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The Conservancy Association

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The Conservancy Association Urges a Positive Conservation Policy for Preserving Hong Kong's Historical Heritage Press Release

The Conservancy Association (CA) supports the motion proposed by Hon Lau Ping-cheung, which will be put on table on 12 Feb, that the Legislative Council urges the Government to expeditiously formulate a comprehensive policy on heritage preservation.

CA has submitted a paper to the Members and expressed deep concern about a number of historical heritages being threatened or already lost under development or redevelopment pressure, such as Nga Tsin Wai, the Kam Tong Hall at No 7 Castle Road, the House of Ngan Shing-kwan at No 64 Kennedy Road.

Dr Gordon Ng, Chief Executive of CA, said that historical heritage is important to a city's identity and character in turn affecting people's recognition of a place and lives. Nevertheless, he is disappointed that only little progress has been reached on heritage preservation over the last few decades. He said, "We have been losing numerous historical and beautiful buildings, such as the former Hong Kong Club Building and Lee Theatre. Action is desperately needed now or else we will lose all heritages of historical significance."

Dr Ng said that many historical buildings are in private ownership and Hong Kong is still lack of a comprehensive conservation policy to deliver a mechanism to protect valuable historical buildings. Although the government is statutorily empowered by the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance to repossess sites or buildings with heritage value, such legal power is never supported by a policy to deliver the conservation objective.

CA calls for the government's full-hearted conservation strategy to embrace certain implementation options which would achieve conservation whilst without infringing private ownership or development rights. Amongst various possible implementation options such as direct government resumption, buy-out by setting up a charitable trust, public-private partnership, Dr Ng suggested that transfer of plot ratio will be the most workable tool for Hong Kong to sustain our heritage with relatively less financial burden.

CA also proposes the idea of "Special Design Zone" which could be more readily put in place to control the development in sites of historic value.

For clarifications and interviews, please call Ms Kate Choy, Senior Campaign Officer at 22720303. The paper submitted to Legco and a related CA's paper entitled "Achieving Conservation – A Positive Conservation Policy for Hong Kong" are available on CA's website www.conservancy.org.hk/campaign