

## **Press Release**

### **Government committed to preserving the Central Police Station**

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In response to recent comments on the proposed heritage tourism development at Central Police Station, the Government today reiterated its commitment to ensure that the historic buildings on the Central Police Station Compound will be properly preserved as it takes forward this project.

“Preserving the historic buildings has always been Government’s primary objective. During the consultation on the tendering arrangements, the key concerns raised by the community were: preservation requirements, traffic and environmental considerations, public access to the site and local involvement in monitoring the project. All these concerns will be fully taken into account in finalizing the tendering arrangements,” a Government spokesman said.

The spokesman pointed out that the Antiquities Advisory Board has been fully consulted on the preservation requirements and their advice has been included in the draft tender documents. The Government will ensure that all 17 historic buildings at the Central Police Station site will be protected in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Responding to comments that financial gain is over-emphasized and may outweigh the benefits of the project to the community, the spokesman stressed that in assessing the tender proposals, the majority of the assessment criteria will focus on the qualitative aspects of the proposals, including heritage conservation; environmental and traffic considerations; as well as community and tourism benefits. He explained that premium will only be relevant only when proposals have been determined to conform to the mandatory heritage preservation requirements, i.e. the proposals will not be evaluated at all unless they have satisfied those requirements.

The spokesman pointed out that the Government has widely consulted the public including the Legislative Council and the Central and Western District Council on the implementation framework, including the assessment criteria, for the project. A workshop was held in March 2004 to gather views from the public on the project.

As regards the open letter to the Chief Executive from the Ho family, the spokesman stressed that the Government is open to views on how this project should proceed. “We are finalizing the arrangement for disposal of the site by way of an open and competitive process and will take all views expressed, including the Ho family’s, into account,” the spokesman said.

“We have encouraged the Ho family group to continue to take an interest in the project and participate in the tender. However, we felt that it is not appropriate to reverse this process and dispose of the land by direct grant to one group.”

“We will continue to listen to views from all parties interested in the project,” he said.

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