

For discussion on
11 January 2008

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

**Future Development of Private Museums –
Hong Kong Maritime Museum**

Purpose

This paper sets out the current situation of private museums in Hong Kong and the Administration's initial views on the Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM)'s proposal to relocate to the Central Pier 8 from 2010 onwards.

Background

Current provision of museum services in Hong Kong

2. Upon the dissolution of the then Municipal Councils in January 2000, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has taken over the role of providing and managing public museums in Hong Kong under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Chapter 132). As of December 2007, there are 17 public museums managed by LCSD. Three other government departments, i.e. the Hong Kong Police Force, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Correctional Services Department, are also operating museums on specific themes. Apart from these Government-run museums, there are currently nine museums that are funded and managed by educational institutions, charitable or non-profit making organizations. A list of these public museums and private museums in Hong Kong is at **Annex A**.

Collaboration between LCSD museums and private museums

3. At present, private museums are expected to operate on a self-financing basis. However, there have been regular collaboration efforts between LCSD museums and other local museums. The most obvious one is the annual International Museum Day organised by LCSD since 2001, in which all non-LCSD museums are invited to participate. Reciprocal loan of museum collections is also very common between LCSD museums and private museums, for example –

- a) the Hong Kong Museum of Art has provided free loan of collections to the two museums of the Hong Kong University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong for display at their exhibitions;
- b) the Hong Kong Jockey Club Museum loaned its artifacts to the Hong Kong Heritage Museum for the exhibition “Hong Kong’s Popular Entertainment” from mid 2006 to early 2007; and
- c) the Hong Kong Museum of Art and the Hong Kong Museum of History have also loaned a number of artifacts for display at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum.

4. Apart from loaning of collections, LCSD museums and private museums also join hands with each other in organising various kinds of activities including exhibitions, lectures and seminars. For instance, the Hong Kong Science Museum jointly organised with the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences in presenting the exhibition “SARS 100 Days – Overcome in Unity”.

5. Separately, the Government has since 1995 offered to the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences of the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences Society the use of the Old Pathological Institute building which is a Government-owned declared monument at a nominal rent of \$1 per annum.

6. As far as our collaboration with the HKMM is concerned, the Hong Kong Museum of Art provided free loan of three historical pictures for HKMM's inaugural display from 2005 to early 2006, while the Antiquities and Monuments Office of LCSD has made available on a loan basis its collection items, including one iron cannon and two cannon balls, to HKMM free of charge for display since December 2006. 17 artifacts of the Hong Kong Museum of History have also been on loan to the HKMM for display since 2005. In addition, the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust approved a grant of \$360,000 to HKMM to carry out a project entitled "Phase I of the Hong Kong Maritime Reference Chart and Pilotage Collection for China Sea Waters: The Catalogue" in 2006.

Establishment of a statutory Museums Board for all existing LCSD museums

7. We briefed the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs (HA Panel) on 18 June 2007 on the recommendations of the Committee on Museums (CoM). On the future mode of governance of public museums, the CoM recommended that a statutory Museums Board should be set up in three years' time as far as practicable to take on the operation and management responsibility of public museums. We accepted the recommendation in principle, but were of the view that it would likely take a longer time, say, five years to complete the entire transformation process. As the first step to follow up this recommendation, we are planning to set up a Provisional Museums Board in early 2008 to prepare for the establishment of the statutory Museums Board.

Development of private museums in Hong Kong

8. From the cultural policy perspective, we welcome the establishment of private museums which are conducive to the pluralism and diversity in our cultural ecology. A standard mechanism has yet to be established in the Government for supporting the operation of private museums, which should normally include a carefully deliberated system of selection, accreditation and regulation, funding arrangements as well as performance monitoring and evaluation for museums. In the absence of such a mechanism, we would have to consider any request from

individual private museums on a case-by-case basis.

