

For discussion on
30 March 2010

Legislative Council Panel on Development

Progress Report on Heritage Conservation Initiatives and Revitalisation of the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital into the Jao Tsung-I Academy / Hong Kong Cultural Heritage under the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the progress made on a number of heritage conservation initiatives since our last report in July 2009 (Legislative Council Paper No. CB(1)2342/08-09(04)) and invites Members' views on our future work. It also seeks Members' support for the funding application for revitalising the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital into the Jao Tsung-I Academy / Hong Kong Cultural Heritage under the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme ("Revitalisation Scheme").

I. PROGRESS MADE ON HERITAGE CONSERVATION

In the Public Domain

Revitalisation Scheme

Batch I

2. Of the six projects under Batch I selected by the Advisory Committee on Revitalisation of Historic Buildings, the latest position is as follows –

- (a) **Former North Kowloon Magistracy** - Renovation works for revitalising the building into the Savannah College of Art and Design Hong Kong Campus (SCAD-HK) commenced in December 2009 and are due for completion by August 2010 in time for the accredited undergraduate programmes to start in the 2010/11 academic year;
- (b) **Old Tai O Police Station** - The project for revitalising the building into a boutique hotel was approved by the Public

Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and the Finance Committee (FC) at an estimated cost of \$66.7 million in money-of-the-day (MOD) prices on 15 June 2009 and 3 July 2009 respectively. Renovation works commenced in March 2010 and are due for completion by August 2011;

- (c) **Fong Yuen Study Hall** - The project for revitalising the building into a tourism and Chinese cultural centre cum Ma Wan residents museum was approved by the Financial Services and Treasury Bureau under delegated authority from the FC in October 2009 at an estimated cost of \$8.64 million in MOD prices. Renovation works will commence in September 2010 with a target completion date of August 2011;
- (d) **Mei Ho House and Lui Seng Chun** - The heritage impact assessments (HIAs) for the proposed revitalisation of Mei Ho House into a youth hostel by the Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association and the proposed revitalisation of Lui Seng Chun into a Chinese Medicine and Healthcare Centre by the Hong Kong Baptist University have been completed. The Antiquities and Advisory Board (AAB) was consulted on the HIAs at its meeting on 2 March 2010 and supported the proposals. The Metro Planning Committee of the Town Planning Board approved the proposed land uses for the two revitalisation projects under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) on 12 February 2010. We plan to submit details of these two proposals for Members' discussion at the Panel meeting on 27 April 2010 prior to making funding applications to the PWSC and the FC; and
- (e) **Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital** – The building cluster will be revitalised into the Jao Tsung-I Academy/Hong Kong Cultural Heritage for the promotion of Chinese culture. Details about the revitalisation project are set out in paragraphs 29 to 37 below. We would like to seek Members' support for the funding application for the project before approaching the PWSC and the FC.

Batch II

3. For Batch II of the Revitalisation Scheme, we have received 38 applications for the following five historic buildings -

Historic Buildings	Applications Received	Valid Applications
Old Tai Po Police Station	20	18
The Blue House Cluster	4	3
Former Fanling Magistracy	4	4
Old House at Wong Uk Village	5	4
Stone Houses at Hau Wong Temple New Village	5	5
Total	38	34

4. The applications propose a wide range of adaptive re-uses for the historic buildings, including museums, education centres, training institutions, “green living” facilities, hostels, restaurants, etc. The Advisory Committee on Revitalisation of Historic Buildings is assessing the applications received and we expect the assessment process to be completed by the second half of 2010.

Declaration of Monuments

5. A total of 41 waterworks facilities were declared as six groups of monuments under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance on 18 September 2009. On the same day, the Tai Tam Waterworks Heritage Trail in the Tai Tam Group of Reservoirs was established to promote public appreciation of these monuments and the history of Hong Kong's water supply. Along this trail, there are 21 waterworks historic structures ranging from valve houses, to bridges and staff quarters. A total of 10 information stations have been set up to explain the function and historic value of these monuments. On 6 November 2009, the Residence of Ip Ting-sz and the Yan Tun Kong Study Hall were also declared as monuments. The above additions have brought the total number of declared monuments in Hong Kong to 94.

