

The Hong Kong Institute of ArchitectsPress Release

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Stage Two West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Planning and Development Process Proposal
Planning and Phased-stage Development Process based on Incremental Approach

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) has attempted to consolidate the public discussion results of the previous months. It is believed “to develop a Cultural District on the West Kowloon Reclamation” and “to make good use of property development proceeds for supporting cultural projects” are the two main directions generally accepted by the public at large. This is also considered as the basis for consensus initially established by the public after the government has launched the Stage One Invitation for Proposals and the commencement of public consultation.

As the public at large are still exploring on how to proceed further after the end of the Stage One consultation on the WKCD development, HKIA hopes to put forward the proposal of using the Incremental Approach as the basis for the Planning and Phased-stage Development Process for public discussion and reference:

Planning and Phased-stage Development Process on the basis of Incremental Approach**1. Establish the Provisional WKCD Development Board**

For a more focused and effective co-ordination and management of the subsequent issues arising from the planning and development of the WKCD project, HKIA has generalized from public opinions that the initial establishment of the Provisional WKCD Development Board is considered to be an appropriate administrative structure capable of facilitating the representatives of all parties concerned to discuss various issues on equal basis.

2. Engage further public consultation on core issues

While the government is studying the proposal to establish the Provisional WKCD Development Board, efforts should be directed at the same time to engage further public consultation on the core issues of the project. Such issues include the needs for cultural facilities matching the direction of cultural development in Hong Kong, the future modes of construction and operation of the project, and whether a giant canopy is required as a landmark for the cultural district. In order to keep the public informed of the development progress of this project, the government should make public the opinions collected from the cultural and arts sectors on the project during the end of 2003 to early 2004 period, the financial data submitted in the proposals at the Stage One Invitation for Proposals and the market demand survey results, so as to facilitate the public to reach consensus, on the basis of the Stage One Planning and Consultation results, on the required cultural facilities in the cultural district and to determine the scale of development of the commercial and residential projects for supporting the long term development of the relevant cultural facilities.

3. Compile the Planning Brief

If the public at large have reached consensus on the cultural facilities and the development scale of the commercial and residential projects in the cultural district, the Provisional WKCD Development Board to be set up subsequently will be able to follow the regular town planning process by drawing up the Planning Brief. The Town Planning Board will also be involved in the relevant process, affirm the Planning Brief, and then draw up the Outline Zoning Plan.

4. Organize a tender for development including design competition and compile the Master Development Proposal

The WKCD Development Board may subsequently follow the Planning Brief and Outline Zoning Plan in consensus to organize a tender for development including design competition for the layout design of the various relevant facilities inside the cultural district in order to compile the Master Development Proposal shaping up the future development of the district. This is also helpful to facilitate the WKCD Development Board to launch the project in different stages under the Incremental Approach. And the competition should also specify that the winner will get the right to develop a certain percentage (such as 25% or 30%) of the Phase One land parcels of the overall development as its prize. And the Phase One development should include cultural facilities and commercial development projects at the same time.

5. Strict development conditions and tender in phases

There are no fixed rules for cultural development and the needs for cultural facilities may also change over time. The WKCD Development Board should make timely decisions by reviewing and adjusting the ready Master Development Proposal at fixed time intervals and to organize tenders in phases for various commercial and residential projects according to the actual prevailing market conditions. The WKCD Development Board should also specify the strict conditions clearly in the development contract to ensure sufficient support is available for the relevant cultural facilities.

The HKIA has pointed out that for large-scale projects like the WKCD, substantial development risk exists. Furthermore, if its planning process has not yet obtained common consensus from the public at large, changes may occur in each and every step when the project is launched. Therefore, the WKCD project, which is now founded on public support for continuous development, should start from the core issues again and proceed step by step to engage further consultation, trying to obtain public consensus progressively and to complete the regular planning process to ensure sufficient recognition is obtained for the project before proceeding to the different stages of development. This will help to reduce risk with better assurance and control of the planning and development time. The relevant process will also display a more fair and just planning mechanism to ensure land prices are more accurately reflected in the market during project tenders ensuring the precious land resources in Hong Kong are well utilized.

