

29 May 2006

Ms Anita Sit
Clerk to Subcommittee
Subcommittee to WKCD Development
3/F Citibank Tower
No. 3 Garden Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Sit

Re: Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development
Invitation of views on the way forward for the West Kowloon Cultural District Development

I refer to your letter of 8th May 2006 addressed to the former executive director and have pleasure forwarding these comments on the Theatre Complex in the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities (CACF) as defined in the Invitation for Proposals (IFP).

1. Given the pressure on existing performance venues and an increasingly competitive environment in arts and cultural development in the region, the proposed increase in the inventory of arts facilities is most welcome.
2. While most theatre activity is currently subvented, the emergence of a commercial theatre sector can be envisaged. Provision for commercial theatre, cabaret, comedy, jazz, and small-scale pop/rock would add to the diversity and dynamism of the Theatre Complex.
3. Technical provisions for acoustic concerts and other stage performances are significantly different and therefore virtually impossible to combine in one space. The requirements for dance, drama, musical and lyric theatre are relatively similar. Thus, if large scale concerts and stage performances are both intended, it may be helpful to consider two venues of significant seating capacity.
4. Whether as part of the complex or outside, a large flexible space will make it possible to present contemporary works by directors such as Brook, Le Page and Wilson, and offer an important alternative for resident creative talent. This may be served by the proposed 10,000 seat venue.
5. Provision for catering, corporate entertainment and other activity related to sponsorship and community support is an important consideration for most arts organisations
6. Full size rehearsal facilities increase productive use of the performance venues and provide additional occasional informal performing spaces. The presence of artistic personnel on a day-to-day basis also helps animate the complex outside performance times.

7. A flexible, responsive and widely accessible box office system is critical. Compatibility with systems in other venues is especially important to promoters working with multiple venues.
8. The interests of entertainment and tourism sectors do not necessarily coincide with those of the arts community, but it is possible to strengthen the common agendas of attracting audiences and visitors, and enhancing Hong Kong's brand values. The shared agendas are likely to be in publicity, communications and brand building, rather than in product development.

I hope that these comments are helpful, and would be happy to contribute to further discussion of both the CACF and WKCD at the appropriate forums, drawing upon my work in planning for the Esplanade and other arts buildings while in Singapore, and observations arising from planning the HKAF.

Sincerely,

Tisa Ho
Executive Director

Copy: Hon Alan Leong Kah-kit, SC (Chairman)