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**WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION
CONCEPT PLAN COMPETITION**

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL PANEL

January 2002

**CONCEPT PLAN COMPETITION FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED ARTS, CULTURAL
AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT AT THE
WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION, HONG KONG**

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL PANEL

INTRODUCTION

This document is the report of the Technical Panel (the Panel) established to advise the Jury for the West Kowloon Reclamation Concept Plan Competition on the technical assessment of individual entries to the competition.

BACKGROUND

2. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region launched the West Kowloon Reclamation Concept Plan Competition on 6 April 2001 to invite conceptual proposals for the development of the 40-hectare waterfront site at the southern tip of the West Kowloon Reclamation in Hong Kong into an integrated arts, cultural and entertainment district. The Competition Document, containing full details of the general conditions of the competition and the competition brief, was given wide publicity.

3. The competition attracted 161 entries by the closing date of 29 September 2001, with 71 from Hong Kong and 90 from elsewhere. (Note: entries dispatched by air on or before 26 September 2001 were accepted as meeting the closing date if they arrived after 29 September, at the request of overseas entrants relying on delivery services disrupted after the terrorist attacks in the US.) Two other entries from overseas with dispatch dates after 26 September arrived late and were not considered further.

4. The entries were assigned serial numbers by the competition Organizer to maintain anonymity during the assessment and adjudication process.

ROLE, COMPOSITION AND MEETINGS OF THE TECHNICAL PANEL

5. The Competition Document states that the Jury will be assisted

by a Technical Panel consisting of ten members chaired by the Director of Planning and that the main role of the Panel is to provide advice to the Jury on the technical assessment of individual submissions. The Chairman of the Panel is required to attend the Jury meetings to present the Panel's assessments, but he may not take part in the return of the verdict of the competition. The composition of the Panel is set out in Annex I to the Competition Document.

6. The Panel met on 9 October 2001 to decide upon a process for the technical assessment of the entries and on 11, 12, 15 and 17 December 2001 to assess the 161 entries in accordance with the agreed process.

7. The Professional Advisor to the competition, Mr Bill Lacy, FAIA, advised the Organizer and the Panel on procedural matters and on compliance with competition rules and submission requirements. He visited Hong Kong to attend the December meetings of the Panel.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY

8. Before proceeding with its assessment work, the Panel considered the provision in the Competition Document that all those likely to be in conflict of interest should be excluded from the competition and discussed what more might be done to ensure compliance. The Panel agreed that members should declare whether, to the best of their knowledge, any party with which they were closely associated had entered the competition and, if so, the details of the matter. The Panel also accepted the need to maintain strict confidentiality throughout the assessment process.

9. The Organizer prepared a declaration form covering conflict of interest and confidentiality in consultation with the Professional Advisor and the Independent Commission Against Corruption and this was completed by all members of the Panel and the Professional Advisor.

10. The declarations made by members were discussed by the Panel immediately before commencing the technical assessment of entries and they were satisfied that, on the basis of the declarations, no conflict of interest arose for any member.

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT OF ENTRIES

11. The following paragraphs describe how the Panel proceeded with the technical assessment of entries.

Technical appraisal by government departments

12. The Panel considered that it would be helpful if the government departments with a primary interest in the concept plan for the competition site - the Planning Department, the Architectural Services Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Transport Department and the Environmental Protection Department - could first advise, in strict confidence, whether the individual entries had generally met the Competition Brief in relation to their respective areas of work and highlight any major technical shortcomings or particularly noteworthy aspects.

13. The departments concerned conducted this technical appraisal from mid October to mid November 2001. The aspects appraised corresponded to the requirements of the Competition Brief. Consolidated versions of the departmental appraisals were prepared by the Organizer and received by Panel members together with the entries.

14. The Panel decided that it would suffice to submit to the Jury its own technical assessments. The departmental appraisals, which make up four bulky volumes, are therefore not attached to this report. They will, however, be available at the Jury meeting for inspection.

