

Revitalisation in São Lázaro gets Cheong U support

by Natalie Leung

Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Cheong U has given his support for the Holy House of Mercy's plan to revitalise its two vacant buildings in the São Lázaro parish, which he hoped can enrich the "cultural value" of the area.

The secretary told reporters yesterday on the sidelines of an event that he "feels happy" with the project and deemed that the local social organisations are "enthusiastic and active in enriching Macau's culture".

As the government also has plans to revitalise the São Lázaro area and create a cultural and creative zone, Cheong said he hoped Holy House of Mercy's project can be a success and promote more projects of this kind both through the government and the community.

On the other hand, the Social Welfare Bureau is going to relocate at the end of this year. The secretary said after the relocation, the premises (commonly known as the 'blue little house') will be returned to the Cultural Affairs Bureau and become a place for the display of Macau's own cultural and creative products.

With the government's intention to develop the area's cultural and creative



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industry, the Holy House of Mercy would like to make use of its two old buildings in a bid to "give contribution and increase the attractiveness of the area," said the head of the association, António José de Freitas.

The plan proposes to build a museum in the two currently vacant premises showcasing Macau's Chinese and

western cultural characteristics.

Freitas said the museum will be set in a reproduction of a home of upper-class Macanese people in the 18th to 20th centuries displaying a variety of decorations including Chinese-style antique furniture, ceramics, wooden carvings, Buddhist statues and Catholic items, as well as the work and manuscripts of re-

nowned Portuguese poets Camilo Pessanha and Wenceslau de Morais.

In addition, a small cafe and a shop selling local souvenirs will be part of the museum.

The head of the charitable association told the Macau Daily Times yesterday that the building plan is nearly finished and expected to be submitted to the public works department for approval in mid-September.

He said once the construction receives the green light from the government the museum can be opened to the public in 18 months time.

Meanwhile, Freitas disclosed that the association will write to Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai On requesting funding for the project.

The construction is estimated to cost about MOP 50 million but he said it is not yet certain how much the government will contribute.

"Although the Holy House of Mercy has the financial ability to pay for it, we would like to use the money for charitable work and we also believe that the government will fully support us," he told the MDTimes.

"Of course it will be good if the government can cover all the cost, because we have already 'donated' our own properties for public use," he added.