Legislative Council Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services

<u>Conversion of the former French Mission Building for</u> <u>accommodation use by law-related organisations and related purposes</u>

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the proposed conversion works for the former French Mission Building (FMB) for use by law-related organisations (LROs) and related purposes, after the Department of Justice (DoJ) takes over the site.

THE PROJECT

2. The FMB is located at No. 1, Battery Path, Central. It was most recently used as the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal (CFA) from 1997. The CFA was relocated from the FMB to the old Supreme Court building at No. 8, Jackson Road, Central in September 2015. Currently, the FMB is temporarily used by the Judiciary as office. As announced in January 2014, DoJ will take over the FMB after completion of necessary procedures, and provide space in the building for use by LROs and related purposes after carrying out the necessary renovation and refurbishment works, on top of the allocation of certain space to them in the West Wing of the former Central Government Offices (CGO), in order to facilitate them to develop their services in Hong Kong¹.

¹ In July 2014, we briefed the Panel on the provision of space to LROs in the CGO West Wing and FMB. As foreshadowed in the paper submitted to the Panel in July 2014, a Committee on Provision of Space in the Legal Hub (the Committee) chaired by the Secretary for Justice has been set up to consider matters relating to the provision of space to LROs in the Legal Hub, including inter alia consideration of applications submitted by LROs based on assessment of the relative merits of the prospective organisations. Under Stage 1 of the application exercise, a total of 25 applications were received. The Committee met last month and the recommended LROs were confirmed. We have already written to the recommended LROs, and the outcome of the application exercise will be announced after the LROs have confirmed their acceptance of our offer of space. Separately, having considered the views of the international arbitration

3. The proposed arrangement is conducive to achieving the policy objective of enhancing Hong Kong's position as a hub for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region as stated in the Policy Addresses from 2013 to 2017 as well as the Financial Secretary's 2014 Budget Speech. It will also enable the building and the former CGO² to form a Legal Hub, which is commensurate with the status and historical background of the building as a declared monument.

THE PROPOSED WORKS

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4. The project site of the FMB occupies an area of about 1 360 square meters. It is a four-storey building on an elevated ground, roughly rectangular in shape, with an internal courtyard at the centre. A site and location plan is at **Enclosure 1** and an artist's impression for the project is at **Enclosure 2**. The proposed scope of works is as follows –

(a) To renovate and refurbish the building to meet the needs of LROs and related purposes;

community (including the survey results of the Global Arbitration Review which gave top rankings to the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC)'s facilities at the Two Exchange Square premises) and the request of the HKIAC, the Government has recently decided that the HKIAC will continue to stay at its existing premises instead of moving to the Legal Hub. In light of that decision and with the receipt of new interest in the provision of space in the Legal Hub, the Committee has recommended that a supplementary application exercise be conducted immediately, following the conclusion of the Stage 1 exercise, to speed up the development of the Legal Hub. The application exercise will commence shortly.

Looking further ahead, after the completion of the supplementary exercise, it is the plan of the Committee to launch a further Stage 2 application exercise in around 2018.

The renovation works for the Main and East Wings of the former CGO were completed and some offices of the DoJ have been relocated there since the third quarter of 2015. As for the West Wing, with Legislative Council's funding approval in July 2016, renovation works commenced in October 2016 and upon completion, the West Wing would be used to accommodate DoJ's offices that cannot be relocated to the Main and East Wings as well as for office use by LROs with related common facilities. To cater for the latest accommodation need of DoJ, 6/F of the building, originally planned for use by LROs but could now be released in light of the latest decision that the HKIAC would not be relocated to the Legal Hub, will be used by DoJ instead.

- (b) To upgrade the building in order to comply with the prevailing statutory requirements without compromising the conservation principles; and
- (c) To restore the building to the French Mission era dating back to 1919 based on available records, while the history of the CFA will be displayed by means of public interpretation so as to enhance the understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the building.

5. The FMB was declared a monument on 14 September 1989. To preserve the heritage value of the building, we have carried out a heritage impact assessment as detailed in paragraphs 6 to 7 below and have taken steps to minimise the impact on or alteration to the original building in planning the conversion works for the building. The key proposed works for conservation and conversion, as well as enhancement to facilitate future office use by LROs and related purposes, are set out below.

