



Chapter 2: Policy Measures @ Heritage.Conservation

Section 1: **The Conservation and Revitalisation of** **Privately-owned Historic Buildings**

Introduction

Conservation of historic buildings contributes to the enhancement of a city's quality of life. However, this is by no means a simple task, but requires a great degree of flexibility and adaptability. The ownership of historic buildings has an impact on their conservation and revitalisation. Property ownership can be divided into two categories – privately-owned and government-owned. This section focuses on the conservation of privately-owned historic buildings.

Privately-owned historic buildings are historic buildings built on private land. Although they are private property, yet by virtue of the historic building's inherent values (as discussed on pg. 10 of Chapter 1) and its status as an important urban landmark, it can be seen as a cultural resource to be enjoyed by the public at large and protected for future generations to appreciate. Hence, the Government and the public are also their stakeholders. The Government has the responsibility of conserving these historic buildings in a way that does not contravene their private ownership, yet ensures their safeguarding and contribution to the overall quality of the community.

As land in Hong Kong is at a premium, many owners of private historic buildings consider demolishing their buildings in order to redevelop the land on which they sit. Maintenance costs of historic buildings can also be very high, especially when buildings have been neglected and allowed to degrade into a state of disrepair. As a result, many private historic buildings are facing the threat of dilapidation, demolition and redevelopment.

To address these issues, the following conservation measures have been adopted in response to public concern for the conservation of private historic buildings:



(Source: "Legislative Council Brief: Declaration of King Yin Lei at 45 Stubbs Road, Hong Kong as a Monument")

Issue:

Threat of demolition and redevelopment.



Measure:

Provide economic incentive to compensate the owner for losing the right to redevelop.



Example:

Conserving the large residence King Yin Lei, which has a history of over 70 years, by land exchange.

King Yin Lei

Monument category: Declared monument (2008)

Address: 45 Stubbs Road, Hong Kong.