Technical assessment and categorization of individual entries

15. The Organizer set up all of the entries in a single exhibition gallery, allowing individual members of the Panel to view and compare all of the entries together before beginning the group assessment of individual entries.

16. The Panel was mindful of its role to assist the Jury without infringing on that body's ultimate adjudication responsibility. At the same time, the Panel took into account the Jury's need to have access at all stages of their deliberations to the entire 161 entries. Therefore the Panel sought to organize the entries into manageable Categories, described below.

17. The Panel considered the entries in serial number order, assessing them from different technical perspectives and, taking into consideration the departmental appraisals and the advice of the Professional Advisor, categorized them according to whether they generally met the Competition Brief (Category 1), or failed to meet the Brief in important respects (Category 2), or should be recommended for disqualification (Category 3). The Panel discussed each entry with the relevant presentation boards set up in front of them and decided upon the appropriate category by

consensus or vote.

18. The Panel came to an early conclusion that a relatively high proportion of entries would generally meet the requirements of the Competition Brief and that it would assist the Jury if entries in Category 1 were sub-divided into those which were -

- (a) well presented, with innovative ideas and commendable design concepts (Category 1(a)); and
- (b) of average quality with some good features (Category 1(b)).

19. Some of the entries assessed as being of average quality with some good features were placed in this category despite some aspects of the entry being considered by some members of the Panel to border on failing to meet the Competition Brief. In these borderline cases, the Panel generally gave the participant the benefit of the doubt.

20. The Panel agreed that its assessments, in addition to categorizing the entry, should draw to the Jury's attention any particularly noteworthy aspects or major technical shortcomings. Minor shortcomings were disregarded on the basis that this is only the conceptual planning stage and minor problems can be worked out at the detailed planning and design stages.

Entries recommended for disqualification

21. The Professional Advisor advised the Panel that, after reviewing the entries, he considered that those numbered 008, 017, 038, 094, 100, 104, 106, 111, 118, 126, 130 and 141 (a total of 12) should be recommended for disqualification for failing to meet the competition requirements in specific non-technical respects. The Panel endorsed the Professional Advisor's advice in respect of all 12 submissions as they assessed the individual entries concerned.

IMPORTANT TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE PANEL

22. During its discussions, the Panel identified a number of important technical considerations that, singly or in combination, most often determined the category into which an entry was placed. The Panel wishes to draw these points to the attention of the Jury. They are set out below.

Provision of arts and cultural facilities

23. The Panel kept in view that the objective of the competition was to invite conceptual proposals for the development of an integrated arts, cultural and entertainment district and examined submissions critically in this respect.

24. The Panel noted that some submissions proposed large amphitheatres or sports stadia or over-emphasized commercial and residential development, while making no provision for, or providing insufficient information on, proposed arts and cultural facilities. The Panel classified such submissions as having failed to meet the Competition Brief.

Landmark features

25. The Competition Brief encourages conceptual designs creating landmarks and many of the submissions proposed such features, often as arts and cultural facilities, though not always to an appropriate scale. The assessment of landmark and design features involved a degree of subjectivity and the Panel could not always reach consensus. In addition, some submissions containing striking landmark features were considered by some members of the Panel to be of only average quality overall.

26. The Panel took the view that a submission that contained a striking landmark feature of appropriate scale, even though it only generally met the Brief to an average standard, should be categorized as displaying innovative ideas and commendable design concepts, rather than as being of average quality with some good features. This would allow such submissions to be considered by the Jury on the same level as submissions having a more consistent standard of innovative and commendable features.

Extension of the Scheme Area through additional reclamation

27. Whilst the Competition Brief permits proposals extending beyond the Scheme Area, it also points out that in the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (enacted in June 1997) there is a presumption against reclamation in the Harbour.

28. The Panel considered that submissions proposing extensive additional reclamation were inconsistent with the purpose of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance and classified them as having failed to meet the Competition Brief.

Modification and integrity of the existing sea-wall

29. The Competition Brief requires submissions to exploit fully the

waterfront of the Scheme Area, the main section of which forms a straight coastline.