Grading Exercise for 1 444 Historic Buildings

6. The AAB commenced a public consultation exercise, including

consultation with all relevant private owners and all District Councils, on 19 March 2009 on the grading exercise for 1 444 historic buildings. Information on these historic buildings has been uploaded onto the website of the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. AMO received 518 items of verbal/written comments and supplementary information from the public and owners of the buildings during the consultation exercise.

7. Based on the public comments and supplementary information received and further consultation with the expert panel, AMO has submitted the proposed gradings to the AAB for consideration. Up to 2 March 2010, 523 historic buildings have been accorded with a Grade 1, Grade 2 or Grade 3 status¹ including -

- (a) 93 buildings with Grade 1 status;
- (b) 202 buildings with Grade 2 status; and
- (c) 228 buildings with Grade 3 status.

8. AAB targets to confirm the gradings of all 1 444 buildings and consider suggestions from the public on the proposed gradings of about 100 new items within this year.

9. We will continue to promote preservation of these graded historic buildings through a number of administrative measures and under the economic incentives policy. In particular, in consultation with the AAB, we will continue with our efforts to proactively reach out to private owners to offer a wide range of assistance (including technical advice and financial assistance for maintenance as well as the offer of economic incentives for heritage-cum-development projects) to encourage and facilitate preservation of their historic buildings. We will also promote public awareness of these heritage buildings through posting information on our website (www.heritage.gov.hk) and our continuous public education and publicity efforts.

¹ Grade 1 status refers to buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible.

Grade 2 status refers to buildings of special merit; efforts should be made to selectively preserve.

Grade 3 status refers to buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable.

The above grading system is an administrative arrangement for the preservation of historic buildings.

Monitoring Mechanism for the Protection of the Historic Buildings

10. We have put in place a monitoring mechanism to better protect privately-owned declared monuments, proposed monuments, graded/proposed graded historic buildings from the threat of demolition, alteration and addition works or material changes in their uses which may affect the heritage value of these buildings. A Task Force comprising representatives from the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO), AMO, Buildings Department (BD), Lands Department (LandsD) and Planning Department (PlanD) was set up in May 2009 to this end.

11. Under the monitoring mechanism, when BD, LandsD or PlanD receive any applications/enquiries which involve a monument/proposed monument or a graded/proposed graded building, they will alert CHO and AMO immediately. CHO and AMO will then approach the owner and provide him with information on various forms of assistance available for the preservation of the building, and discuss with him possible economic incentives, on a case-by-case basis, for preserving the building. CHO has also sought the assistance of the District Offices so that if their staff are aware of any demolitions of/alterations to the monument/proposed monument or the graded/ proposed graded buildings during their normal course of duties, or if they receive any relevant complaints/reports, they will inform CHO and AMO. Detailed guidelines on the implementation of the monitoring mechanism have been issued to all relevant departments.

12. Since the monitoring mechanism was put in place, CHO and AMO had received over 110 alerts and quickly followed up with the owners to provide them with technical assistance for better protection of their historic buildings during any necessary maintenance/renovation/alteration works and discuss with them appropriate measures for preserving these historic buildings. In particular, the monitoring mechanism provides timely opportunities for CHO to explore with these owners who are interested in preservation. A notable recent example is the preservation-cum-development project at No. 179 Prince Edward Road West (details of which are set out in paragraphs 15-17 below).

In the Private Domain

Economic Incentives for Private Owners of Historic Buildings

Jessville

13. Members were briefed *vide* our last progress report (Legislative

Council Paper No. CB(1)2342/08-09(04) on the “preservation-cum-development” proposal for the Grade 3 historic building at 128 Pokfulam Road (commonly known as “Jessville”). Following several rounds of discussion between the owners and relevant government departments through the co-ordination of CHO, the owners have proposed a “preservation-cum-development” scheme which involves the construction of residential units on the site and the preservation of Jessville as a club house for the residents of the private residential units, with a reasonable degree of public access to the preserved building. The scheme has achieved an appropriate balance between heritage conservation and respect of private development right.