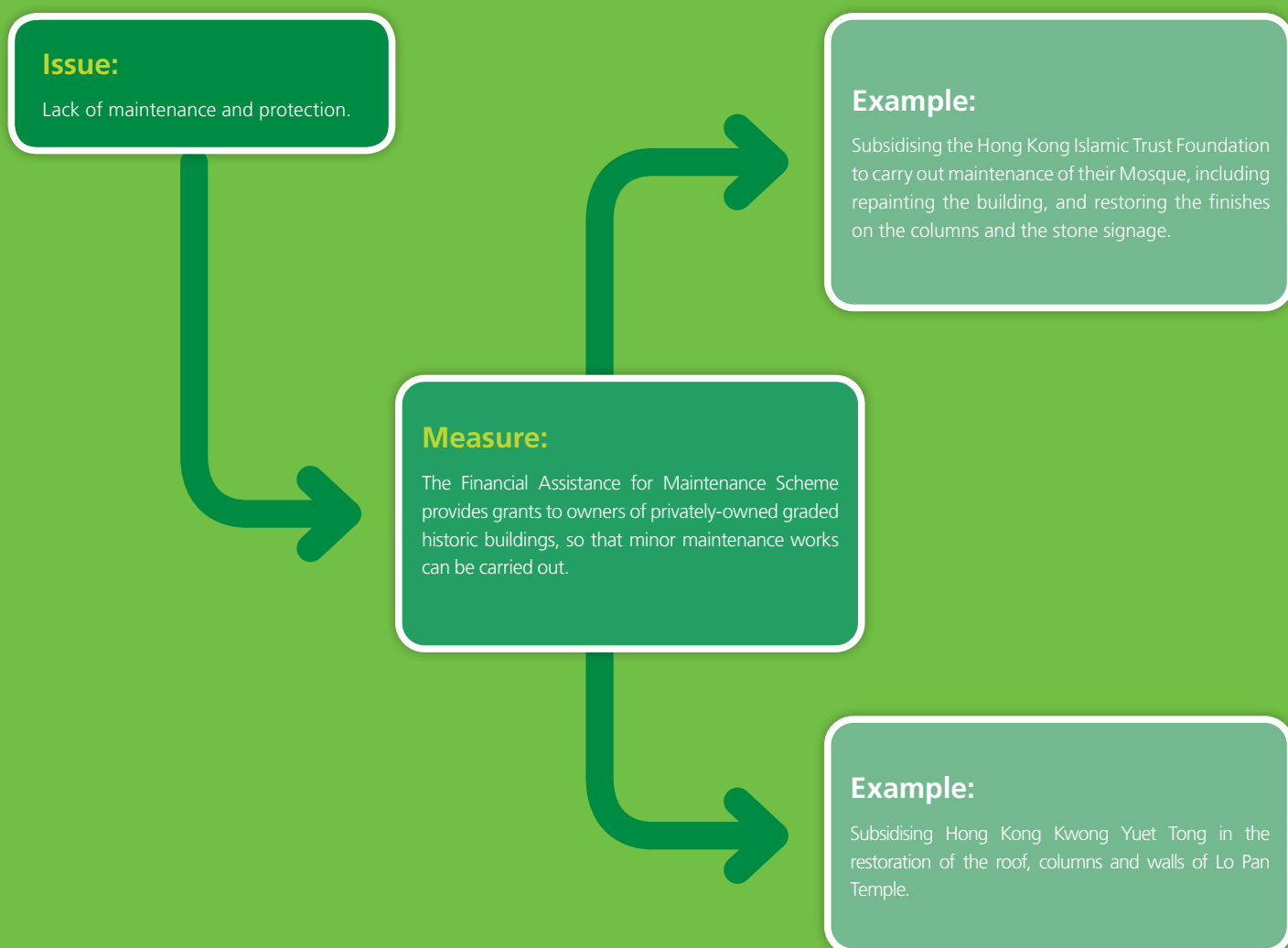
Originally named "Hei Lo", King Yin Lei was built by Mr. Shum Yat-chor and Mrs. Shum Li Po-lun in 1937. The building was designed by Mr. Chan Nam-chong of the Office of A. R. F. Raven. Mr. Shum Yat-chor was a notable merchant and philanthropist in Xinhui of Guangdong Province. The building was sold in 1978 to the Yow family - Mr. Yow (Yeo) Chie-man and his son Mr. Yow Mok-shing, who renamed the building as "King Yin Lei".

King Yin Lei is an historic and luxurious residence built on the hillside of Hong Kong Island. It reflects the rising social and economic status of the Chinese community in Hong Kong and signified the start of the construction of high-end residences in Mid-levels in the early history of the territory. This is an important testimony to Hong Kong's historical development.

King Yin Lei is a good example of the Chinese Renaissance architectural style which was very popular in the 1920s and 1930s in Hong Kong. It combines the Chinese and Western architectural influences in a sophisticated manner, demonstrating the superb building technology and craftsmanship of Hong Kong's early colonial period.

The social value of King Yin Lei lies in its association with Hong Kong's film and entertainment industries. It was featured in films, including 'Soldier of Fortune' 《江湖客》(1955) and 'Love is a Many-splendored Thing' 《生死戀》(1955). Locally produced television series, such as 'Delightful Dream of the Capital' 《京華春夢》(1980) have also used it as a location.

For details, please refer to: Summary of Legislative Council reference materials: announcement on King Yin Lei at 45 Stubbs Road, Hong Kong as a declared monument (July 2008)
http://www.heritage.gov.hk/tc/doc/LegCo_Brief_KYL_eng.pdf



Teaching tips:

Using the private examples above, teachers can explain to students how the Government addresses public concern for the conservation of historic buildings through different policy measures within the context of Hong Kong. This section mentions that while respecting private property ownership, the Government can use two measures – (1) providing economic incentives; and (2) subsidising maintenance works – to address the issue of conserving privately-owned historic buildings. Depending on the circumstances, other examples of possible economic incentives include tax reliefs, transfer of development rights, establishment of a trust, etc.

