

**HONG KONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES- WEST WING HERITAGE ALERT
PRESS RELEASE**

13 JUNE 2012

The International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C) of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has released a Heritage Alert regarding the threatened demolition of the West Wing of the Central Government Offices (CGO) in Hong Kong, China.

Built in the late 1950s the Central Government Office is a significant architectural component of the Government Hill historic precinct and the ICOMOS ISC20C is requesting that the government of the Hong Kong SAR urgently reconsider the currently proposed redevelopment for the site that would build a new 32 story tower where the West Wing of the CGO stands currently.

The ISC20C feels that a strong case can be made for the architectural and historic values of CGO as a whole equally meeting the criteria for heritage listing, within a Special Protected Zone. Recent research on the architectural history of the West Wing suggests that its importance as an integral component of the group needs further consideration in the adaptive re-use of the government precinct. The preparation of a Conservation Master Plan, including a thorough examination of reuse options for the entire complex is needed to inform any decision on the future redevelopment of the site.

The Heritage Alert process uses the ICOMOS ISC20C's international professional and public networks to investigate requests for international action where potentially significant heritage places are threatened, by using external experts to assess research and comparative values, in order to achieve a rigorous, independent assessment of the situation.

In cases such as the CGO, where the heritage values of all three buildings are well-proven, a Heritage Alert can be used to draw international attention to the threat and to promote good conservation solutions. The Heritage Alert will be uploaded to the ISC20C website and distributed through the networks of ICOMOS, DOCOMOMO International, and the International Union of Architects. It will be updated as further information comes to hand. The Heritage Alert review was undertaken by ISC20C members from Sweden, South Africa, the USA and Australia, who engaged with local citizens and reviewed the documentary evidence.

Beside the architectural and heritage loss, the demolition of the West Wing of the CGO would be seen as a sign of departure from the widely acknowledged commitment of China to the protection and long-term conservation of its cultural heritage and historic sites of all periods, be they ancient or modern.

We urge the SAR government to suspend the current proposal and to engage in a process to ensure that the heritage significance of the Central Government Office complex as a whole, including the West Wing, is retained as one of Hong Kong's landmarks of 20th Century architecture in its historic precinct setting of Government Hill.

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