- (a) <u>Conservation works</u>
 - (i) Retain the original layout at the time the FMB was built in 1919 as far as practicable. New door openings will be avoided unless absolutely necessary for the purpose of complying with the statutory requirements of fire escape;
 - (ii) Remove interior partitions of later interventions to restore the original layout as far as possible;
 - (iii) Re-open the existing enclosed southeast-facing verandahs on G/F, 1/F and 2/F to restore the original façade design;
 - (iv) Restore the parapet walls at the internal courtyard on 1/F and 2/F previously dismantled for the installation of the existing lift in 1997 by taking down the lift (serving only G/F and 1/F), based on available old architectural drawings and photos with reference to the existing parapet walls at the internal courtyard;
 - (v) Restore the existing courtroom on 1/F to the original setting and design of the former Chapel based on available records. Remove the existing later-added court furniture, wall furring and carpet to reveal the original finishes; and

(vi) Preserve one of the cells on LG/F and the existing concrete staircase leading down to the cell area for public interpretation.

(b) <u>Conversion works to comply with statutory requirements and meet</u> <u>operational needs of the users</u>

- (i) Modify the gradient of one existing accessible ramp and add one demountable ramp for universal access;
- (ii) Add a new lift to meet the prevailing requirements of barrierfree access for serving all floors. The location of the new lift, which has experienced various interventions throughout the history of the building and thus has comparatively lower heritage significance, is carefully chosen. It is also a less prominent location such that the major building layout will not be disturbed. For the spatial arrangement of the building, the location of the new lift is close to the access point for persons with disability to facilitate convenient access;
- (iii) Add a new staircase to meet the prevailing requirements of the means of escape;
- (iv) Upgrade the existing staircases, balustrades and window sills to meet the requirements for barrier-free access, means of escape and protective barriers;
- (v) Provide fire barrier such as fire rated doors and fire dampers to form fire separations to meet the requirements for fireresisting construction;
- (vi) Replace the existing skylight covering the internal courtyard by a new one; and
- (vii) Add a new lightning pole on the flat roof to meet the prevailing statutory requirements.
- (c) <u>Structural strengthening works</u>

The existing building generally complies with the data in record drawings. Comprehensive investigation works are proposed to reconfirm the condition, which have to be carried out after the site is vacated and before commencement of site works. Strengthening works would be carried out where necessary.

(d) <u>Refurbishment works</u>

In view of the technical requirements and constraints for carrying out refurbishment works in a monument building and the interface with the overall renovation works, refurbishment works to meet operational needs will also be carried out under this project for areas to be occupied by LROs as well as communal facilities so as to facilitate future use of the building.

HERITAGE IMPLICATIONS

6. The current structure is the third generation of the building on the same site³. The Architectural Services Department (ArchSD), as the works agent, has engaged a heritage consultant to conduct an assessment of the heritage impact of the proposed works on this site of cultural heritage and to devise mitigation measures if adverse impact is unavoidable.

³ The first generation was a two-storey building completed in 1841 occupying the exact same lot, and it was among one of the first houses completed after the establishment of the Victoria City. It was originally intended to be used as the personal residence of Mr. A.R. Johnston, then Deputy Superintendent of Trade of the British Government, who was sometime put in charge of the administration of Hong Kong before the first Governor formally resumed duty as such. The house was rented as a temporary residence for the first Governor Sir Henry Pottinger between 1843 and 1844.

In 1860, the building was reconstructed into a three-storey building with a basement and two corner towers, which was the second generation of the building on the same lot, used by private companies and the Russian Consulate as office and subsequently leased by the Government for use as offices between 1897 and 1911.

In 1915, the French *Mission Etrangeres de Paris* ("the French Mission") purchased the house from the hands of a Jewish merchant. The First Stone of the new building on the same foundation of the site was laid on 24 March 1917. The building was officially in use on 27 April 1919, marking the beginning of a new base of a Far East venture by this group of Catholic Fathers from France. This transformation of the building marked the third generation of the building on the same lot, which is the building on the site today. The French Mission and the Government signed a contract for the transaction of the FMB on 23 December 1952. Since 1953, various structural alterations were made to adapt the building for use by different Government departments.