Jamia Mosque

Grade of the building: Grade 1

Address: 30 Shelley Street, Central, Hong Kong

Introduction:

The Jamia Mosque was built in 1894 and was Hong Kong's first mosque. When it was redeveloped in 1915, the original steeple design was retained. The mosque is of rectangular shape, with an arched design at the main entrance. The windows on all sides are Arabic in design. Over the years, the mosque has attracted a lot of poverty-stricken Moslems to assemble in its vicinity.

Degree of public access:

The mosque is open to visitors during the day and at selected times during the night.

(Source: Antiquities and Monuments Office, Leisure and Cultural Services Department)



Lo Pan Temple

Grade of the building: Grade 1

Address: 15, Ching Lin Terrace, Lee Po Lung Road, Belcher's Street, Kennedy Town, Hong Kong.

Introduction:

Lo Pan was the guru of Chinese architecture. Originally named Gung Shu Poon, he came from the State of Lu (now Shandong Province) in the Era of Warring States. It is believed that Master Lo Pan was born in 507 BC, on the 13th day of the 6th month in the lunar calendar. The date was designated as the birthday of Master Lo Pan. Situated in 15 Ching Lin Terrace, Western District, Lo Pan Temple is the only temple in Hong Kong that commemorates Master Lo Pan. This temple was built in 1884 by a group of construction workers. The Temple is of double-entrance (兩進式) design, with a number of exquisite protective walls, numerous sculptures and figurines and relief and mural paintings. The temple has changed ownership many times. In 1921, it was taken over by Kwong Yuet Tong Temple Management Company.

Degree of public access:

The temple is open to visitors during the day.

(Source: Antiquities and Monuments Office, Leisure and Cultural Services Department)



Glossary of Terms

What is the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme (FAS)?

Under the FAS, the Government provides financial assistance to owners of privately-owned graded historic buildings to carry out minor maintenance works. The objective of the scheme is to help protect privately-owned graded historic buildings from deterioration due to lack of maintenance. As pre-requisite conditions for accepting the grant, building owners are required to agree to a number of conditions, including not to demolish the buildings, not to transfer the ownership of the buildings and to allow reasonable public access to their buildings for appreciation within an agreed period after the completion of the maintenance works.

Reference➤

Maintenance Subsidy Scheme, Hong Kong Heritage – Conservation.Revitalisation
<http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/maintenance/about.htm>

Proposal for Teaching and Learning

Learning Theme

Hong Kong Today: Quality of Life, Rule of Law and
Socio-political Participation

Objectives

1. To understand conservation and revitalisation measures for private historic buildings in Hong Kong
2. To develop students' ability to think independently and analyse policies

Generic Skills

1. Communication skills
2. Problem-solving skills
3. Critical thinking skills

Consider Issues from Multiple Perspectives

1. What are some of the measures adopted by the Government to conserve and revitalise privately-owned historic buildings?
2. What is the relationship between private historic buildings and the public? How does the heritage value of these buildings benefit society?

Values and Attitudes

1. Rationality
2. Participation
3. Responsibility

Proposed Teaching Flow

Knowledge Framework

Teachers can reference the content of the introduction and use related examples to illustrate the various measures adopted to conserve private historic buildings. Then, discuss with the students whether there is room for further improvement.



Teaching Activity (1)

- Group discussion: 179 Prince Edward Road West Revitalisation Proposal
- Refer to Worksheet 1



Teaching Activity (2)

- Site investigation: Identify an historic building in need of maintenance
- Refer to Worksheet 2



Extended Activities 1, 2 & 3



Enter Chapter 2: Section 2

Conservation and Revitalisation of Government-owned Historic Buildings

Knowledge Framework

Teachers can illustrate, using issues related to the conservation and revitalisation of private historic buildings, the ways in which the Government responds to public concern when exploring the topic “How does the government respond to the demands of different social groups?”

