Lantau Conservation Fund
Priority Conservation Themes - Cultural Conservation

1. Enhancing the Depth and Comprehensiveness of Existing Cultural and Historical Information of Lantau

Over the years, various scholars have conducted research into Lantau's history, culture, customs, and economic activities. Furthermore, the South Development and Sustainable Lantau Office (SSLO) has previously commissioned consultants to conduct cultural and historical baseline studies on traditional villages in Northwest and Southeast Lantau. Building upon these research foundations, projects can explore areas that remain untouched or understudied including village history on Lantau over hundreds of years, the migration of founding ancestors/ancestors, village establishment and the formation of local geomancy, the spatial utilisation through time, and the interaction among different communities and their subsequent cultural heritage. The research can also adopt a "holistic approach" to individual villages or connect related fields through a "point-line-plane approach" to achieve broader and more thorough results to enrich existing cultural and historical information. These research findings may be integrated into the SSLO's Lantau Cultural and Historical Database as appropriate.

Potential Themes and Examples:

(i) Village Traditions

- The history and cultural customs of Nim Shue Wan Village, villages at Northeast Lantau, etc.

(ii) Socio-economic Landscape

- Past agricultural, fishery, mining and industrial development on Lantau shaped its own economic and cultural landscape. Their evolution over times, alongside their relationships with the village communities and the island's topography can be explored.
    - Agriculture: The development of cultivation practices and farming techniques for rice, vegetables, and fruit trees; cultural landscapes derived from agriculture, such as the relics of the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association and the terraced fields of Wo Tin Village.

- Fisheries: The development of inshore operations, such as stake net fishing (also known as *au yue*), and offshore operations.
- Mining: Relics of the wolframite mine around Sha Lo Wan, etc.

- Land and water transports within Lantau and connections to other areas in the past, such as kaito and ferry services between Lantau and Tsing Lung Tau, Cheung Chau, Central, etc.
- The relation of the former Ngong Ping Tea Farm and the socio-economic development of the time, and the spatial distribution of buildings and tea trees in the tea farm.

(iii) Histories, Settings and Features of Traditional Villages and Buildings

- Religious buildings / cultural landscapes in Ngong Ping, Luk Wu, Keung Shan, etc.

(iv) Military Facilities[1] and Village Defence

- Village defence and the watchtowers built from the 1920s to 1940s on Lantau.

2. Restoring Lantau Traditional Buildings and Fostering Community Belonging

Many buildings and structures of historical and traditional cultural value on Lantau are deeply intertwined with the previous village life. The village houses, temples, shrines, old boulder trackways, old bridges have rich historical and heritage values and reflect the rural lives of the past. Some of them are facing challenges of aging populations, structural deterioration, increased threats from environmental changes and development pressures. By documenting, consolidating and analysing existing conditions — and by restoring, conserving, and revitalising these precious built heritage and cultural landscapes — the architectural features and

[1] Lantau Island, situated at the mouth of the Pearl River, was a primary maritime gateway for entering and leaving China during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. It held significant military and strategic importance, with stationed troops and military facilities, forming a coastal defense line alongside Nantou City and Chiwan Fort in Shenzhen. During the 1920s to 1940s, some villagers on Lantau constructed watchtowers to defend against pirates, bandits, and used them for scouting, surveillance and hiding during the Japanese occupation. The military importance of Lantau continued and transformed during the Second World War. The Fan Lau Fort, Tung Chung Battery, and Tung Chung Fort on Lantau have been declared monuments and several watchtowers are listed as graded historic buildings. Together, they form an important part of Lantau's cultural heritage that is well worth exploring and researching. Before submitting a proposal, the Applicant Organisations shall review the contents of previously approved projects to avoid duplication.

communities' collective memories can be preserved, showcasing long-standing ties with the communities and thereby fostering a sense of belonging.

Potential Themes and Examples:

(i) Village Traditions and Socio-economic Landscape

- Restoring or reinstating stake nets to demonstrate traditional fishing methods.

(ii) Histories, Settings and Features of Traditional Villages and Buildings

- Restoring watchtowers, traditional dwellings, village schools, temples, etc., to introduce their architectural features and related history, and opening them to the public.

3. Passing on Lantau's Village Culture and Reviving Community Vitality

Lantau is home to various ethnic groups, whose ancestors relied on its natural resources for their livelihoods and settlements. To this day, they still preserve rich village traditions, including oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship. Due to ageing populations and out-migration, particularly in remote villages, these cultural traditions are gradually being lost. Village revitalisation can strengthen local networks, create local development opportunities, and attract former residents or newcomers to reside in the villages, thereby passing on village culture and restoring community vitality.

Potential Themes and Examples:

(i) Village Traditions

- Organising workshops on traditional food preparation and traditional building techniques, or guided tours of local customs, and assisting in branding local agricultural produce or handicrafts.

- Inviting artisans to reside in the villages to co-create artworks with villagers on themes of traditional villages or surrounding cultural landscapes.

- Documenting stilt house construction techniques and organising related workshops.

(ii) Socio-economic Landscape

- Restoring selected farmlands or salt pans to showcase past socio-economic landscapes.

4. Enhancing Public's Lantau Cultural Conservation Awareness

Lantau possesses rich cultural resources, but given its remote geographical locations, the general public and tourists do not frequently visit its rural village areas. In addition to leveraging online platforms and social media for promotion, more in-person activities—such as seminars, workshops, and guided tours—can be organised to attract a broader audience to understand and experience the local unique history and culture, thereby raising public conservation awareness. Creative formats, such as integrating elements of artistic creation or orienteering, may also generate synergistic effects and engage diverse interest groups.

Potential Themes and Examples:

(i) Village Traditions and Socio-economic Landscape

- Organising fishermen experience workshops to recreate the traditional stake-net fishing method in Sam Heung.
- Organising cultural fairs and talks in conjunction with traditional deity festivals, such as the Hau Wong Festival of Tung Chung, Tin Hau Festival of Pui O, and Qilin dance.

(ii) Histories, Settings and Features of Traditional Villages and Buildings

- Organising building restoration workshops using traditional village houses in Fan Lau as examples to demonstrate traditional construction techniques with mud bricks, grey bricks, rammed earth, and stones.
- Designing Sam Heung cultural themed routes and guided tours to connect heritage spots, including the walled enclosure of Pak Mong Village, watchtowers, Fung Shui Woods, and Man Hing Bridge in Tai Ho.

Others

(I) Key points to note when submitting an application:

All cultural conservation projects should:

- Formulate the research scope if building on existing research findings, with the objective to uncover new data or draw new conclusions, or to interpret and present based on the unique characteristics of specific areas.
- Engage scholars and experts in relevant fields (such as history, culture, and folklore).
- Demonstrate established connections and communication with the local community.

Building restoration or revitalisation projects should:

- Demonstrate the value of the building, such as its historical, architectural, and social value, as well as its local significance.
- Demonstrate that the restoration or revitalisation is of public interest and cost-effective.
- Prove consent obtained from the relevant owners.
- Comply with the statutory requirements and engage appropriate building professionals (such as Authorised Persons and Registered Structural Engineers).

(II) References

SSLO – Cultural and Historical Studies for Rural Villages on Lantau (Cultural and Historical Database and Study Reports)
https://sslo.cedd.gov.hk/en/our-projects/conservation-initiatives/cultural-studies/index.html

SSLO – Thematic Websites: Cultural Stories on Lantau
https://sslo.cedd.gov.hk/en/exploring-more/stories/index.html

Previously approved Lantau Conservation Fund projects
https://www.lcf.gov.hk/en/approved-projects/conservation-related-projects.html