

CE visits Central Market Revitalisation Project (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (October 30) visited Central Market to learn more about the progress of the revitalisation project of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) there.

Accompanied by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, Mrs Lam started the visit at the Urban Renewal Exploration Centre in Central, where she received a briefing from the URA Board Chairman, Mr Chow Chung-kong, and the URA's Managing Director, Mr Wai Chi-sing, on the progress of various URA projects in different districts and the Authority's future redevelopment strategy. Mrs Lam expressed her support for the URA's new planning-driven urban renewal approach in recent years and recognised its efforts in carrying out the new task she assigned to it in the 2019 Policy Address by taking an active role in providing Starter Homes (SH) units for Hong Kong residents. The first SH pilot project, eResidence, has been well received by members of the public, with all of the 450 units sold out in the middle of last year. The URA has also decided to earmark a redevelopment project adjacent to eResidence for another SH project.

Mrs Lam and the other officials then visited the Central Market Revitalisation Project to know more about the latest progress of the works. With about 80 years of history, the Central Market building is a Grade 3 historic building. The Central Market Revitalisation Project is one of the projects under the Conserving Central initiative. The URA has been responsible for the market building's comprehensive conservation and revitalisation and started the related works in 2017. The project team is committed to conserving the valuable architectural characteristics of the external façade and the interior of the building, including the atrium, the main staircase and market stalls, and integrating the features into the revitalised building with new functions. Mrs Lam said she was pleased to note that the project has been progressing smoothly, with the URA planning to select an operator in the first quarter next year and striving to commence operation in the third quarter of next year at the earliest. By that time, the project is expected to provide affordable cultural, catering and retail facilities as well as open spaces, and become the "Central Oasis" in the Central business district, providing a trendy place for the working population in Central to relax.

"Following the completion of the first phase of the Central Market Revitalisation Project next year and its opening to the public, most of the projects under the Conserving Central initiative, including the Central Police Station Compound (now Tai Kwun – Centre for Heritage and Arts), the Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road (now PMQ), Murray Building (now The Murray hotel) and the Main Wing and the East Wing of the former Central Government Offices (now Justice Place), will have been completed with the

revitalised buildings given new uses. They have become new landmarks of the city. The Conserving Central initiative demonstrates the concept of preservation-cum-development, which allows preservation of old buildings, provision of new facilities to the public and creation of a new look for the community," Mrs Lam said.

