home Affairs Bureau
May 2007

List of Declared Monuments in Hong Kong – Historical Buildings

Item No.	Name	Address	Year of Construction	Year of Declaration
1	Duddell Street Stone Steps and Gas Lamps, Central	Southern end of Duddell Street, Central, Hong Kong	1875-1889	1979
2	Sam Tung Uk Walled Village, Tsuen Wan	Tsuen Wan, New Territories	1750s	1981
3	Sheung Yiu Village, Sai Kung	Pak Tam Chung, Sai Kung, New Territories	c.1850s	1981
4	Old District Office North, Tai Po	Wan Tau Kok Lane, Tai Po, New Territories	1907	1981
5	Tin Hau Temple, Causeway Bay	No. 10 Tin Hau Temple Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong	Early 18 th C	1982
6	Man Lun Fung Ancestral Hall, San Tin, Yuen Long	Fan Tin Tsuen, San Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories	Late 17 th C	1983
7	Island House, Yuen Chau Tsai, Tai Po	Yuen Chau Tsai, Tai Po, New Territories	1905	1983
8	Man Mo Temple, Tai Po	Fu Shin Street, Tai Po, New Territories	1893	1984
9	Old Tai Po Market Railway Station	Tai Po, New Territories	1913	1984
10	The Exterior of the Main Building of The University of Hong Kong	Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong	1910-1912	1984
11	The Exterior of the Old Supreme Court, Central	No. 8 Jackson Road, Central, Hong Kong	1903-1919	1984
12	Old Stanley Police Station	No. 88 Stanley Village Road, Stanley, Hong Kong	1859	1984
13	Hong Kong Observatory, Tsim Sha Tsui	No. 134A Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon	1883	1984
14	Liu Man Shek Tong Ancestral Hall, Sheung Shui	Mun Hau Tsuen, Sheung Shui, New Territories	1751	1985
15	Old House, Hoi Pa Village, Tsuen Wan	Jockey Club Tak Wah Park, Tak Wah Park, Tsuen Wan, New Territories	1904	1986
16	Tai Fu Tai , San Tin , Yuen Long	Wing Ping Tsuen, San Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories	1865	1987
17	Kun Lung Wai Gate House(San Wai), Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling	Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, New Territories	1744	1988

Item No.	Name	Address	Year of Construction	Year of Declaration
18	Yeung Hau Temple, Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long	Tung Tau Tsuen, Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long, New Territories	Before 1811	1988
19	Law UK Hakka House, Chai Wan	No. 14 Kut Shing Street, Chai Wan, Hong Kong	1736-1795	1989
20	Flagstaff House, Cotton Tree Drive, Central	Hong Kong Park, Cotton Tree Drive, Central, Hong Kong	1846	1989
21	Former French Mission Building, Battery Path, Central	No. 1 Battery Path, Central, Hong Kong	1917	1989
22	Old House, Wong UK Village, Sha Tin	Wong Uk Park (Old Wong Uk Village), Yuen Chau Kok Road, Sha Tin, New Territories	1800s	1989
23	Western Market (North Block)	No. 323 Des Voeux Road Central, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong	1906	1990
24	Wan Chai Post Office	No. 221 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	1912-1913	1990
25	Old Pathological Institute, Caine Lane, Sheung Wan	No. 2 Caine Lane, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong	1905	1990
26	Former Kowloon-Canton Railway Clock Tower, Tsim Sha Tsui	Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon	1913-1915	1990
27	Kang Yung Study Hall, Sha Tau Kok	Sheung Wo Hang Village, Sha Tau Kok, New Territories	1736-1795	1991
28	Former Kowloon British School, Tsim Sha Tsui	No. 136 Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon	1900-1902	1991
29	Yi Tai Study Hall, Kam Tin, Yuen Long	Shui Tau Tsuen, Kam Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories	1821-1850	1992
30	Main Building of St. Stephen's Girl's College, Lyttelton Road, Mid-Levels	No. 2 Lyttelton Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong	1923	1992
31	The Exterior of the Main Building, the Helena May, Garden Road, Central	No. 35 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong	1914	1993
32	Enclosing Walls and Corner Watch Towers of Kun Lung Wai(San Wai), Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling	Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, New Territories	1744	1993
33	The Entrance Tower of Ma Wat Wai, Lung Yuek Tau, Fanling	Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, New Territories	1736-1795	1994
34	Former Marine Police Headquarters, Tsim Sha Tsui	Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon	1884	1994

