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**Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of
the West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 27 June 2012**

**Design Competitions for the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities
in the West Kowloon Cultural District**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the design competitions for the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities ("CACFs") in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and highlights the major views of members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee").

Background

2. On 4 March 2011, the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("the WKCDA Board") announced the selection of City Park designed by Foster+Partners ("F+P") as the preferred Conceptual Plan Option ("CPO") on which the Development Plan ("DP") for WKCD was to be based. By virtue of section 21(1) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601) ("WKCDAO"), WKCDA is responsible for preparing DP, the main purpose of which is to lay out the WKCD area and set apart the land for various arts and cultural facilities; for other land uses such as commercial, hotel, retail and public open spaces; and for internal infrastructural projects.

3. Under sections 21(3) and (4) of WKCDAO, in preparing DP, WKCDA has to consult the public and the Secretary for Home Affairs who may impose such requirements or conditions as he thinks necessary or expedient for the development of WKCD. WKCDA unveiled the proposed DP for Stage 3 Public Engagement ("PE") exercise conducted from 30 September to

30 October 2011. According to WKCDA, while the proposed DP had been developed on the basis of the preferred CPO, WKCDA had taken note of public preferences on individual features of the other two CPOs (i.e. Key to Sustained Vitality designed by Rocco Design Architects Limited and Project for a New Dimension designed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture) as reflected in Stage 2 PE exercise conducted from August to November 2010, and had incorporated those technically feasible and financially viable features into the proposed DP with due regard to the integrity of the preferred CPO.

4. The proposed DP strictly complies with the statutory requirements as stipulated in the South West Kowloon Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K20/26. The key planning parameters include a maximum plot ratio of 1.81, provision of not less than 23 hectares of public open space (including three hectares of piazza areas and a waterfront promenade of not less than 20 metres in width), residential development of not more than 20% of total plot ratio, as well as building height restrictions of 50, 70 and 100 metres above Principal Datum under three sub-zones.

Proposed DP

5. According to WKCDA, the proposed DP comprises the following key features -

- (a) 17 CACFs (as set out in **Appendix I**);
- (b) a Great Park providing 23 hectares of public open space for arts pavilions, outdoor performances and artwork displays, as well as for cycling, running and viewing the Victoria Harbour;
- (c) the Avenue connecting the entrances to the core arts and cultural venues in WKCD; and
- (d) three civic squares serving as hives of activity and central meeting points.

6. Taking into consideration public reference for organic growth, aspirations of arts and cultural stakeholders, site availability, clustering effect to create vibrancy, financial implications and accessibility to and from surrounding areas, the WKCD project will be developed in phases. Part of the Great Park is expected to be completed in 2014-2015, followed by the phased completion of CACF starting from 2015. The proposed phasing plan for WKCD is in **Appendix II**.

7. WKCDA submitted DP to the Town Planning Board for consideration on 30 December 2011. According to its work plan, WKCDA will commence construction work in 2013, with the aim of completing the Arts Pavilion and part of the Great Park around 2014-2015, followed by the Xiqu Centre in 2015-2017.

Members' views

8. Members had expressed views on the subject of design competitions for CACF in WKCD at various meetings in the context of discussing the hardware development of and the proposed DP for WKCD. Their views are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

9. Members expressed concern about whether WKCDA would fulfill its undertaking to hold architectural design competitions for individual landmark facilities in WKCD. They hoped that the design competitions for M+ and other landmark facilities in WKCD would be launched as soon as possible, and the design guidelines would be set out in DP to be submitted to TPB. As advised by WKCDA, such competitions would be held in tandem with the statutory planning process. The first architectural design competition would be undertaken in early 2012 for the Xiqu Centre, which was expected to be completed by late 2015. The design competition for M+ was expected to be launched in mid 2012 and that for other key facilities would follow.

10. Concern was also raised about the progress of M+. WKCDA was called on to provide sufficient time for local and overseas designers to prepare their submissions for the design competitions. According to WKCDA, it would conduct the competitions in accordance with international practice and appoint a jury to select the winning designs, and it was envisaged that first-rate submissions would be received from local and international designers.

11. In response to members' enquiry about the reason for holding the design competition for M+ before that for some other facilities which were scheduled for completion earlier, WKCDA advised that as M+ was a bigger project and more fundamental part of the entire WKCD project, more time was required to undertake the design competition and other relevant preparatory work to facilitate its development. WKCDA would roll out the design competitions for other landmark facilities according to the proposed implementation programme of WKCD.

12. Enquiries were raised about whether the designs of the Park in WKCD and waterfront of WKCD would be conducted by F+P or design competitions would be held for such facilities. According to WKCDA, the Park would be one of the first projects delivered in WKCD. The WKCDA Board would decide how to move forward in the process of the design of the Park at its meeting scheduled for 20 December 2011.

