

1,500 items from Stone Age found

By NG KANG-CHUNG

THE most refined stone artefacts and earthenware found in southern China, some dating back 6,000 years, have been unearthed in Hongkong.

The 1,500 Stone Age items were discovered during a six-month excavation at the coastal site of Yong Long - next to Black Point, Tuen Mun, where a power station has been planned.

The most significant discoveries are square-rimmed pots with simple geometric patterns carved on them. They could be 4,500 years old. It is the first time such refined pots have been found in southern China, according to experts.

Government archaeologists believed the 65,000 square metre site was a densely populated settlement between the middle and late Neolithic period (between 4000 BC and 2500 BC).

The stone projectile points, spindle whorls, slot-

ted rings, chisels, clay ovens and pottery showed the settlement had been fairly civilised, they said.

They believed it was a commercial centre where most people traded fish catches and there were workshops making stoneware.

Antiquities and Monuments Office curator Chiu Siu-tsan said the discovery also marked the first time such well-preserved items had been unearthed in Hongkong although fragments of similar pieces had been found in the past.

The \$1.1 million project was launched last October and funded by China Light and Power Company, which is to build a new station in the area.

Secretary for Recreation and Culture James So Yiu-cho yesterday praised the company for its contribution to the project, which he said demonstrated the positive role a developer could play in saving archaeological remains from sites affected by development projects.