9. That said, we see the need to formulate, in the longer term, a proper framework and mechanism for supporting the development of private museums in Hong Kong, which should comprise selection criteria based on cultural and historical significance and other considerations, an accreditation system, funding models, and performance monitoring and evaluation. The mechanisms for supporting the running of museums in the United Kingdom and Singapore are at **Annex B** for Members' reference. We will make reference to relevant overseas experiences when formulating such a framework and will consult stakeholders including the HA Panel when a solid proposal on this framework has been drawn up in due course.

Hong Kong Maritime Museum's Proposal

10. Officially opened in September 2005, HKMM is a private museum funded by the Hong Kong's shipping community. We understand that in 2004 HKMM secured a six-year lease with the Link at nominal rent on the ground floor with an area of about 500m² in the Murray House in Stanley, and that there is also a small Museum shop cum ticket counter for which HKMM pays full commercial rent. As of August 2007, HKMM has received about 100,000 visitors since its opening. The HKMM's current lease with the Link, which will expire in August 2010, could probably be renewed. However, HKMM considers that as the rest of Murray House is occupied by commercial tenants, there is little chance that they can secure more space for expansion.

11. In October 2007, HKMM formally submitted a proposal to the Administration to set up a private museum on the Upper Deck, Public Viewing Deck and Roof Viewing Deck of the Central Pier 8 (Pier 8) which include both the commercial areas of about 1,000m² and the common areas of about 2,300m². The major requests of HKMM's proposal are summarised as follows –

- a) To make use of the public viewing decks and the upper deck at

Pier 8 to set up the museum, with ancillary shop and café provided;

- b) To be granted a lease for at least 50 years at no or nominal rent; and
- c) To be given a matching grant of \$52 million from the Government.

12. HKMM's proposal has included three commercial areas in respect of which the Government has invited tender for tenancies. The Government was made known that it would submit a proposal just before the closing of the tenders in late September 2007. The three commercial areas include a café (50m²) at the Public Viewing Deck, a restaurant (141m²) at the Roof Viewing Deck and another restaurant (820m²) at the Upper Deck. Tenders have been received for the restaurant at the Upper Deck. The tender validity period will expire on 23 March 2008.

13. We are considering in detail the HKMM's request for support and would also need to discuss further with HKMM in good time. Our major considerations are set out below.

Preservation of maritime history as an important part of Hong Kong's history as a major port city

14. We are inclined to support and encourage the continued development of the HKMM. The primary consideration is our recognition of the historical and cultural significance of maritime history and heritage in Hong Kong as a major port city. By virtue of our rich maritime history and heritage as an international city with a deep-water port, there is great potential for Hong Kong to establish a maritime museum which is of regional significance. With the geographical advantage of a natural deep-water harbour, modern port facilities, and a well-established communication and trading network, Hong Kong was able to become a premier trading hub in the region soon after it came under the British rule in 1842. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 also boosted trades between Hong Kong and the European countries, and within a few

decades, Hong Kong had developed into a hub for oceangoing vessels and a metropolis of international standing. Setting up a museum to showcase the growth and development of Hong Kong as a major world port and top maritime centre might be of great appeal to the locals and tourists alike.

15. Although the history of Hong Kong's maritime development is also currently presented in the "Story of Hong Kong" exhibition at the Hong Kong Museum of History under LCSD, there is no overlap between the two museums' exhibitions, as their exhibits and interpretative approaches are different. Instead, the HKMM's exhibition could complement the "Story of Hong Kong" to enable visitors to explore Hong Kong's maritime history in a more interesting and comprehensive manner.

16. Many modern international cities, especially major port cities have their own maritime history museums as a distinguished component of their national history museums, an essential component of their maritime life, a major initiative to preserve their maritime heritage, and a major cultural and heritage tourism attraction to local and overseas visitors. Many of these maritime museums are set up at harbourfront sites so as to capitalise on the synergy between the contents of these museums and the real maritime environment.

Other relevant considerations

HKMM's established record of professional operation

17. Without any regular funding support from the Government, HKMM runs an effective and professional operation. It has also attracted a considerable number of visitors for the past two years and built up a sizable collection on Hong Kong's maritime history. The exhibitions are well produced which appeal to a diverse audience interested in maritime history.