Latest development

13. On 9 March 2012, WKCDA announced the launching of WKCD's first design competition for the Xiqu Centre, which is scheduled for completion around the end of 2015. The Xiqu Centre will be the first of 17 core arts and cultural venues to be opened in WKCD and one of 15 proposed performing arts venues. The Xiqu Centre is located at the eastern edge of WKCD on the corner of Canton Road and Austin Road West. The design competition covers the design of a 1 100-seat main theatre, a 400-seat small theatre, a Tea House for performances for audiences up to 200 and ancillary training and education facilities.

14. WKCDA has set up a Steering Committee, comprising representatives of professional institutes and arts and culture disciplines, to oversee the competition. The submission deadline of the Expression of Interest for pre-qualification for the design competition was on 10 April 2012. Short-listed design teams will be invited to submit schematic designs of their concepts. Entries from the short-listed teams will be examined by a Jury Panel together with assessment through interviews. The selected team will be recommended to the Development Committee of WKCDA and the WKCDA Board for appointment. The press release issued by WKCDA on 9 March 2012 containing information on the selection process of the design/design consultant for the Xiqu Centre is in **Appendix III**.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks at the Legislative Council's website is in **Appendix IV**.

Core arts and cultural facilities in the proposed Development Plan

	Facility	Description
1	Mega Performance Venue	Hong Kong's biggest indoor seated facility, with over 15 000 seats designed for local and overseas concert and large-scale entertainment events.
2	Exhibition Centre Complex	A medium-sized convention facility sitting under the Mega Performance Venue and integrated with a hotel.
3-4	Freespace (with a music box)	It can accommodate 300 to 500 people and places no restriction on the performances it hosts. It also contains a 150-seat (or 300 standing) Music Box providing venue for alternative and independent music scenes.
5	M+	An international-calibre museum for visual culture, covering contemporary arts, design, architecture, moving image and popular culture. A floor area of 43 000 square metres will be developed in Phase 1.
6	Lyric Theatre	A 1 200-seat facility with an orchestra pit for dance, ballet, opera, musicals and theatrical performances.
7	Great Theatre	A grand theatre with 1 600 seats for opera, dance and other large-scale performances.
8	Musical Theatre	A 2000-seat receiving house for touring musicals, popular commercial productions and large-scale performances.

	Facility	Description
9-10	Music Centre (comprising a concert hall and a recital hall with arts education facility)	It comprises a 1 800-seat concert hall and a 300-seat recital hall for chamber music and recitals.
11-13	Centre for Contemporary Performance (comprising 3 blackboxes with arts education facility)	It comprises three flexible performing spaces with 400, 250 and 150 seats respectively for different scales of dance, theatrical and multimedia performances.
14	Medium Theatre I	A well-equipped 600-seat, proscenium-arch style theatre for medium-scale theatrical and dance performances.
15	Medium Theatre II	A 600-seat facility dedicated to medium-scale spoken-word drama and dance ensembles.
16-17	Xiqu Centre (comprising a main theatre and a teahouse with arts education facility)	It comprises a 1 100-seat main theatre, a commercially operated teahouse, and a 400-seat small theatre for traditional Chinese performances.

Source: Website of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (www.wkcda.hk/pe3)

Proposed Timetable for WKCD Facilities Completion

Phase	Target Completion Year	Key Facilities and Venues
Phase 1	2014-2015	Arts Pavilion
		Great Park (Early portion of the Park)
	2015-2017	Xiqu Centre (Main Theatre, Tea House and Arts Education Facility)
		Free Space (with Music Box) and Outdoor Theatre
		Centre for Contemporary Performance (3 Blackboxes and Arts Education Facility)
	2017-2020	M+ (Phase I)
		Lyric Theatre
		Medium Theatre I
		Music Centre (Concert Hall, Recital Hall and Arts Education Facility)
		Mega Performance Venue **
		Exhibition Centre **
		Musical Theatre **
Phase 2	Beyond 2020	M+ (Phase II)
		Great Theatre
		Medium Theatre II
		Xiqu Small Theatre

** Subject to alternative funding options.

Source : Information extracted from the Administration's paper entitled "Proposed Development Plan for the West Kowloon Cultural District and Related Matters" (LC Paper No. CB(2)385/11-12(05))



Press Releases

9 March 2012

West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Announces Design Competition for its First Arts Venue

The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD) launched today a design competition to deliver one of the first landmark buildings for the West Kowloon Cultural District, the Xiqu Centre. The Chinese opera venue will provide a world-class facility for the preservation and development of the art form in Hong Kong and will be designed to host and produce the finest examples of Cantonese and other Chinese opera performances.

The Xiqu Centre, scheduled for completion around the end of 2015, will be the first of 17 core arts and cultural venues to be opened within the District and one of 15 proposed performing arts venues. Occupying a prime site at the eastern edge of the District on the corner of Canton Road and Austin Road West, the centre will provide a gateway of access to the Cultural District. The competition covers the design of a 1,100-seat main theatre, a 400-seat small theatre, a Tea House for performances for audiences up to 200 and ancillary training and education facilities.

Michael Lynch, Chief Executive Officer of WKCD, said, "The competition heralds a new phase of the West Kowloon Cultural District development. We are proceeding to a detailed design stage and I am looking forward to working with inspired creative teams on the realisation of our ambitions for the Cultural District."

