

## GOVERNMENT HILL CONCERN GROUP

27 June 2016

To: Members of the Legislative Council Finance Committee

Re: Funding application for renovation works for the West Wing of the former Central Government Offices for office use by the Department of Justice and law-related organisation

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Government Hill Concern Group, an alliance of 21 environmental and heritage conservation NGOs and concerned professionals, has been involved in campaigns to conserve the former Central Government Offices (CGO) since 2010. The former CGO compound with its three wings was accorded Grade 1 historical building status in 2012.

We note that the Department of Justice (DoJ) is applying for funding for renovation works to the West Wing of the former CGO. The building will be devoted to office use by the DoJ and law-related organizations. We have read the LegCo paper PWSC(2016-17)31 and discussed the supplementary information provided to us by DoJ at our meeting with its representatives on 22 June 2016.

We generally support the renovation works for the West Wing as they pledge to comply with best conservation practices and promise that all heritage features of the West Wing will be carefully preserved. We note that the fences along Lower Albert Road on top of a slope/retaining wall will be retained (but lowered to 1.45 metre) for public safety reasons. There will be a new lift to facilitate public access from the Queen's Road Central entrance to the 7th floor which is the same level as Lower Albert Road. We endorse this feature as it enhances public accessibility.

We understand that there is a need to start the renovation work this year and we urge the Finance Committee to approve this funding application. The building has been left idle for some time and should revert to active use as soon as possible.

DoJ representatives advised that the Public Open Space (POS) within the CGO compound is a separate item to be designed by the Development Bureau and managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in the future.

We are most concerned about public accessibility and use of the POS, particularly the need to remove gates, unnecessary fences and other obstacles currently hindering public access. We are also concerned about greening and would recommend the provision of catering facilities for the convenience and enjoyment of the public.

DoJ has provided us with a brief update of some of the POS entrance design proposals, but as this is a separate project under the Development Bureau that may, or may not, require funding application, we urge the Bureau to engage our Concern Group and members of the public in the planning and design of the POS in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

We request that the Finance Committee put this matter on record in its approval of the West Wing funding application.

We sincerely hope that the renovation of the former CGO compound and its POS will provide a heritage attraction sensitively conserved for the appreciation and enjoyment of members of the general public and visitors with an interest in history and heritage.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Best regards,

Katty Law

for and on behalf of Government Hill Concern Group