

# ICOMOS



## International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage

13 November 2012

Mr. CY Lueng

Chief Executive,

Hong Kong SAR Government

Office of the Chief Executive

Central Government Offices

Tamar, Hong Kong

By Email: [ceo@ceo.gov.hk](mailto:ceo@ceo.gov.hk)

Ref: Reply re Proposed redevelopment, Central Government Offices West Wing Hong Kong.

Dear Mr. Lueng,

In the interest of continuing the professional dialogue about this important heritage site, we write to once again seek your reconsideration of the future conservation of the West Wing of the Hong Kong Central Government Offices, following our letters of 17 August 2012 to Mr Tony Li, and 13 June 2012 to Mr Donald Tsang Yam-kuen and issuing of the international Heritage Alert, posted 13 June 2012.

We have reviewed with interest the numerous on-line submissions received regarding the conservation of this important government building complex. Once again, our analysis of the documentation and our research confirms that the West Wing of the CGO is a vital and integral part of the whole CGO complex and cannot be treated differentially in terms of its grading or adaptation. It was designed as one entity, as a demonstration of the concept of providing centralised government services and administration in a single accessible location and it has proved to be adaptable and functionally relevant to date.

The submissions indicate that for many people in Hong Kong, the building complex has particular social (intangible) significance, as well as physical heritage values through its form, function, fabric and location. The adaptive re-use proposals already developed for the central wing demonstrate the sustainability for further functionality of the whole complex for ongoing use by future generations.

The AAB assessment that rated the whole site as being of heritage significance Grade 1, yet differentially graded the Main Wing as Grade 1, the East Wing as Grade 1, and the West Wing as Grade 2 is not logically reasoned, and deserves careful evaluation, but even so, the fact that the whole site is proposed to be Grade 1 makes it clear that the West Wing is vital to understanding the heritage of the whole complex.

Once again, we respectfully suggest that all efforts should be strongly pursued to conserve this complex. The CGO was conceived as a whole, designed as a whole and indeed built as a whole, though it was done in phases and with numerous people involved. The CGO has also functioned as a significant government complex for more

**President: 78 George Street Redfern, NSW AUSTRALIA 2016** [isc20c@icomos-isc20c.org](mailto:isc20c@icomos-isc20c.org)



than fifty years, serving the people of Hong Kong. Differentiating between the wings therefore is both philosophically contradictory and ethically troubling.

Once more, we wish to emphasise, as a group of internationally experienced professionals, that the proposed removal of the West Wing would not only be a great loss in its own right but it would also significantly diminish the cultural value and meaning of the remaining buildings and site that make up the CGO complex.

We fully support your government's plans to save and economically rehabilitate the Central Wing and East Wings. A similar opportunity should be offered to ensure that the West Wing can continue to serve the people of Hong Kong. In that way the entire CGO complex can retain its cultural value and meaning, and its heritage values can be appreciated and celebrated by future generations.

Considering the strength of the public submissions supporting its conservation, and the demonstrated capacity for the building to be adaptively re-used, we ask you once more to re-consider further the opportunity before you to conserve and celebrate the heritage significance of the entirety of the Central Government Office complex.

I attach for your consideration the current international standard guidelines for conserving and adapting significant heritage buildings of the Twentieth Century, the Madrid Document, prepared by the ICOMOS ISC20C.

We hope that it will assist the government and its advisers in making a sound decision for the future of this important building complex and cultural landscape.

**Sheridan Burke**  
**President, International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage**

**13 November 2012**

Cc

Paul Chan, Secretary for Development [sdev@devb.gov.hk](mailto:sdev@devb.gov.hk)

Bernard Chan, Chairman of Antiquities Advisory Board [bernard@bernardchan.com](mailto:bernard@bernardchan.com)

Tom Ming, Executive Secretary, Antiquities and Monuments Office (the secretariat of AAB) [tkcming@lcsd.gov.hk](mailto:tkcming@lcsd.gov.hk)

Gustavo Araoz, President ICOMOS

Tong Mingkang, President ICOMOS China

Mr. Thomas Chow, Town Planning Board; [tpbpd@pland.gov.hk](mailto:tpbpd@pland.gov.hk)

Mr Dominic Lam, President Hong Kong Institute of Architects; [dominic@leighorange.com.hk](mailto:dominic@leighorange.com.hk)

Ms Katty Law Government Hill Concern Group; [ktylaw@gmail.com](mailto:ktylaw@gmail.com)