7. The impact assessment concluded that the project will restore the original atmosphere of the FMB and its surrounding area, enhancing the public interpretation of the monument, and thus the proposed works are beneficial to the monument.

8. The key Character Defining Elements identified, as set out below, will be preserved, repaired or reinstated with minimum intervention so that the heritage value of the building will be observed and respected without compromising the significance of the heritage place (photos showing the features concerned are set out in **Enclosure 3**) –

- (a) Setting and external landscape
 - (i) The setting of the building built on the elevated platform supported by retaining walls;
 - (ii) The setting and layout of the open space; and
 - (iii) Metal gate with granite pillars topped by urns, red brick parapet wall with stone balconies and urn-shaped balustrades, granite stairs with patterned landing, external granite retaining walls, and granite stone with inscriptions of "38 HEC".
- (b) Exterior
 - (i) Building façades (including granite courses, fair-faced brick walls, architectural features such as pediments, classical orders, string courses and decorative plasterworks and the like);
 - (ii) Verandahs, balconies, timber-framed windows, timber shutters and associated ironmongeries, semi-circular window opening with decorative metal window grille, high level semi-circular arched window;
 - (iii) Granite niche and foundation stone;
 - (iv) Cast iron downpipes with stylised hopper;
 - (v) Main entrance with granite double columned portico and granite steps, side entrance with granite door surround, steps and cartouche above, and side entrance on LG/F; and

- (vi) Cupola with lantern atop, turret and chimney stacks on the flat roof.
- (c) Interior
 - (i) General spatial organisation and building structure;
 - (ii) Main circulation area including main entrance lobby, side entrance lobby, entrance corridor, hallways and major corridors;
 - (iii) Internal courtyard surrounded by colonnades with classical features, timber-framed windows, and void with metal balustrade on G/F;
 - (iv) Former Chapel including the original spatial arrangement, domed ceiling with oculus, decorative plasterworks, and original flooring of patterned square and hexagonal mosaic tiles;
 - (v) Hardwood staircases, staircase from G/F to LG/F, and concrete staircase;
 - (vi) Finishes including plastered walls, decorative plasterworks, decorative ceiling moulding, timber plank flooring, mosaic tile flooring, encaustic tile flooring and cement tile flooring;
 - (vii) Timber paneled doors, timber-framed French doors to verandahs, timber-framed circular window, circular window opening and timber moulded skirting;
 - (viii)Fireplace with timber mantelpiece, tiled surround and metal inset; fireplace with marble mantelpiece and surround; and
 - (ix) Former cell units on LG/F.

9. Under Section 6 of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53), a permit is required from the Antiquities Authority (i.e. the Secretary for Development) for carrying out works in the declared monument. ArchSD will follow the statutory requirement of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance in taking forward the project. Moreover, a Conservation Management Plan, detailed specifications, works drawings of the proposed works and other relevant information will be submitted to the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) for approval before commencement of works. Monitoring checks and

surveys will be conducted under the supervision of a heritage consultant engaged by ArchSD during the construction period.

10. Although the FMB will mainly be used as office area of LROs, we will liaise with LROs concerned to open up some designated areas for public access and interpretation on scheduled days in future provided that the daily operation of LROs will not be affected. We will examine and discuss with the AMO the appropriate mode and arrangement in this respect.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The proposed conversion works in the FMB constitute a designated project under Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499) and an Environmental Permit (EP) is required for its construction.

12. Having regard to the project profile prepared and submitted by DoJ, the Director of Environmental Protection was satisfied that the environmental impacts of the works concerned could meet the requirements of the Technical Memorandum on Environmental Impact Assessment Process. With the consent of the Secretary for the Environment, the permission to apply directly for an EP was granted on 27 May 2016 and the EP was issued on 26 July 2016. DoJ shall implement the mitigation measures as set out in the EP and comply with any requirements therein accordingly.