Proposed waterfront location and area required

18. HKMM's proposed location at Pier 8 is a harbourfront location which is in line with the location of many other maritime museums at the

harbourfront, such as Australian National Maritime Museum, Vancouver Maritime Museum, Yokohama Maritime Museum, Galata Maritime Museum (Italy).

19. The area required by the proposed HKMM at Pier 8 is more than 6 times the size of its existing premises in Stanley, i.e. some 3,300 m² vis-à-vis the current size of some 500 m². It is broadly comparable to the following medium-size public museums in Hong Kong –

- a) Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware – GFA 2,985 m²
- b) Dr Sun Yat Sen Museum – GFA 2,560 m²
- c) Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre – GFA 4,948 m²

This area is however considerably smaller than that of many maritime museums in major port cities, many of which command more than 10,000 m².

Way Forward

20. We are actively considering HKMM's submission and shall further discuss with HKMM on any issues of concern. We will consider the HKMM's proposal on its own merit having due regard to the historical and cultural significance of maritime history and heritage in Hong Kong as a major port city.

Home Affairs Bureau
January 2008

Museums in Hong Kong
(As of December 2007)

Museums under LCSD

1. Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum (1957)
2. Hong Kong Space Museum (1980)
3. Sheung Yiu Folk Museum (1984)
4. Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware (1984)
5. Hong Kong Railway Museum (1985)
6. Sam Tung Uk Museum (1987)
7. Law Uk Folk Museum (1990)
8. Hong Kong Museum of Art (1991)
9. Hong Kong Science Museum (1991)
10. Hong Kong Museum of History (1998)
11. Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (2000)
12. Hong Kong Heritage Museum (2000)
13. Hong Kong Film Archive (2001)
14. Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre (2005)
15. Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum (2006)
16. Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre (2007)
17. Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery (2007)

Departmental Museums

18. Hong Kong Police Museum (1976)
19. Lions Nature Education Centre (1990)
20. Hong Kong Correctional Services Museum (2002)

Private Museums

21. University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong (1953)
22. Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (1971)
23. Tung Wah Museum (1971)
24. The Hong Kong Racing Museum (1996)
25. Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences (1996)
26. Po Leung Kuk Museum (1998)
27. Museum of Ethnology (2000)
28. Hong Kong Maritime Museum (2005)
29. Dr & Mrs Hung Hin Shui Museum of Chinese Medicine (2007)

Overseas government's support to museums

The United Kingdom¹

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is a department of the United Kingdom government with responsibility for culture and sport in England. It directly funds the national level museums such as the British Museum. These “national museums” operate under their respective Boards of Trustees with statutory legislation.
- The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by DCMS and is the lead strategic agency for museums, libraries and archives at regional level, which include museums operated in different modes of governance.
- Although there is no dedicated policy for private museums, they are covered by the policy on museum in general. The government sponsors culture at arm's length through a number of NDPBs. The funding is usually made for three years at one time to allow more flexibility for NDPBs to plan ahead of their development. The NDPBs, in return for the funding support, have to agree with DCMS on their aims, objectives, financial and service delivery targets and funding levels. Many museums and galleries are, in fact, run as NDPBs.
- Apart from DCMS, there are also other organisations which offer financial assistance to the museum sector, including the non-national

¹ Sources of information: Official website sites of [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#), [Museums, Libraries and Archives Council](#), [Arts and Business, UK](#) and [Museums Association](#), and also [publications](#), *The Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the United Kingdom – Accreditation Standard* (MLA, London, 2004), *The Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the United Kingdom – Application Form* (MLA, London, 2004), *Private Investment Benchmarking Survey 2005/06* (Arts and Business, London) and *Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*, 8th edition (Council of Europe / ERICarts, 2007).

and non-profit museums, through various programmes. Besides, the government is keen to promote the role of the business community in supporting the arts and cultural sector. The investment of business in the sector has been increasing in recent years. Notwithstanding this, private museums still need to generate funding from their visitors and activities, and appeal to charitable donations to sustain themselves financially.