Item No.	Name	Address	Year of Construction	Year of Declaration
35	Government House, Upper Albert Road, Central	Upper Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong	1851-1855	1995
36	Former Gate Lodge, the Peak	Mount Austin Road, The Peak, Hong Kong	1900-1902	1995
37	Central Police Station Compound, Hollywood Road, Central	No. 10 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong	1864-1919	1995
38	Former Central Magistracy, Arbutnot Road, Central	No.1 Arbutnot Road, Central, Hong Kong	1913-1914	1995
39	Victoria Prison Compound, Old Bailey Street, Central	No. 16 Old Bailey Street, Central, Hong Kong	1840	1995
40	The Exterior of Hung Hing Ying Building of The University of Hong Kong	Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong	1912	1995
41	The Exterior of Tang Chi Ngong Building of The University of Hong Kong	Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong	1929	1995
42	The Exterior of University Hall of The University of Hong Kong	No. 144 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong	1861-1867	1995
43	St. John's Cathedral, Garden Road, Central	Nos. 4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong	1847-1849	1996
44	Former Yamen Building of Kowloon Walled City, Kowloon Walled City Park	Kowloon Walled City Park, Kowloon City, Kowloon	1847	1996
45	I Shing Temple, Wang Chau, Yuen Long	Wang Chau, Yuen Long, New Territories	c.17 th C	1996
46	Entrance Tower and Enclosing Walls of Lo Wai, Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling	Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, New Territories	c.1200s	1997
47	Tang Chung Ling Ancestral Hall, Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling	Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, New Territories	1525	1997
48	Cheung Shan Monastery, Ping Che, Fanling	Wo Keng Shan, Ping Che, Fanling, New Territories	1789	1998
49	King Law Ka Shuk, Tai Po Tau Tsuen, Tai Po	No. 17 Tai Po Tau Tsuen, Tai Po, New Territories	1368-1644	1998
50	Cheung Ancestral Hall, Shan Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long	No. 209 Shan Ha Tsuen, Ping Shan, Yuen Long, New Territories	1815	1999
51	Fan Sin Temple, Sheung Wun Yiu, Tai Po	Sheung Wun Yiu, Tai Po, New Territories	1736-1795	1999

Item No.	Name	Address	Year of Construction	Year of Declaration
52	North and West Blocks of St. Joseph's College, Kennedy Road, Central	No. 7 Kennedy Road, Central, Hong Kong	1920-1925	2000
53	Waglan Lighthouse, Waglan Island	Waglan Island, Hong Kong	1893	2000
54	Tang Lung Chau Lighthouse (commonly known as Kap Sing Lighthouse)	Tang Lung Chau, Kap Shui Mun, Hong Kong	1912	2000
55	Tang Ancestral Hall, Ping Shan, Yuen Long	Hang Mei Tsuen, Ping Shan, Yuen Long, New Territories	c.1300s	2001
56	Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda, Ping Shan, Yuen Long	Sheung Cheung Wai, Ping Shan, Yuen Long, New Territories	1368-1398	2001
57	Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall, Ping Shan, Yuen Long	Hang Mei Tsuen, Ping Shan, Yuen Long, New Territories	Early 16 th C	2001
58	Tin Hau Temple, Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling	Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, New Territories	c.1500	2002
59	Hung Shing Temple, Kau Sai Chau, Sai Kung	Kau Sai Chau, Sai Kung, New Territories	Before 1899	2002
60	Hau Kui Shek Ancestral Hall, Ho Sheung Heung, Sheung Shui	Ho Sheung Heung, Sheung Shui, New Territories	1762	2003
61	Morrison Building , Hoh Fok Tong Centre, Tuen Mun	Hoh Fuk Tong Centre, Tuen Mun, New Territories	1936	2004
62	Cape D'Aguilar Lighthouse, D'Aguilar Peninsula	Cape D'Aguilar, D'Aguilar Peninsula, Hong Kong	1875	2005
63	Leung Ancestral Hall	No. 62 Yuen Kong Tsuen, Pat Heung, Yuen Long, New Territories	17 th -18 th C	2006