



WKCD-431

香港建築師學會
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

22 October 2007

By Fax and By Post
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Hon Alan LEONG
Chairman
Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development
Legislative Council
c/o Legislative Council Secretariat
3/F Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Hong Kong

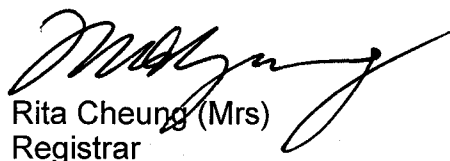
Dear Mr Leong

Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development
Meeting on 23 October 2007

Thank you for your letter dated 14 September 2007 inviting the Institute to give views on the Recommendation Report on Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District at the captioned Subcommittee meeting.

We are pleased to present our views in the captioned meeting and to deliver our written submission on the above subject. Please find enclosed herewith our paper for your consideration and record.

Yours sincerely


Rita Cheung (Mrs)
Registrar

Encl

c.c. Dr Ronald Lu, President
Mr Bernard Hui, Honorary Secretary
Mr K S Wong, Chairman, Board of Local Affairs
Mr Alex Lui, Convenor, West Kowloon Cultural District Taskforce

Patron: The Honourable Donald Tsang Yam-Kuen, Chief Executive, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
A Member of The International Union of Architects (UIA), Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) and Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA)

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**THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
VIEWS AND VISION OF WEST KOWLOON CULTURAL DISTRICT
For submission and presentation to Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District
Development of Legislative Council on 23 October 2007**

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) is highly appreciative of the Government's decision to scrap the developer-led mode for West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) development and the establishment of a WKCD Authority. Members' responses to Government's consultation paper have generally been positive. The 6 visions outlined in the consultation paper are shared and supported. There will be many exciting, yet extremely challenging tasks ahead for the realization of these visions. In this context, HKIA has the following views and vision of WKCD, to present to the LegCo and the Government for consideration and action :

1. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

WKCD will be an area of great significance to Hong Kong. It is also an important public asset to be shared and enjoyed by the community. It should serve the interests of the mass as well as the elite of our community. To ensure its success, meaningful and accountable public consultation is essential.

2. SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE DESIGN

HKIA would have high expectations for WKCD development to adopt sustainable and innovative design. Appropriate policies and requirements should be included in the design, planning and development briefs.

3. INTEGRAL PART OF OUR CITY

WKCD is a site of enormous potential. It is also an integral part of our city and should be treated as so. Connectivity and interactions with urban areas near and far would bring enhancements and synergies benefiting the entire city. Its harbor front presence is expected to add charm and vitality to our harbor and urban scenes.

4. DESIGN COMPETITION

HKIA strongly advocates for open design competitions as ways to generate creative design and planning ideas worthy to such a significant undertaking. Open design competition should not be limited to just the 3 icon facilities. It should be adopted for the WKCD master plan and major development packages.



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5. VISIONARY MASTER PLAN

An urban design led visionary master plan of much wider perspectives and greater depths than the usual Government approach, is essential to realize the invaluable potential of this development, to provide a broad and sustainable framework for the general layout, major development packages, much needed open space with high environmental qualities, responses to the harbor and YTM region, pedestrian connectivity, linkage to rail systems, traffic circulation and important parameters of various development elements in WKCD and potential synergies amongst them to foster arts and cultural activities. A simplistic, rigid building height control can only hinder creative design. It can never nurture a desirable outcome.

6. DEVELOPMENTS TO SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURE

Apart from the arts and cultural facilities proposed, which will be further debated amongst the arts and cultural community, HKIA takes a strong view that residential and commercial developments proposed for WKCD should contribute meaningfully to the promotion of arts and culture. This should be a key criterion in scheme selection for any development proposal made to the future WKCD Authority. Furthermore, to ensure compatibility with the overall WKCD goals, master development plans for all individual packages should be scrutinized.

7. DEFINE EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

For the promotion of arts and culture in Hong Kong, the proposed WKCD brief demands for a large scale and complex development of multiple uses, which requires an extended period of time for design, planning and execution. There are further technical implications due to impending massive rail facilities in this area, such as engineering conditions, potential encroachment, connectivity and acoustic interferences. Therefore, it is important for the Government to define all the external conditions as early as possible, so that WKCD could be planned and designed in response to these external conditions.

8. PROVISIONAL WKCD AUTHORITY

HKIA echoes the Hon. Patrick Lau's suggestion for a Provisional WKCD Authority. Design and planning should commence urgently if the Government's proposed schedule to complete Phase I by 2015 is to be accomplished.

9. ADEQUATE FLEXIBILITY

Although there are many examples of similar arts and cultural districts in overseas countries, but each one is quite unique on its own. There is no precedence in Hong Kong, which may indicate conditions for success in WKCD. Therefore, it is prudent to allow adequate flexibility in the scale and components of main facilities, development requirements and modes of operation, so that there are rooms for adjustment in future.



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10. ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITY NETWORK

WKCD should not be perceived as an independent facility. It should be a part of and fit into an overall arts and cultural facility network of Hong Kong to foster and promote arts and cultural activities.

11. MECHANISM TO ENCOURAGE CREATIVE DESIGN

HKIA is painfully aware of the severe detriments to creative ideas caused by rigid and unsympathetic building laws. To enable WKCD design to flourish, it is essential to devise a mechanism to encourage the adoption and realization of creative design, provided that the basic requirements for safety, health and welfare of the occupants are satisfied. HKIA sincerely appeals to the legislature to support this effort.

12. SOFTWARE TO LEAD HARDWARE

HKIA understands that the ultimate success of WKCD would depend largely on the software. The hardware could only provide a desirable environment to support the activities and operation. WKCD's well being, including financial viability depends on a sensible plan to run, manage and operate, which should be formulated early to guide the design and planning of the physical development.

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