

LCQ10: Lee Tat Bridge in Shui Tsan Tin Tsuen, Pat Heung

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Following is a question by the Hon Patrick Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (May 16):

Question:

I have learnt that the Lee Tat Bridge in Shui Tsan Tin Tsuen in Pat Heung, which has a history of over 100 years, is facing the risk of its original appearance being damaged, or even demolition. Although the Antiquities Advisory Board has assessed the bridge to be a building of rural cultural character, it has not put forward any preservation proposals. Moreover, in a cemetery in Happy Valley, some of the gravestones of soldiers who died in war times have been damaged due to lack of proper maintenance. Regarding the heritage assessment and conservation of cultural relics, monuments and historic buildings, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether, under the existing heritage conservation policy, monuments or historic buildings include cultural relics of historical significance such as gravestones;
- (b) whether it has conducted grading assessments on such cultural relics as gravestones in the past five years; if so, of the number of gravestones being graded; if not, the reasons for that;
- (c) of the reasons for not classifying the Lee Tat Bridge as a Grade I, II or III historic building; and
- (d) whether there is any mechanism for members of the public to appeal against the grading of monuments; if so, of the details?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) & (b) In accordance with the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (A&M Ordinance), the Antiquities Authority (i.e. the Secretary for Home Affairs) may, after consultation with the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) and with approval of the Chief Executive, by notice in the Gazette, declare any place, building, site or structure, which the Antiquities Authority considers to be of public interest by reason of its historical, archaeological or palaeontological significance, to be a monument for protection.

Over the past five years, the Antiquities Authority had not consulted the AAB on matters relating to the declaration of gravestones as monument. Moreover, the AAB had in the past five

years mainly worked on the grading of historic buildings. No gravestones have been accorded with grading.

(c)For most of the residents in Shui Tsan Tin Tsuen, Yuen Long, the Lee Tat Bridge is the major access to the village. The Antiquities and Monuments Office will continue to liaise with the villagers and relevant government departments for the grading of the bridge, as well as to explore the possibility of drawing up a conservation approach which is both feasible in the long run and acceptable to the villagers.

(d)Apart from declared monuments, the AAB has in the past years graded 497 historic buildings as Grade I, Grade II or Grade III buildings in accordance with their heritage value. The grading system, which has no statutory authority, serves as an internal reference for the AAB. Historical buildings are graded primarily on the basis of their heritage values. If members of the public have any views on the AAB's work, they are welcome to forward them to AAB or its Secretariat.

Ends/Wednesday, May 16, 2007

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