30. Many submissions presented design concepts involving modifications to the existing sea-wall, particularly the straight section. The Panel considered that, whereas minor modifications to the sea-wall were possible with sufficient justification and should therefore not be ruled out, major modifications to create a substantially different coastline would be prohibitively expensive and possibly conflict with the presumption against further reclamation in the Harbour. It also considered that major modifications to create navigable water-ways within the reclamation, as proposed in some submissions, would negate part of the considerable effort and expense that had gone into forming the reclamation. The Panel considered therefore that submissions proposing major modifications to the sea-wall should be classified as having failed to meet the Competition Brief. The Panel noted that many submissions proposed commendable design concepts which did not include major modifications to the sea-wall.

31. The Panel considered that water features or shallow waterways for pleasure-boating that were contained by the existing sea-wall were acceptable as design features.

32. The Panel considered that submissions proposing a large mound next to the sea-wall as a main feature had serious technical shortcomings, as the sea-wall would collapse under the pressure exerted by the mound. Such submissions were assessed as having failed to meet the Competition Brief.

Construction over rail and road tunnel reserves

33. The Competition Brief specifies that the Airport Railway and Western Harbour (Road) Crossing alignments and their associated underground facilities and ventilation buildings form existing constraints which must be taken as given and taken into account at the conceptual proposal stage. It also provides that the possibility of decking over the Western Harbour Crossing Toll Plaza area for open space use should be explored.

34. The Panel noted that many submissions proposed substantial structures on top of, or partly over, the tunnel reserves. Where the structure was directly over one or both of the tunnel reserves and it appeared that the conceptual design lacked scope for it to be relocated easily, the Panel assessed the submission concerned as having failed to meet the Competition Brief. Where the structure encroached partly onto a tunnel reserve, the Panel generally took a more flexible view on the basis that scope would exist

for modifications at later design stages.

Linkage with adjoining areas

35. The Panel noted that many submissions emphasized links between the Scheme Area and adjoining districts, including Kowloon Park and the existing cultural facilities in Tsim Sha Tsui.

36. Some submissions, including one recommended for disqualification, proposed monorail systems linking different areas and facilities. The Panel considered that the submission recommended for disqualification (no. 094) presented a conceptual design for such a system which should be drawn to the attention of the Jury.

Feasibility of implementation

37. The Panel observed that some of the conceptual proposals could be difficult to implement in practice. For example, several submissions proposed large canopies covering all or substantial parts of the Scheme Area. The construction of such structures and of buildings within them might be feasible, but the ownership, management and maintenance of the canopy could well present problems.

38. The Panel considered that doubts over the feasibility of implementing a conceptual proposal should not equate to failure to meet the Competition Brief, but were relevant to the technical assessment of entries. Such doubts should be recorded in the assessment form for the individual submission concerned.

ADVICE OF THE TECHNICAL PANEL

39. Having completed its technical assessment of the 161 entries, the Panel advises the Jury that -

- (a) 54 entries generally meet the requirements of the Competition Brief, of which 21 are considered to be well presented, with innovative ideas and commendable design concepts, and 33 to be of average quality with some good features. These comprise the entries placed in Categories 1(a) and 1(b), respectively;
- (b) 95 entries fail to meet the requirements of the Competition Brief in important respects. These comprise the entries placed in Category 2; and

- (c) 12 entries failed to abide by the rules, requirements or conditions set out in the Competition Document in important respects and are recommended for disqualification. These comprise the entries placed in Category 3.

40. A tabular summary of the Panel's categorization of the entries is at the **Annex** to this report. The summary includes the reasons for recommending disqualification in the cases concerned.

41. Forms containing the Panel's technical assessments of the 161 entries also form part of this report. They make up two volumes: Volume I contains the assessments in respect of the entries placed in Categories 1(a) and 1(b), in serial number order. Volume II contains the assessments in respect of the entries placed in Categories 2 and 3, also in serial number order.

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