14. The project requires a partial uplifting of the Pokfulam Moratorium, which imposes administrative restrictions on developments requiring lease modifications because of traffic concern. The traffic impact assessment commissioned by the owners indicates that the amount of traffic generated from the proposal will be acceptable, and the Southern District Council raised no objection to the proposed partial uplifting of the Pokfulam Moratorium. On 22 September 2009, the Chief Executive-in-Council approved the partial uplifting of the Pokfulam Moratorium to facilitate the "preservation-cum-development" proposal. We are following up with the owner on the implementation of the project, including lease modifications and the public access arrangement for Jessville.

179 Prince Edward Road West

15. The four-storey shophouse at 179 Prince Edward Road West was a Grade 3 building constructed in 1937. It has front verandahs projecting out over the pavement supported on columns to form a covered walkway, and its façades are finished with Shanghai plaster and incorporate Art Deco architectural details. Following meetings with relevant departments coordinated by CHO, the owners have proposed a preservation-cum-hotel development scheme with the following key features -

- (a) the front portion of the building, which is the major part with prominent architectural features, will be fully preserved;
- (b) the rear part of the existing building, which has little heritage value, will be redeveloped into a 17-storey hotel with 50 rooms; and
- (c) the owner would make extra efforts to revitalise the preserved portion on the second floor into a display area with materials

related to the history of the building for free public access. The owner also plans to arrange free guided tours to promote public understanding of the building.

A photo of the existing building and an artistic impression of the proposed preservation-cum-development of 179 Prince Edward Road West is at **Annex A**.

16. This preservation-cum-development is a very good example of a heritage initiative from the private sector, in particular the provision for public accessibility and the promotion of built heritage. It is particularly encouraging to note the feasibility of heritage preservation for a relatively small-scale development with a site area of only about 250 square metres. The public will benefit from the accessibility to the historic building. They will not only be able to appreciate the exterior of the building from the street, but also enjoy the display area inside the building for free.

17. On 19 March 2010, the Metro Planning Committee of the Town Planning Board approved under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance the proposed land use of a hotel and a minor relaxation of the plot ratio from 9 to 10.23, which is justified on the ground of the preservation of the front portion. CHO and AMO will provide advice on conservation needs to the owner during and after the redevelopment.

Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme

18. Since the launch of the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme in August 2008 to provide financial assistance to owners of private graded historic buildings for carrying out maintenance works, we have approved nine applications as at late March 2010, involving a total grant of about \$7.2 million. These nine approved applications are -

- (a) Lo Pan Temple, Belcher's Street, Kennedy Town (Grade 1);
- (b) Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Tao Fung Shan Road, Sha Tin (Grade 2);
- (c) Jamia Mosque, Shelly Street, Sheung Wan (Grade 1);
- (d) No. 3 Bungalow, St. Stephen's College, Stanley (Grade 2);
- (e) Ancestral Hall of Shan Ha Wai (commonly known as Tsang Tai

Uk), Shan Ha Wai Village, Sha Tin (Grade 1);

- (f) Tin Hau Temple, Kam Tin, Yuen Long (Grade 3);
- (g) Hung Shing Temple, Hung Leng, Fanling (Grade 2);
- (h) Main Building of Helena May, Garden Road, Central (the exterior of the building has been declared as a monument and the interior of the building is a Grade 2 building); and
- (i) Hung Shing Temple, Ping Shan, Yuen Long (Grade 2).

19. For all the nine approved applications, we have worked out appropriate arrangement with the owners for public access to their buildings to appreciate the historic values of the buildings. Owners have also agreed that no demolition works of the buildings will be carried out within ten years from the date of the grant of financial assistance.

MAJOR PROJECTS

Revitalisation of Haw Par Mansion

20. In our last progress report (Legislative Council Paper No. CB(1)2342/08-09(04)), we informed Members of our plan to designate Haw Par Mansion (HPM) for commercial uses by inviting proposals through open tender instead of putting it under the Revitalisation Scheme. The estimated up-front investment of the project was in the order of \$70 million, of which \$45 million would be for basic upgrading and renovation works that are required irrespective of the adaptive re-use of the premises.

21. In view of the positive prevailing economic climate, we intend to carry out a public tender for the revitalisation of HPM as a commercial venture without any Government funding for the basic upgrading and renovation works. We will keep Members posted on the progress of this initiative.