"Following the fantastic response to the West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre performances at the start of the Year of Dragon, we know Chinese Opera has a special place in the heart of Hong Kong people. We want to find a design team that can deliver for Hong Kong a world-class home for Chinese Opera practitioners, students and audiences and a facility fitting for such an important form of Chinese cultural heritage"

A Steering Committee, chaired by Mr Lee Shing-see, a member of WKCD's Development Committee, and made up of representatives of professional institutes and arts and culture disciplines, has been appointed to oversee the competition.

Interested parties can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to WKCD to pre-qualify for the design competition. The selection process of the design/ design consultant is set out at Annex. Deadline for submission is April 10, 2012. Further details are available on WKCD's website (http://www.wkcd.hk/en/architectural_competition/xiqucentre).

In due course the design teams who are shortlisted will be invited to submit schematic designs of their concepts. Entries from the shortlisted teams will be examined by a Jury Panel together with assessment through interviews. The selected team will be recommended to the Development Committee and the Board for appointment.

WKCD also issued today an invitation for Expression of Interest for Theatre Planning and Acoustic Sub-consultants to work alongside the chosen design team.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The West Kowloon Cultural District

The West Kowloon Cultural District is the largest cultural project in Hong Kong to date. Its vision is to provide a vibrant cultural quarter for the city; a vital platform for the local arts scene to interact, develop and collaborate; and major facilities to host and produce world-class exhibitions, performances and arts and cultural events.

The District will include 17 core arts and cultural venues and 30,000 square metres of space for arts education. It will be a low-density development, providing ample open green space and embracing two kilometres of a vibrant harbour-front promenade, 23 hectares of open space and a green avenue, and closely connected with the neighbourhood.

The project will be developed in phases. The venues to be commissioned in Phase 1 include the Xiqu Centre (main theatre and Tea House), a Freespace with an outdoor stage, phase I of M+ (a museum of 20th-21st century visual culture), a Lyric Theatre, a Centre for Contemporary Performance, Medium Theatre I, a Music Centre with a Concert and Recital Hall, a Musical Theatre, a Mega Performance Venue and an Exhibition Centre. A host of ancillary facilities including a Resident Company Centre, other creative learning facilities and a number of Arts Pavilions for visual arts exhibitions will also be constructed in this phase. Phase 2 will involve the commissioning of the Great Theatre, a small theatre as part of the Xiqu Centre, Medium Theatre II and phase II of the M+ development.

The development plan was submitted to the Town Planning Board for consideration in December 2011. Construction works are scheduled for commencement in 2013.

WKCDA's first cultural event was the West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre which was staged at the future site of the Xiqu Centre near Canton Road during the Chinese New Year in 2012.

Xiqu (Chinese Opera)

Xiqu, also called Chinese Opera, is a form of performing arts which integrates singing, acting, speech, martial arts, gongs and drums, strings, costume and body movement. Xiqu performers make use of symbolic gestures and facial expression to portray the characters and communicate with the audience. According to statistics in 1950s, there were originally 360 forms of Xiqu in China. Today, more than 200 genres are still performed on stage. The best known genres including Kunqu, Cantonese Opera and Beijing Opera, were added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2001, 2009 and 2010 respectively.

Cantonese Opera is the first world intangible cultural heritage in Hong Kong. In recent years, the number of Cantonese Opera performances and operatic song concerts has increased to over one thousand per year, with attendance figures for Chinese Opera performances ranked highest among the four major types of performing arts (theatre, music, dance and Xiqu).

Annex

Selection Process of the Design/ Design Consultant for the Xiqu Centre

1. Interested parties submit Expression of Interest (EOI) to WKCDA to pre-qualify for the Xiqu Centre design competition by April 10, 2012.

- 2. The EOI submissions will be assessed against a set of criteria which measure their professional and financial capability, resources, past experience and track record, as well as quality assurance.
- 3. The WKCDA Management, led by the Steering Committee and assisted by an Independent Professional Advisor, will shortlist four to six design teams for consideration and endorsement by the Development Committee and the Board. Names of the shortlisted design teams will be posted on WKCDA's website.
- 4. The shortlisted design teams will be invited to produce and submit schematic designs, models, etc., of their concepts; they will be compensated with a fee of HK\$1,000,000 for preparation and upon satisfactory completion of the submission.
- 5. The design entries from the shortlisted design teams will be assessed by a Jury Panel of prominent leaders in the relevant professional and arts and culture fields. The Panel will examine the schematic designs, together with assessment through interviews, workshops, etc., to ascertain the individual team's ability. The selected team will be recommended to WKCDA's Development Committee and the Board for appointment.
- 6. Shortlisted design teams will be provided with lists of nominated Theatre Planning Sub-consultants and Acoustic Sub-consultants for selection to collaborate in the competition stage.

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**Relevant papers on
Design Competitions for the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	29.3.2011 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	11.7.2011 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	26.8.2011 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	29.11.2011 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes

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