

Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong 香港高等教育科技學院

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The logo for Thei, consisting of the word "Thei" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with a red dot above the letter 'i'.

Member of VTC Group
VTC 機構成員

Hon. Mrs. Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Chairlady
Establishment Subcommittee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road,
Hong Kong

13 June 2017

Dear Mrs. IP,

**Response to the Proposed Creation of a Permanent Post of
Chief Landscape Architect in the Architectural Services Department**

Landscape architecture embraces the interaction between humans and nature, creating liveable communities through design, planning and implementation. Hong Kong is well known for its rich natural and cultural heritage and as a highly developed and populated metropolis. Hong Kong also has one of the most advanced systems of recognition for the landscape architectural profession across the Asian region and a well-established mechanism for planning and development of our urban environment. It is for us to make the best use of our advantages to take the lead by formulating a comprehensive and integrated landscape strategy to ensure our long-term development as a truly sustainable city.

A comprehensive landscape strategy and a policy that support such strategy is not a luxury but a necessity for the health and well-being of the citizens as well as for the attractiveness of our city for economic activities. It will enhance the competitiveness and standing of Hong Kong as an international city in view of the economic, social and environmental challenges we face today.

There is currently no landscape department under the government structure. Policies set out by the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section (GLTMS) need to be implemented through the corresponding units within numerous departments, and there is generally a lack of leadership from professional landscape architects in those related Bureaux and Department. We ought to recognize that it is not an administrative machine but people-oriented public services that people aspire to. It is only reasonable to expect the government to be able to exercise coherency,

transparency, and consistency in land-use planning and development. Commonly seen problems are:

- Landscape quality given low priority in infrastructural development or planning
- Quality of design of our public realm being compromised by the maintenance requirements, standardization and lack of overall vision
- Different parts of the public realm being studied and planned in isolation without cohesion
- Lack of projects or development relating and contributing to the public realm

The current practice for the planning, design, and management of open space and public facilities in Hong Kong is an awkward one and contributed to the above problems. For instance, there is currently no permanent position of landscape architect in the HAB and the LCSD who initiate and manage all the major open space of Hong Kong. ArchSD on the other hand is responsible for the design and implementation of development of open space and many other public facilities such as publicly funded school campuses, revitalization of heritage sites, etc. All these projects involve substantial amount of landscape elements but landscape architects are not given to bid for them. Almost all of them invites only 'architectural consultants' to bid and even though the consultancy brief spells out the services required from other sub-consultants including 'landscape architectural consultants' ArchSD allows the architectural consultants as lead consultants to decide the scope of the 'landscape architectural consultant'. It is common that the lead consultant, without the need to seek ArchSD's prior approval, reduces the scope of the 'landscape architectural consultant' to only soft landscape design. Landscape architectural consultant being appointed as lead consultant, i.e. direct appointment by the client instead of being the sub-consultant of architect or engineer, is not rare. There has been direct appointment to landscape architect in other government departments and organizations such as CEDD, HyD, LandsD, URA, WKCDA. Hong Kong has not best utilized the well-established system of recognition to the landscape architectural profession to enhance the quality of our public realm.

The proposed new Landscape Division (the Division) and the CLA in ArchSD should have an active role in the design and implementation of public realm, open space, and urban design projects. The proposed Division should also be involved in the budgeting for landscape related projects to ensure the intended quality and standards are adhered to. As landscape architect should be the major service provider of the planning, design, and implementation of those landscape related projects, it is also important for the Division to manage AACSB List of Landscape Consultants and review the landscape aspects of all proposed AACSB Consultancy Appointments.

I support the creation of CLA post in ArchSD in view that it is one of the many steps toward the goals, that the government needs to make bigger commitments to achieve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Y K Chan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul Y K Chan
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Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (THEi)

c.c. Assistant Director/ Arch, ArchSD