Former Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road

22. On 19 March 2010, the Development Bureau and the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau invited interested organisations to submit proposals on the transformation of the Former Police Married Quarters Site on Hollywood Road (PMQ) into a distinct creative industries centre. This constitutes one of the eight projects under the “Conserving Central” initiative.

Under a new partnership model, Government will finance the core facilities of this project (estimated to cost about \$ 340 million), which will comprise the essential structural and building services works, under the Public Works Programme. The successful applicant will be responsible for the capital costs for any additional renovation works and interior decoration, as well as the envisioning and operation of the creative industries centre.

23. We envisage that the centre will comprise studios for artists, designers from different creative sectors, as well as exhibition space and galleries for the display and sales of creative products which will help attract patronage to the site. It will provide dedicated space for creative establishments and be used as a venue for activities to promote creative industries and foster a creative environment within the community. It may also include lodgings for visiting artists to facilitate on-site creative activities and collaboration among diverse talent groups. In addition, there will be an exhibition area for displaying relics of the Central School and interpreting the history of the PMQ and the Central School as well as landscaped open space. The deadline for submission of proposals is noon, 18 June 2010. The Advisory Committee on Revitalisation of Historic Buildings, augmented by creative industries expertise, will select the successful applicant. We expect that the Government works will be completed in the fourth quarter of 2013 and the creative industries centre will start operation in early 2014. More details on this invitation for proposal exercise can be obtained from our heritage website (www.heritage.gov.hk). We will keep Members posted on further developments of this project.

Publicity and Public Education

24. In 2009, we have organised a series of publicity and public education activities targetting at students and youths as well as for the general public. Notable examples include -

- (a) a historic buildings drawing competition-cum-exhibition organised from March to May 2009, attracting the participation of around 560 children and teenagers. The winning entries were printed on postcards and distributed to all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong for a free postage day on 13 June 2009, which coincided with China's Cultural Heritage Day;
- (b) free guided heritage tours for schools and youth groups at the Central Police Station Compound organised from April to August, and October to December 2009, with a total attendance of over 5 500;

- (c) free guided heritage tours for the public to the Tai Tam Waterworks Heritage Trail organised from October to December 2009, with a total attendance of about 1 000;
- (d) an heritage photo exhibition organised with the Royal Asiatic Society at the Central Police Station Compound and Heritage Discovery Centre from September to November 2009, with a total attendance of about 23 500;
- (e) a Symposium on the Revitalisation of Urban Heritage Buildings and Sites by the Private Sector organised in collaboration with the University of Hong Kong in November 2009.

25. We continue to keep the public informed of developments on the heritage front and our heritage conservation work through -

- (a) our dedicated heritage website (www.heritage.gov.hk), which has received a total of 718 965 visits as at the end of February 2010 since its launch in January 2008; and
- (b) our bimonthly heritage newsletter, “活化 @Heritage”, which is distributed both electronically and in printed form (with a circulation of 13 000 copies per issue).

26. In 2010, our publicity and public education efforts will focus on community outreach. In the first quarter of 2010, we have organised West Kowloon Architecture and Cultural Tours in support of the Hong Kong Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture 2009. About 500 members of the public participated in appreciating historic buildings and old shops in Tsim Sha Tsui and Yau Ma Tei. We also organised, in conjunction with the Central and Western District Council, an exhibition on Conserving Central at the International Finance Centre and the Times Square respectively from December 2009 to March 2010 to introduce the eight innovative projects under the “Conserving Central” initiative.

27. We will organise the following activities in the remaining months of 2010 -

- (a) free guided heritage walking tours for low-income families;
- (b) free guided Tai Tam waterworks heritage tours (Part II);

- (c) free guided heritage tours for the disabled groups;
- (d) a Heritage Tourism Expo;
- (e) a Heritage symposium; and
- (f) production of a teaching kit on heritage conservation for the New Secondary School Liberal Studies curriculum.