For short-term environmental impacts during construction, we 13. will control noise, dust, and site run-off to levels within the established standards and guidelines through implementation of environmental mitigation measures, such as the use of silenced construction equipment and noise barriers to reduce noise generation, water-spraying to reduce emission of fugitive dust, and proper treatment of site run-off before discharge. To protect the internal structure of the monument and to further minimise construction noise and dust impacts, only hand-held power tools and hand-held manual tools will be used for carrying out the internal works of the Project. We will also carry out environmental monitoring and audit programme to ensure that these recommended mitigation measures and good site practices will be properly implemented. We have included in the overall project estimates the cost to implement the environmental mitigation measures, including the environmental monitoring and audit programme.

14. As regards waste management of the project, we have considered measures to reduce the generation of construction waste where possible at the planning and design stages. In addition, we will require the contractor to reuse inert construction waste on site or in other suitable construction sites as far as possible in order to minimise the disposal of inert construction waste at public fill reception facilities⁴. We will encourage the contractor to maximise the use of recycled/recyclable inert construction waste, and the use of non-timber formwork to further reduce the generation of construction waste.

15. At the construction stage, we will require the contractor to submit for approval a plan setting out the waste management measures, which will include appropriate mitigation means to avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle inert construction waste. We will ensure that the day-to-day operations on site comply with the approved plan. We will require the contractor to separate the inert portion from non-inert construction waste on site for disposal at appropriate facilities. We will control the disposal of inert construction waste and non-inert construction waste at public fill reception facilities and landfills respectively through a trip-ticket system.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. The estimated cost of the project is about \$234.2 million in money-of-the-day prices. We estimate that the annual recurrent expenditure arising from the project would be in the region of \$13.4 million.

ENERGY CONSERVATION, GREEN AND RECYCLED FEATURES

17. This project will adopt various forms of energy efficient features and renewable energy technologies, including in particular –

(a) high efficiency air-cooled chiller with variable speed drive;

(b) brushless direct current motor for fan coil units; and

(c) solar powered light fittings.

⁴ Public fill reception facilities are specified in Schedule 4 to the Waste Disposal (Charges for Disposal of Construction Waste) Regulation (Cap. 354N). Disposal of inert construction waste in public fill reception facilities requires a licence to be issued by the Director of Civil Engineering and Development.

LAND ACQUISITION

18. The project does not require any land acquisition.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

19. An information note on the proposed conversion works had been submitted to the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) which was followed by a site visit by AAB members in February 2016. AAB members noted the proposed works and had no particular comment.

20. We consulted the Central and Western District Council on 10 March 2016 about the proposed project. District Council members had no in-principle objection to the project.