Conservation of privately-owned historic buildings and the measures adopted by the Government

- Teachers will use newspaper clippings on the demolition of King Yin Lei and photos of privately-owned historic buildings lacking maintenance and protection, to explain the issues faced by privately-owned historic buildings and the concern of the public.
- The teacher will show excerpts of 《古蹟再生》 in which the Secretary for Development points out that negotiations on King Yin Lei were progressing well (<http://app3.rthk.org.hk/creativearchive/list.php?type=3>). This enables students to understand the Government’s position on the issue and the conservation measures taken.
- Questions for guiding students’ discussion:
 - Why does the Government not make it mandatory for privately-owned historic buildings to be conserved?
 - Should the Government allocate resources to conserve privately-owned historic buildings? Why?
 - What are the measures being adopted by the Government to prevent privately-owned historic buildings from being demolished on the one hand, and to balance the interests of the property owners on the other?

Integrated explanations:

- The teacher will explain to students that some of the historic buildings in Hong Kong are privately-owned, and that the Government should protect the rights of every citizen to own property.
- Historic buildings, which possess rich heritage values, should be regarded as cultural resources to be commonly enjoyed by the public. The Government has the responsibility to protect these buildings on the basis that private ownership is not infringed upon.

Teaching Activity (1)

Group discussion: **Revitalisation proposal for 179 Prince Edward Road West**

Introduction to the activity:

179 Prince Edward West is an old-style urban shop-house about to be revitalised. Students will discuss this case and find out the concerns of the stakeholders. They will also discuss whether a revitalisation proposal can balance the interests of different parties.

Teaching objectives:

- To enable students to understand the concerns of different stakeholders over conserving and revitalizing privately-owned historic buildings
- To develop students' ability to communicate and think critically through group discussions

Format of the activity: Group discussion (2 sessions)

Proposed procedures:

- The teacher will distribute the Information Sheet and ask the students to complete Question 1 on the Worksheet
- The teacher will divide the students into 6 to 8 groups
- The teacher will ask the students to answer Question 2 on the Worksheet, assign each of them a role and then start a group discussion
- The teacher will ask a representative from each group to share their group's answers
- The teacher will ask the students to study and discuss Question 3 on the Worksheet, analysing the case study from the perspectives of the Government, the property owner and the public
- The teacher will ask a representative from each group to share their answers

