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Dear Sir,

Preservation of the Waterworks Installation at Bishop Hill in Sham Shui Po

Regarding your concerns on the preservation of the waterworks installation at Bishop Hill in Sham Shui Po, the reply of the Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”) is set out below.

The Government attaches great importance to heritage conservation. The Water Supplies Department has commenced the temporary strengthening and tidying up works for the waterworks installation. The works include sorting and protection of structural elements taken down earlier to facilitate future rehabilitation.

AMO has conducted site inspection and commenced an in-depth research on the heritage value of the waterworks installation, including carrying out the study of this item with reference to the six prevailing assessment criteria, namely historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity and rarity. Upon completion of the in-depth research, AMO will submit the appraisal to the independent Historic Buildings Assessment Panel (“Assessment Panel”) for examination and recommendation of a proposed grading for the waterworks installation against the aforesaid six assessment criteria. AMO has planned to submit the appraisal and the Assessment Panel’s proposed grading to the Antiquities Advisory Board (“AAB”) for consideration and grading assessment in March 2021. When AAB endorses the proposed grading of the waterworks installation, the relevant information and proposed grading of this item will be uploaded to the website of AAB for a one-month public consultation. AAB will take into account all information and views received during the public consultation before confirming the proposed grading. In parallel, the Development Bureau will also look into the options of conserving and revitalising the waterworks installation, after WSD has completed the temporary strengthening works and the temporary tidying up works mentioned above, with a view to enabling the people of Hong Kong to enjoy this place.

AMO continues to collaborate with WSD on a study of underground waterworks installations. According to the currently available information, at least four existing underground installations were built before the War, such as Yau Ma Tei Service Reservoir, Albany Fresh Water Service Reservoir, Mount Gough Fresh Water Service Reservoir and Peak Fresh Water Service Reservoir.

The Government understands the public concerns on the incident. The Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) is leading a working group to review the handling of the case by relevant departments, and to put forward improvement measures to avoid recurrence of similar incidents.

Antiquities and Monuments Office

5 February 2021