

LCQ6: Exploring tourism projects relating to the history of the disciplined services

Following is a question by the Hon Yiu Pak-leung and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (November 8):

Question:

"The Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address" proposed to continue to promote characteristic local tourism and encourage the tourism industry to develop tourism products with cultural and heritage elements. There are views that some of the buildings relating to the disciplined services, such as the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station which is listed as a Grade II historic building, are currently "check-in" hotspots for inbound tourists. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current number of buildings graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board as historic buildings that are being managed by each disciplined service and, among them, the number of those which are open to the public;

(2) whether it will study, without affecting the normal operation of the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station, allowing a reasonable degree of access to the Police Station for public visits, so as to complement scenic spots such as the Temple Street night market and Tin Hau Temple in Yau Ma Tei and introduce characteristic tourism elements into the district; and

(3) whether it will set up a disciplined services museum to exhibit decommissioned equipment and modes of transport of historical value from various disciplined services, so as to attract tourist visits?

Reply:

President,

The development of heritage tourism involves different aspects including policies on tourism, as well as the usage, promotion and revitalisation of historic buildings, etc. Having consulted the Cultural, Sports and Tourism Bureau, the Development Bureau and other relevant departments, my reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Currently, 32 of the graded historic buildings in Hong Kong are managed by the disciplinary/auxiliary forces under the Security Bureau. Among them, 2 are accorded with Grade 1 status, 16 with Grade 2 status and the remaining 14 with Grade 3 status. The details are set out in the attachment.

The Cotton Tree Drive Marriage Registry (on G/F of Rawlinson House of the old Victoria Barracks) managed by the Immigration Department is a Grade 1 historic building. It provides marriage-related services including solemnisation of marriages to members of the public. People may visit the premises during the office hours as long as their visits will not affect the provision of public services. Another Grade 1 historic building is the Stanley Mosque under the management of the Correctional Services Department (CSD). The Stanley Mosque is located within the restricted area of the CSD. For security reasons, the Stanley Mosque mainly caters for the religious needs of the Muslim staff members of the CSD. If members of the public wish to use the Stanley Mosque, they may make applications to the CSD in advance.

The other historic buildings are mostly used as departmental facilities (such as police stations, fire stations, staff training venues and office premises). On operational and security considerations, these historic buildings are in general not opened for public visit. However, group visit appointments would be accepted for some of the historic buildings if such visits do not affect daily operation and provision of emergency services. Besides, our departments will organise open days in these historic buildings on special occasions like department anniversaries to let members of the public know about the historic buildings and have a better understanding of the work of the departments.

Apart from historic buildings currently owned by the disciplinary/auxiliary forces, the disciplinary forces have released buildings or facilities of historic value that are no longer in-use to relevant government departments for other uses. Examples include the former Central Police Station and former Victoria Prison (now Tai Kwun), and the former Hollywood Road Police Married Quarters (now PMQ) in Central, as well as the old Tai O Police Station (now Tai O Heritage Hotel).

(2) The old Yau Ma Tei Police Station is a Grade 2 historic building. The old wing of the building is now used as Police offices and therefore not suitable for public visit. The new wing of the building is now temporarily occupied by the Highways Department as the work site of the Central Kowloon Route.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the centenary of the establishment of the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) held a four-day "Old Yau Ma Tei Police Station 100th Anniversary Open Days" event in August 2022, showcasing the HKPF's rich history and remarkable achievements. As aforementioned, our disciplinary/auxiliary forces will continue to organise public visits to these historic buildings on special occasions as appropriate.

I understand that public opening of the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station is not within the scope of the Temple Street night market initiative.

(3) Currently, of the six disciplinary forces, five (excluding the Government Flying Service (GFS)) have their own departmental museums/exhibition galleries. Among them, the Police Museum and the Hong Kong Correctional

Services Museum are open to the general public and tourists. For the Fire and Ambulance Services Education Centre cum Museum, the Customs Headquarters Building Exhibition Gallery and the Immigration Service Institute of Training and Development Training Gallery, individuals (including tourists) or organisations may make visit appointments. Admissions to these museums/exhibition galleries are free of charge.

Our departments have devoted constant efforts to renew exhibitions and exhibits in their museums and galleries, and curate thematic exhibitions from time to time in order to enhance the attractiveness of the museums and galleries. For instance, the Police Museum, located at the former Wan Chai Gap Police Station, underwent a revitalisation project in mid-2020 and re-opened to the public on September 15, 2022 with a new look. Through the revitalisation, new interactive technologies and interesting elements are added to the Museum to help citizens and tourists better understand the history, development and daily operation of the HKPF. The project has served to preserve the historical heritage of the Police in a more effective manner and promote related historical research.

Equipment and vehicles play a vital role in the daily operation of the disciplinary and auxiliary forces. The forces have made every effort to preserve and display their retired equipment and vehicles in order to facilitate public education. For instance, subsequent to the retirement of two Jetstream 41 fixed-wing aircraft in 2016, the GFS has made available one of them to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department for exhibition at the Kai Tak Runway Park. Furthermore, the Energizing Kowloon East Office and the Hong Kong Science Museum have undertaken to arrange a long-term public exhibition for the recently retired aircraft of the GFS including one Super Puma helicopter, one EC155 helicopter and one fixed-wing aircraft. The long-term exhibition will tentatively commence in 2027.

Besides, the museums and exhibition galleries of the disciplinary forces mentioned above also display an array of retired vehicles and equipment. The forces will continue to explore different means of preserving and displaying retired equipment and vehicles with relevant departments and organisations.

Other than the display of retired vehicles and equipment as exhibits, the disciplinary and auxiliary forces will from time to time showcase their serving vehicles and equipment on occasions like government events (such as parades), departmental open days and other public education activities (such as the Mountaineering Safety Promotion Day). Most of these activities are open to the public and tourists.

President, building on the existing foundation, the Security Bureau, together with the disciplinary and auxiliary forces, will continue to explore how to better utilise our historic buildings, museums, vehicles and equipment, etc, to facilitate understanding of the work of our disciplinary and auxiliary forces among the public and tourists, and to tell the good stories of Hong Kong.

Thank you, President.