28. We envisage that the activities that have been held and will be held in 2010 will attract over 140 000 participants.

II. REVITALISATION OF THE FORMER LAI CHI KOK HOSPITAL INTO THE JAO TSUNG-I ACADEMY/HONG KONG CULTURAL HERITAGE

Background

29. In February 2008, we invited NPOs with charitable status under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) to apply for adaptive re-use of selected government-owned historic buildings in the form of social enterprise under the Revitalisation Scheme. Following a vigorous and competitive process, and upon the advice of the Advisory Committee on Revitalisation of Historic Buildings, we selected successful applicants for six historic buildings, including the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital, under Batch I of the Revitalisation Scheme, and reported the selection results to the LegCo Panel on Development *vide* LegCo Paper No. CB(1)816/08-09(03). The Hong Kong Institution for Promotion of Chinese Culture (HKIPCC) was selected to undertake a project for the preservation and revitalisation of the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital into the Hong Kong Cultural Heritage for the promotion of Chinese culture. In honour of the world-renowned eminent scholar in Chinese culture, the Professor Jao Tsung-I, the building will be named as Jao Tsung-I Academy/Hong Kong Cultural Heritage (the Academy) after revitalisation as announced by the Administration on 30 December 2009.

The Project

The Building

30. The Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital was built between 1921 and 1924 as a prison. Subsequently, it was used as a hospital and then as a health care centre before its closure in mid-2004. The site has been left vacant since then. The compound comprises a cluster of over 20 buildings of the

Utilitarian style, spread over three zones (namely the lower, middle and upper zones). Most of the buildings are installed with Chinese double-tile roofing system, showing influence of local Chinese craftsmanship. The buildings in the compound have been accorded a Grade 3 status in recognition of their architectural merit and the historical significance of the site.

The Project Scope

31. The scope of the revitalisation project comprises the restoration and revitalisation of the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital for accommodating the following facilities –

- (a) a reception, ticketing/front desk and shop;
- (b) two exhibition halls;
- (c) a performance hall;
- (d) covered outdoor performance stage and outdoor activities area;
- (e) a recreation centre;
- (f) two information centres and a reading room;
- (g) 20 studios/classrooms;
- (h) 89 hostel rooms;
- (i) two cafés/restaurants;
- (j) a kitchen; and
- (k) other ancillary facilities, e.g. lifts, toilets, storage, plant rooms, etc.

A site plan and some artistic impression of the Academy are at **Annex B**.

The Benefits

32. The revitalisation project will generate the following benefits -

- (a) The project aims to provide a good environment with natural

landscape in the urban area for visitors to learn more about Chinese culture and history, in reflection of Professor Jao's dedication to education work in the field of Chinese culture and arts. The Academy will become a unique cultural landmark for both local citizens and tourists;

- (b) We expect that the Academy will attract more visitors to the area and brings vitality to the local economy. To enable the public to appreciate this beautiful cluster of historic buildings, arrangements will be made to facilitate public access to the exhibition areas, information centre and reading room, shop, Chinese gardens, covered outdoor performance stage and outdoor activities area for free. The other areas, including unoccupied hostel rooms, studios, classrooms and performance hall, will also be open to the public during guided tours and on open days;
- (c) HKIPCC will operate the Academy as a social enterprise, develop new programmes or workshops with local operators as necessary, and promote traditional Chinese culture. The Institution will organise Chinese cultural courses, workshops, performances, tours and conferences. These activities will promote traditional Chinese culture to the local community, especially young people. The hostel rooms will provide accommodation for overseas exchange groups and individuals participating in programmes or workshops held at the Academy; and
- (d) To allow the public an early opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the Academy, HKIPCC will commence the operation of the Academy in two phases. Renovation works for the lower zone, including the exhibition halls for displaying Professor Jao's art collection, his achievements and the history of the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital, will commence in October 2010 for completion by August 2011. The lower zone will then commence operation in the fourth quarter of 2011. Renovation works for the remaining parts of the site will commence in October 2010 for completion by June 2012. These remaining parts of the site will commence operation in the third quarter of 2012.

Project Estimate

33. The estimated capital cost of the project is about \$240.7 million² in September 2009 prices. We intend to seek funding approval from the PWSC on 19 May 2010 and the FC on 11 June 2010 to enable renovation works to start as early as possible. The cost of structural repairs of the historic building in the site, as well as the maintenance of the slopes not affected by the revitalisation works, will be borne by the Government. HKIPCC is responsible for the cost of the other maintenance works for the historic building and the site.

