

\$80m project to boost kuk work

By Winnie Fu

THE Po Leung Kuk intends to extend its social welfare services through rents from a proposed \$80 million reconstruction project.

Pending Government approval, the project would boost the existing six-storey Welfare Building to a 12-storey one and replace the Kuk's west wing by a 30-storey commercial building.

All rent revenues from this commercial building would be used to fund future Po Leung Kuk welfare projects.

This was revealed by Po Leung Kuk Chairman Michael Chan yesterday before he left for Beijing at the head of a delegation.

"Since the original foundation of the Welfare Building had been set for a 12-storey building, there's no need to pull down the existing six stories. The new six stories will be added on top," he said.

The costs of extending the Welfare Building and constructing the commercial building were expected to be \$20 million and \$60 million respectively.

"Once completed, we expect the commercial building to bring in about \$30 million annually for the Po Leung Kuk," he said. "The costs can be covered within five years."

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— Michael Chan, Po Leung Kuk chairman

Mr Chan said the project would not affect the Kuk's daily running because the administrative offices in the west wing of the existing Po Leung Kuk on Leighton Road could be incorporated into the extended Welfare Building.

"Only some mentally handicapped children living in the west wing need re-accommodation," he said. "Anyway, we have plans to move these children to a new school in North Point whether or not the reconstruction plan is approved."

Mr Chan said future projects of Po Leung Kuk include build-

ing a recreation campsite, twice as big as the existing one in Pak Tam Chung, expanding elderly services and setting up new "Homes for Children".

The 30-member Po Leung Kuk delegation that left for Beijing yesterday included two vice-chairmen and 15 directors of the organisation. Headed by Mr Chan, this is the third Po Leung Kuk tour to China organised through the *Xinhua* news agency.

The directors will meet various officials, including Mr Ji Peng-fei of the Hongkong and Macau Affairs Office, to exchange views on social welfare services.

"We will also present our future development plans to the Chinese officials and visit some of their social service organisations like homes for the elderly, nurseries, and hospitals," said Mr Chan.

Discussions would be confined to social welfare and educational issues while political matters would be avoided, he said.

The delegation has prepared two gifts for their visit to Beijing University — a "Po Leung Kuk Centennial History" and a set of "Laws of Hongkong" comprising 32 volumes.