Information Sheet (1): **179 Prince Edward Road West** Revitalisation Proposal

Background information

- Built in 1937
- Confirmed as a Grade 3 historic building in 2010

Architectural features

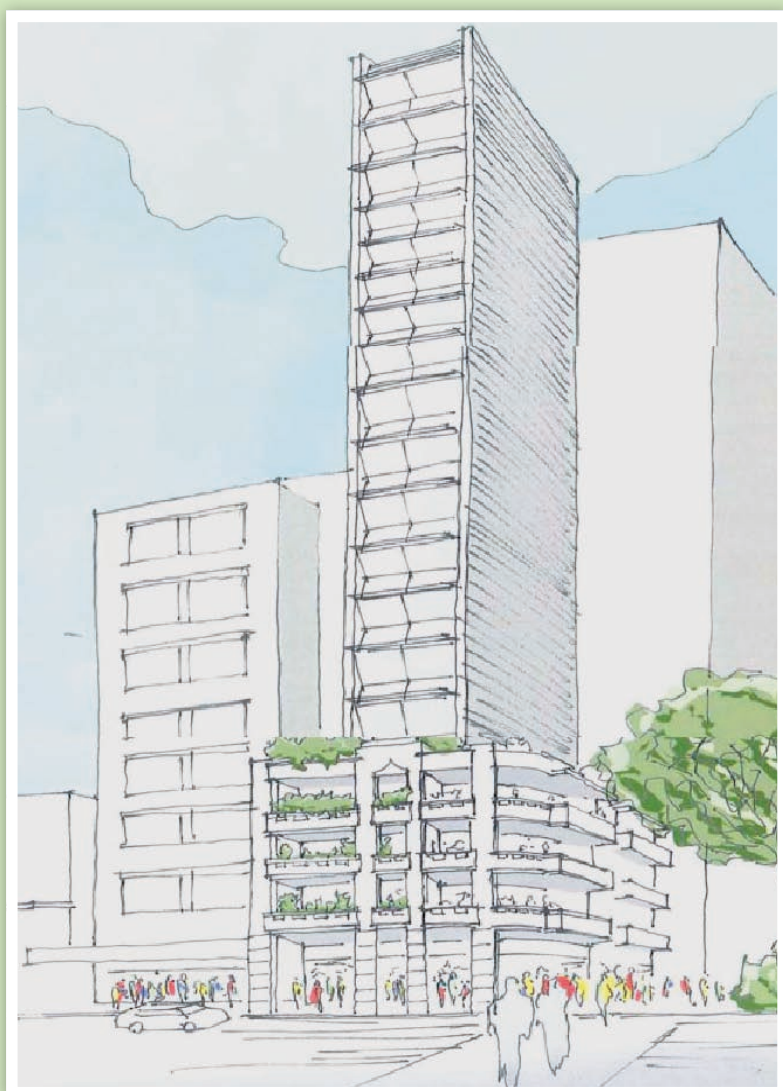
- It has front verandahs projecting out over the pavement supported on columns to form a covered walkway
- The building's façades are finished with Shanghai plaster and incorporate Art Deco architectural details



Source: Legislative Council Panel on Development paper (30 March 2010),
http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/doc/LegCoPanel_ProgressRptHeritageConservation.pdf

“Preservation-cum-development” Proposal

1. The owner originally planned to demolish the entire Tong Lau and redevelop the site into a hotel. To respect the private property rights and to cater for the need for development in the district, as well as to achieve the objective of heritage conservation, the Government and the owner came up with a proposal, approved by the Town Planning Board, to slightly raise the plot ratio. The owner was encouraged to adopt a “preservation-cum-development” proposal that would still preserve parts of the heritage value for a relatively small-scale development with a site area of only about 250 square metres.
2. The front portion of the building, which is the major part with prominent architectural features, will be fully preserved.
3. The rear part of the existing building, which has little heritage value, will be redeveloped into a 17-storey hotel with 50 rooms.
4. Apart from bearing the additional construction cost of conserving the old building, 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.
5. The owner also plans to arrange free guided tours to promote public understanding of the building.



The building after revitalisation (mock-up picture).

Source: Legislative Council Panel on Development Discussion paper (30 March 2010),
http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/doc/LegCoPanel_ProgressRptHeritageConservation.pdf

Worksheet 1: 179 Prince Edward Road West Revitalisation Proposal

Name: _____ Class: _____ ()

1. Do you think the revitalisation proposal for 179 Prince Edward Road West is a good way to protect a privately-owned historic building? Why?

I think:

The reasons are:

i. _____

ii. _____

2. Please assign a role for yourself and carry out group discussions on the following issues:

My role:
(A Hong Kong citizen)

Name:

Occupation:

We believe that 179 Prince Edward Road West, (please tick ✓ in the appropriate box)

should ☐/ should not ☐ be retained:

The reasons are:

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

We think that the current conservation and revitalisation plan has the following advantages:

i. _____

ii. _____

The places where improvements are possible are:

i. _____

ii. _____

3. Please analyse this case from the perspectives of (a) the Government, (b) the property owner and (c) the public, and discuss to what extent this proposal can balance all of their interests.