Heritage Implications

34. This project is subject to a HIA in accordance with the prevailing requirements for heritage conservation. HKIPCC consulted the AAB on the HIA report, which is in the form of a Conservation Management Plan, at its meeting on 27 October 2009 and received its support. HKIPCC will ensure that the construction works, mitigation measures, future maintenance and interpretation of the site history to be carried out will comply with the requirements stipulated in the HIA report.

Public consultation

35. We reported the selection results for Batch I of the Revitalisation Scheme, including the successful application for the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital, to the Panel on 24 February 2009. Members generally supported the Scheme and the Administration's efforts to revitalise these historic buildings.

36. As mentioned in paragraph 34 above, HKIPCC consulted the AAB on the HIA for the revitalisation project on 27 October 2009 and received its support.

37. HKIPCC consulted the Sham Shui Po District Council on the project on 5 May 2009 and received its support.

ADVICE SOUGHT

38. Members are invited to note the latest position of various heritage conservation initiatives and provide comments on our future efforts.

² There may be slight adjustments to the final estimated capital cost to be submitted to the PWSC for funding approval on 19 May 2010.

Members are also invited to support the funding application for the revitalisation of the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital into the Jao Tsung-I Academy / Hong Kong Cultural Heritage.

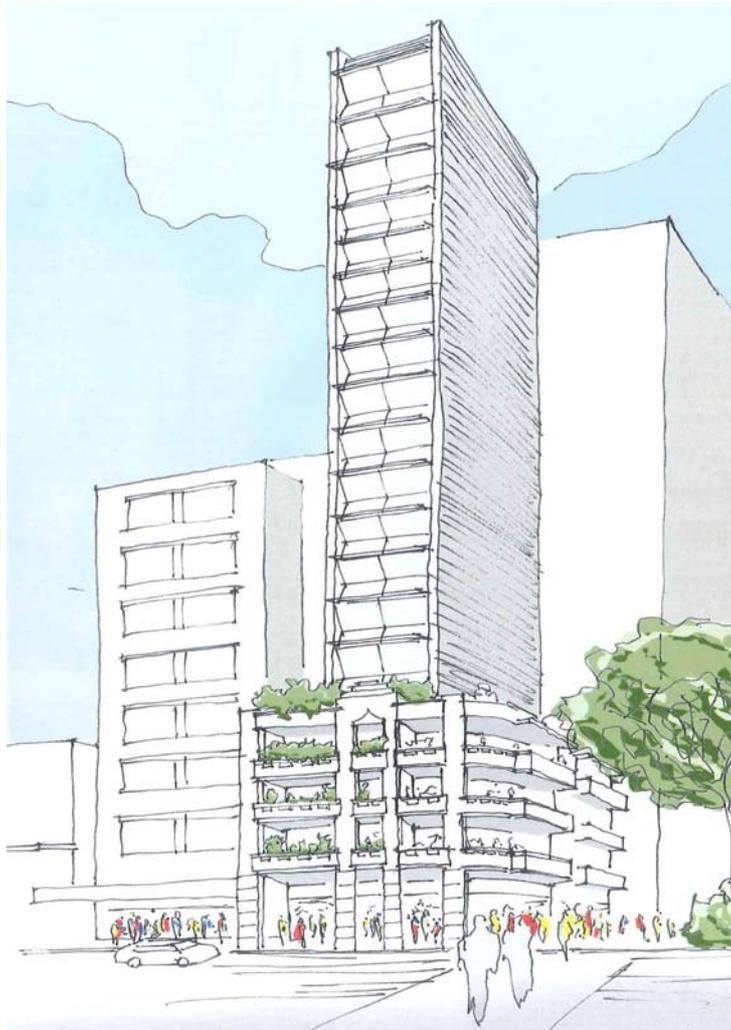
Development Bureau
March 2010

179 Prince Edward Road West

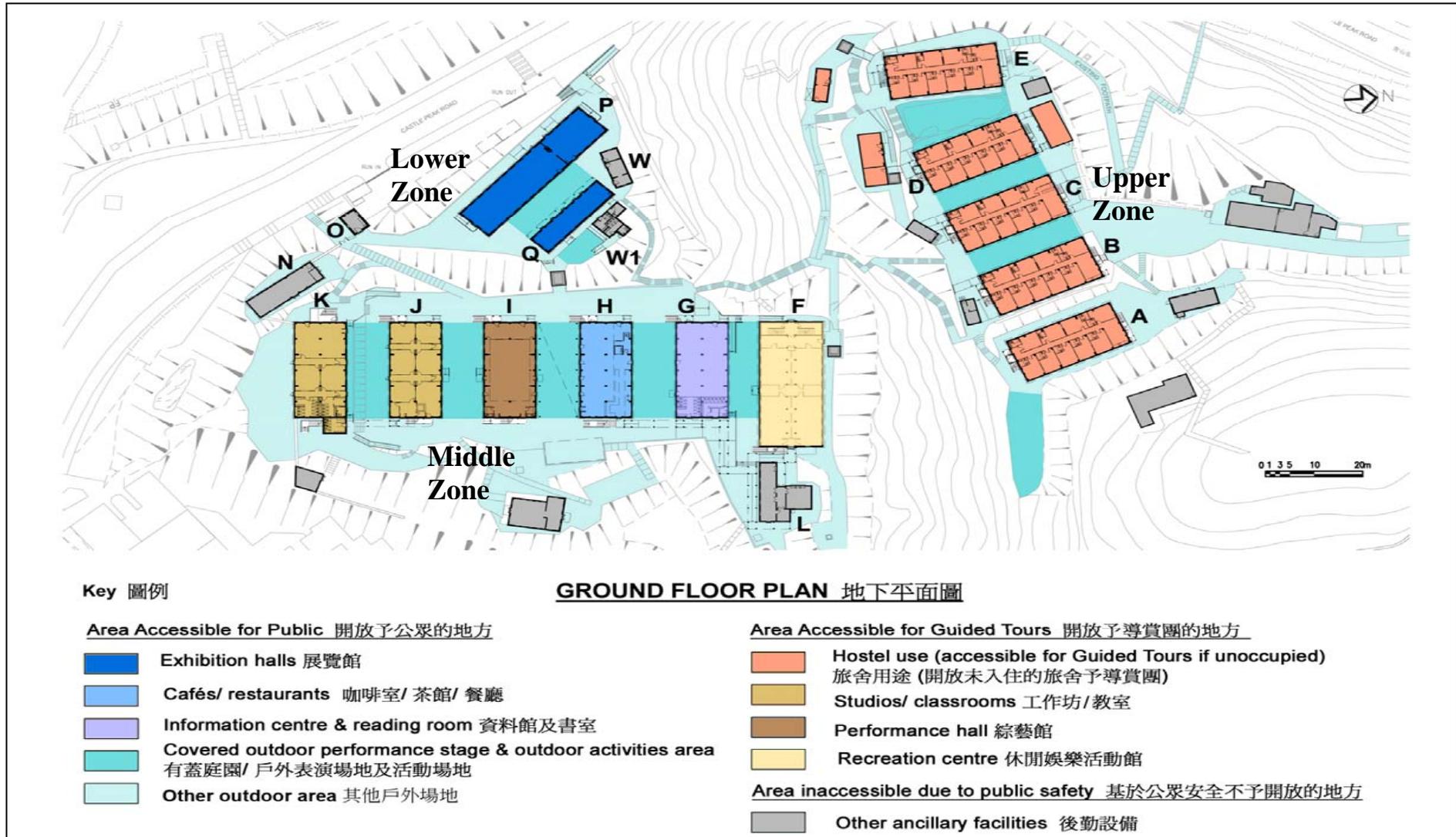
Front view of the existing shophouse



Artistic impression of the preservation-cum-development that adopts the Chinese concertina lantern design for the façade



Jao Tsung-I Academy / Hong Kong Cultural Heritage (the Academy)
 Site Plan



Artistic Impression of the Academy



Overall view of the Academy



Chinese Garden



Covered outdoor performance stage & outdoor activities area