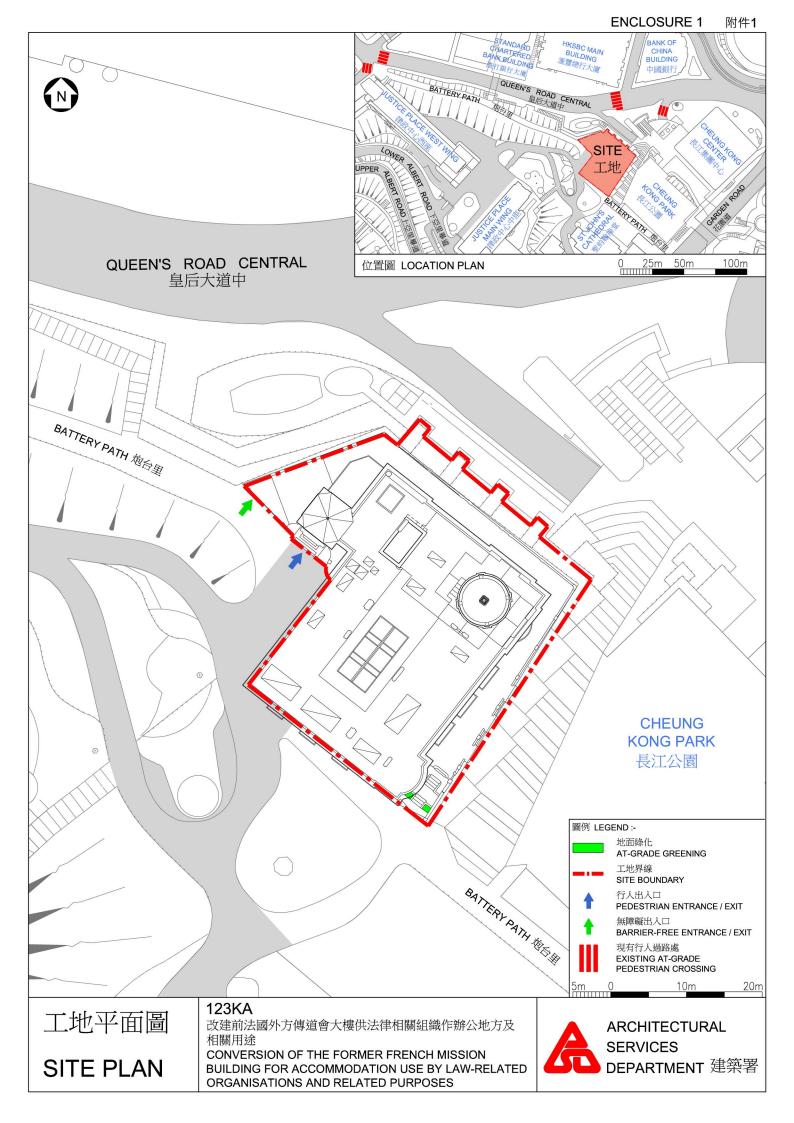
PROJECT PROGRAMME

21. Subject to Members' comments, we plan to submit the funding application to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration, and the Finance Committee for funding approval in the second quarter of 2017. Subject to funding approval by the Legislative Council, we anticipate that the renovation works will commence in the fourth quarter of 2017 for completion by the first quarter of 2020.

ADVICE SOUGHT

22. Members are invited to comment on the proposed works.

Department of Justice February 2017





從皇后大道中望向建築物的外觀 VIEW OF THE BUILDING FROM QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL

123KA

構思圖

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

改建前法國外方傳道會大樓供法律相關組織作辦公地方及相關用途 CONVERSION OF THE FORMER FRENCH MISSION BUILDING FOR ACCOMMODATION USE BY LAW-RELATED ORGANISATIONS AND RELATED PURPOSES



Key Identified Character Defining Elements (CDEs) 主要的別具特色的元素

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
(a)	Setting and External Landscape 環境及外	下部景觀
(i)	The setting of the building built on the elevated platform supported by retaining walls 大樓建於高台上並由護土牆承托	
(ii)	The setting and layout of the open space 露天空地的環境及布局	
(iii)	urn-shaped balustrades, granite stairs with and granite stone with inscriptions of "38 H	主、紅磚矮牆連甕形欄杆石露台、連有圖案平台的

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
	• Red brick parapet wall with stone balconies and urn-shaped balustrades 紅磚矮牆連甕形欄杆石露台	
	• Granite stairs with patterned landing 連有圖案平台的花崗石樓梯	
	• External granite retaining walls 外圍花崗石護土牆	
	• Granite stone with inscriptions of "38 HEC" 刻有「38 HEC」字樣的花崗石塊	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
(b)	Exterior 室外	
(i)	Building Façades 建築物外牆	
	• Granite courses 花崗石牆基	
	• Fair-faced brick walls 砌面平滑的磚牆	
	 Pediments 楣飾 triangular pediments 三角形楣飾 broken segmental-arched pediment with two Doric pilasters underneath 缺口弧形拱楣飾及兩根多利克式 壁柱 	
	• Classical orders 古典柱式	
	• String courses 帶飾	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
	• Decorative plasterworks 裝飾灰塑	
(ii)	 Verandahs and balconies 遊廊及露台 with Doric and Ionic columns and decorative balustrades, and trapezoidal balconies 由多利克及愛奧尼亞柱式、富裝 節性的欄杆及呈梯形的露台組成 with brick arcade supported on granite columns accessible by granite steps on LG/F 地下低層花崗石級通往花崗石柱 支撐的磚造拱形遊廊 	
	 Timber-framed windows, timber shutters and associated ironmongeries 木框窗戶、木製百葉窗及金屬窗扣 	
	 Semi-circular window opening with decorative metal window grille 有金屬窗花綴飾的半圓形窗戶 	
	 High level semi-circular arched window 半圓拱高窗 	(1919) (2015)