The Government:

- i. _____

- ii. _____

The property owner:

- i. _____

- ii. _____

The public:

- i. _____

- ii. _____

Teaching Activity (2)

Site investigation: Identify an historic building in need of maintenance

Introduction to the activity:

You are a heritage conservation expert being asked to provide advisory service to an organization. The organization is conducting a survey on the maintenance of privately-owned historic buildings in Hong Kong, and will, upon the completion of the survey, recommend that the owners apply for the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme. Please team up in a group and select a district in Hong Kong for the site investigation, and complete Worksheet 2.

Teaching objectives:

- To enable students to learn about the state of conservation of privately-owned historic buildings through a field study
- To review how the lack of repair to historic buildings can reduce their heritage value
- To understand the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme and to contemplate whether it can be improved
- To enhance students' ability to collect, organise and analyse information

Format of the activity: Site investigation and group reporting (1 to 2 sessions)

Proposed procedures:

- Students will organise themselves into groups and browse the website (http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/maintenance/inform_app.htm) for details on the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme
- They will then select a graded privately-owned historic building in the neighbourhood and make photo records of its condition
- They will then identify parts in the historic building that require maintenance and assess the extent of disrepair
- Then, to meet the requirements of the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme, they will propose the parts of the historic building to be opened to the public upon completion of the maintenance work
- Each group will present its proposal to the rest of the class

Teaching tips:

This teaching activity is designed to develop students' ability to collect information through site investigation, so that they will be able to carry out independent research in the future.

Worksheet 2: Identify an historic building in need of maintenance

Name of group members:

_____	()
_____	()
_____	()

Class:

_____	()
_____	()
_____	()

Based on our site investigation, we identify the following privately-owned historic building in need of maintenance:

Name of historic building: _____

Location: _____

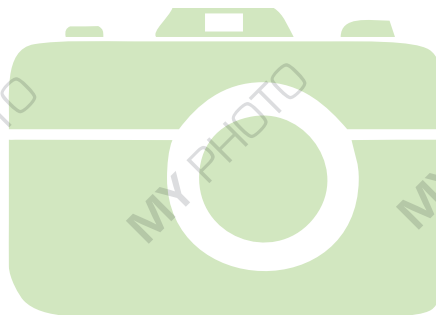
Heritage Values:

- i. _____

- ii. _____

- iii. _____

Its condition:



Condition of the building

(Please attach the photo taken during site investigation)

The group recommends that the following places be maintained, for the following reasons:

Areas in need of maintenance: (such as, external wall peeling off or water seepage)

Parts lacking maintenance, and their impact on the building's heritage value:

Areas in need of maintenance: (such as, external wall peeling off or water seepage)

Parts lacking maintenance, and their impact on the building's heritage value:

In order to be eligible for the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme, we propose the following areas for public access:

Extended Activities

1. Teachers will guide the students to design a poster based on the information gathered in Activity 2, to publicize the issues related to the maintenance of privately-owned historic buildings.
2. Teachers will invite the students to discuss and select the building that is in need of maintenance the most.
3. Teachers will guide the students in collecting further information in order to understand the building's heritage values and to compose a report making recommendations to the building's owner.

References:

Asia Conserved: Lessons Learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation 2000-2004.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001557/155754e.pdf>

New Initiatives on Heritage Conservation, Conserve and Revitalise Hong Kong Heritage.

<http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/heritage/conservation.htm>

Antiquities and Monuments Office: 《香港文物》. August 2008, Issue 19.

http://www.amo.gov.hk/form/newsletter_v19.pdf

Commissioner for Heritage's Office, Development Bureau: 《活化@Heritage》. October 2008, Issue 2.

http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/doc/Heritage_Issue_3.pdf

Commissioner for Heritage's Office, Development Bureau: 《活化@Heritage》. April 2010, Issue 12.

http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/doc/Heritage_Issue_12.pdf

Legislative Council document (Please refer to the documents about heritage conservation policies and measures of the Panel on Development of the Legislative Council).

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/english/index.htm>

