



Hong Kong Golf Club applies for 2023 UNESCO Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage Conservation Award for the Fanling Golf Course

(Hong Kong, 5 July 2023) The Hong Kong Golf Club (the Club) announced today that the Fanling Golf Course (FGC), which has been under the Club's stewardship for over 110 years, is under consideration for a UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Opened for play in 1911, making it the oldest championship golf course in Asia, FGC's century-old history and high cultural value presents an opportunity for the Club to showcase Hong Kong as a multi-cultural international metropolis which is at the forefront of heritage preservation. The Club expects that the story of FGC, a pristine lowland landscape of incomparable ecological significance, will enhance people's appreciation of this unique dimension of Hong Kong's sporting and cultural history.

As host of the Hong Kong Open, Hong Kong's oldest professional sporting event, since 1959, FGC is also one of only two golf venues in the world to have hosted the same tournament for 60 years or longer. The other is storied Augusta National Golf Club, home of the Masters Tournament, traditionally the first major golf championship of the year.

To further reaffirm the value of FGC, the Club commissioned independent heritage experts to conduct a cultural landscape research and assessment of the internationally-renowned golf venue. The results show that FGC has outstanding value ratings in terms of history, course design, nature conservation, sustainability, and quality of architecture. The ratings are a reflection of the Club's efforts as custodians of the site, making it a designed cultural landscape of the highest integrity. FGC is a priceless gem that symbolizes Hong Kong and the city's golf culture and a 'living heritage' that has retained its authenticity for more than a century.

Submissions for the 2023 UNESCO Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage Conservation Awards will be evaluated on the merits of criteria such as the project's cultural value, contribution to sustainable development spanning economic, social, and environmental aspects, and contribution to the long-term development of social and cultural heritage.

Mr Andy Kwok, Captain of the Hong Kong Golf Club, said, "Fanling Golf Course is the cradle of the game in all of China, a place where heritage, precious architecture and a unique landscape can be found. The Old Course in particular is a classic design dating from the 'Golden Age' of golf course architecture, a period when architects blended their talents into the existing landscape to take advantage of natural contours. It has faithfully emulated the design principles of traditional Scottish golf courses such as St. Andrews.



“Because the site’s natural topography and hydrology has been preserved for all these years, the Old Course is home to a number of rare and protected trees, notably a grove of Chinese Swamp Cypress trees, which are considered ‘critically endangered’ by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in addition to other ecologically precious floral and faunal species.”

He continued: "We very much want to preserve FGC – a living heritage site full of vibrancy – for Hong Kong’s next generation. As part of our efforts to tell the good stories of Hong Kong, we hope that the value of FGC as a cultural landscape will be established and recognised and that it will continue to thrive in a sustainable manner so that it can become another unique landmark of this wonderful city.”

Projects in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region that have been recognised by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Conservation Awards include: Lai Chi Wo Rural Cultural Landscape Project (Special Recognition for Sustainable Development), Tai Kwun - Centre for Heritage and Arts (Award of Excellence), the Blue House Cluster (Award of Excellence), Revitalization of the Former Tai Po Police Station (Honorable Mention), and the Saltpans of Yim Tin Tsai (Award of Distinction).

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