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
(iii)	Granite niche and foundation stone 花崗石壁龕及基石	
(iv)	Cast iron downpipes with stylised hopper 鑄鐵雨水管連別具風格的雨水斗	
(v)	granite door surround, steps and cartouche	ed portico and granite steps, side entrance with above, and side entrance on LG/F, 設有花崗石飾邊、石級及上方卷邊橢圓形牌匾的
	 Main entrance with granite double columned portico and granite steps 設有花崗石雙柱廊及花崗石級的主 入口 	
	 Side entrance with granite door surround, steps and cartouche above 設有花崗石飾邊、石級及上方卷邊 橢圓形牌匾的側入口 	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
	• Side entrance on LG/F 地下低層的側入口	
(vi)	Flat roof profile with chimneys, cupola and the turret 建有煙囪、圓頂閣及角塔的平屋頂	
	• Cupola with lantern atop 圓頂閣連小塔飾頂	
	• Octagonal turret 八角形角塔	
	• Chimney stacks 煙囪	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
(c)	Interior 室内	
(i)	General spatial organisation and building s 整體空間布局及建築結構	tructure
	• General spatial organisation 整體空間布局	
	• Building structure 建築結構	
(ii)	Main circulation area including main entrance lobby, side entrance lobby, entrance corridor, hallways and major corridors 主要通道,包括主入口大堂、側入口大堂、入口走廊、門廳以及主要走廊	
	• Main entrance lobby 主入口大堂	
	• Side entrance lobby 側入口大堂	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
	• Entrance corridor 入口走廊	
	• Hallways 門廳	
	• Major corridors 主要走廊	
(iii)	Internal courtyard surrounded by colonnades with classical features, timber-framed windows, and void with metal balustrades on G/F 內庭院四周具古典特色的柱廊、木框窗 戶及地下設有金屬欄杆的通風空間	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
(iv)	Former Chapel including the original spatial arrangement, domed ceiling with oculus, decorative plasterworks, and original flooring of patterned square and hexagonal mosaic tiles 前小教堂,包括原有空間布局、設有眼 洞天窗的圓拱型天花、裝飾灰塑,以及 原有以正方形及六角形馬賽克地磚整 合的圖案地面	
(v)	Staircases 樓梯	
	• Hardwood staircases 硬木樓梯	
	 Staircase from G/F to LG/F 地下至地下低層的樓梯 	
	• Concrete staircase 混凝土樓梯	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
(vi)	Finishes 飾面	
	 Plastered walls and decorative plasterworks 批盪牆身及裝飾灰塑 	
	• Decorative ceiling moulding 天花裝飾灰塑	
	• Timber plank flooring 木地板	
	• Mosaic tile flooring 馬賽克地磚	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
	• Encaustic tile flooring 飾面地磚	
	• Cement tile flooring 水泥地磚	
(vii)	Timber paneled doors, timber-framed Frend window, circular window opening and timb 木鑲板門、通往遊廊的木框法式門、木	
	• Timber paneled doors 木鑲板門	
	 Timber-framed French doors to verandahs 通往遊廊的木框法式門 	
	• Timber-framed circular window 木框圓形窗	

No. 號碼	CDEs of former French Mission Building 前法國外方傳道會大樓的別具特色的 元素	Photo 相片
	• Circular window opening 圓形窗戶	
	• Timber moulded skirting 木飾線條牆腳線	
(viii)	Fireplace 壁爐	
	 Fireplace with timber mantelpiece, tiled surround and metal inset 壁爐連木製壁爐台、瓷磚飾邊及金 屬嵌入物 	
	• Fireplace with marble mantelpiece and surround 壁爐連雲石壁爐台及飾邊	
(ix)	Former cell units on LG/F 地下低層的前囚室	