

Building at 128 Pok Fu Lam Road declared as proposed monument

The Secretary for Home Affairs, in his capacity as the Antiquities Authority under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, has decided to declare the Building at 128 Pok Fu Lam Road together with its garden and the access road from Pok Fu Lam Road as a Proposed Monument with effect from today (April 20).

The declaration, which is published in today's Gazette, will be effective for 12 months.

"This will give the Building temporary statutory protection from demolition and allow time for the Antiquities Authority to fully consider whether a declaration of Monument should be made, and also for negotiation with the owner with a view to reaching a consensus on preservation of the building," a government spokesman said.

The owner of the building filed a demolition application to the Buildings Department last month (March).

"During the effective period of the declaration, no demolition works can be carried out on the building except with a permit granted by the Antiquities Authority."

Under section 2C of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, the owner or any lawful occupier of private land within which a Proposed Monument has been declared may apply to the Antiquities Authority for withdrawal of the declaration and may also by petition to the Chief Executive object to the declaration. Section 8 of the Ordinance sets out the circumstances where compensation will be paid to the owner or lawful occupier.

The Building at 128 Pok Fu Lam Road is a rare surviving example of European-style mansions in the Southern District. It is of Italian Renaissance architectural style with interesting Art Deco variations. It is elaborate in design, decoration and craftsmanship. Set against a background of pleasant greenery, it presents a gracious cultural landscape, which is very rare in the highly urbanised Hong Kong.

It was built around 1931 by Mr William Ngar Tse Thomas Tam who was a

barrister and well-known social figure in Hong Kong in the mid-20th Century. He was appointed as a Magistrate in 1947. He was enthusiastic in social services. The Jessie and Thomas Tam Centre of the Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care, a charitable organisation, was named after Mr Tam and his wife.

"We hope that a mutually acceptable preservation plan can be worked out with the owner in due course," the spokesman said.

Ends/Friday, April 20, 2007

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