- One of the most important developments in the museum sector in the UK is the introduction of the Museum Accreditation Scheme (MAS) in 2004 by MLA in collaboration with regional agencies for museums, libraries and archives. The MAS, which replaces the Registration Scheme for Museums and Galleries launched in 1988, aims to set minimum nationally agreed standards for UK museums and galleries and to encourage improvement through planning. Specifically, it aims to encourage all museums and galleries to achieve agreed minimum standards in museum management, user services, visitor facilities and collection management. It also aims to foster confidence in museums as bodies which hold collections in trust for society and manage public resources appropriately, and to reinforce a shared ethical basis for all bodies which meet the definition of a “museum”. Museums applying for the MAS would be assessed in four broad areas, i.e. Governance and Museum Management, User Services, Visitor Facilities and Collections Management.
- To qualify, museums must meet clear basic requirements on how they care for and document their collections, how they are governed and managed, and on the information and services they offer to their users. The MAS is overseen by the Accreditation Committee, whose members are senior museum professionals with a spread of knowledge and expertise relating to museums of all types throughout the UK.
- According to the survey conducted by MLA in 2002, the major benefits arising from the MAS as considered by the accredited museums, were the gaining of public recognition on museums, fostering of confidence amongst potential donors, improvement in

staff morale and motivation, raising of awareness of the importance of core curatorial work, and general eligibility for grant-aid and awards. The MAS will continue to be revised by MLA to ensure its relevance to museums and their users.

Singapore²

- In Singapore, the national level museums are under the management of the National Heritage Board (NHB) which is a statutory body governed by the National Heritage Board Act. The NHB's funding comes mainly from the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) which is responsible for the creative industries, arts, heritage, library, media, infocommunications and government public relations.
- In order to encourage private donations, NHB launched the Approved Museum Scheme (AMS) which is an accreditation scheme for museums that are not under the NHB to apply for the Approved Museum status. Donors who make artwork or artifact donations to an Approved Museum are eligible for double tax deduction and carrying forward unutilised tax deductions granted for their donations for a maximum of five years. Currently, there are eight Approved Museums under the AMS and all of them are either museums under the NHB or operated by a public body³. Museums eligible to apply for the Approved Museum status are museums and organisations with a dedicated and defined collection plan. Approved Museums should have a clear defined mission that promotes the understanding and appreciation of Singapore's arts, culture and heritage, and be a part of a "public body" or owned by a public body, and managed on a

² Source of information: The website of the National Heritage Board of Singapore.

³ According to NHB, a "public body" is defined to be a government ministry / department, organ of state, statutory board or arts, heritage or cultural institution incorporated as company limited by guarantee with subscribing members and Board of Directors appointed by Minister / Permanent Secretary of a ministry. Any institution incorporated in a similar way but which is not primarily arts, heritage or cultural-oriented can also be considered, if it can show that a significant part of its organization is devoted to arts, heritage or culture.

not-for-profit basis.

- NHB also launched the National Heritage Fund – Central Fund (NHF) scheme to support and encourage the development of non-profit organisations that promote Singapore’s heritage. Donors to members of NHF could enjoy double tax deduction and carry forward the unutilized tax deductions for a maximum of five years. According to NHB, organisations eligible to apply for membership of NHF include non-profit privately owned museums / galleries / facilities with non-tradable collection(s) for public accessibility and with a mission to promote heritage.
- In April 2007, the NHB launched the Heritage Industry Incentive Programme, a pilot one-year project, to upgrade private operators in the museum and heritage sector. It encourages private museums to embark on new initiatives and offers financial incentives for heritage and museum projects that help transform Singapore into a global cultural city. Under the programme, NHB aims to spur the development of new and innovative museum and heritage products, and encourage private museums to showcase Singapore’s rich cultural capital both locally and abroad.