

**立法會**  
*Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(1)1105/16-17(02)

Ref : CB1/PS/2/16

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

**Meeting on 13 June 2017**

**Updated background brief on the development of Xiqu Centre**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the development of Xiqu Centre in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD"), and a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") in the 2016-2017 legislative session and the former Joint Subcommittee formed in the Fifth Legislative Council ("LegCo").

**Background**

2. The Xiqu Centre, located on a site of 13 800 sq m on the corner of Canton Road and Austin Road West at the eastern edge of WKCD, will be the first core arts and cultural facility to be opened in WKCD. According to the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA"), Xiqu Centre's artistic positioning is to become the best venue for Xiqu in the region in a world-class facility with a core mission to preserve and develop the art of Xiqu, which includes Cantonese opera and other Xiqu genres. Following the completion of the Xiqu Centre Design Competition in December 2012, the winning team Bing Thom Architects and Ronald Lu & Partners Company Limited has been appointed the design consultant for the Xiqu Centre project. An illustration of the design of the façade of Xiqu Centre is in **Appendix I**.

3. The seven-storey Xiqu Centre will provide more than 23 700 sq m of gross floor area. The project scope of Xiqu Centre comprises a 1 050-seat Main Theatre; a 200-seat tea house with a performance stage; rehearsal and training spaces; arts education facilities; retail, dining and entertainment ("RDE") facilities; public open spaces as well as associated facilities such as car parking. As advised by WKCDA in December 2016,<sup>1</sup> the target was to complete the building (with occupation permit obtained) in late 2017, allowing Xiqu Centre to open to the public in late 2018.

### **Major views and concerns expressed by members**

4. Issues relating to the development of Xiqu Centre were discussed at various meetings of the former Joint Subcommittee between 2013 and 2015. Those issues were also raised by members of the Joint Subcommittee during the discussion on the progress of the WKCD development at its meeting on 20 December 2016. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### Project cost

5. Some members expressed grave concern that the estimated cost for Xiqu Centre and related facilities based on the chosen design stood at \$2.7 billion in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices, which was more than double the cost estimate for the same facilities in 2006.

6. The Administration and WKCDA advised that the estimate of \$2.7 billion (in MOD prices) was based on the current scope of Xiqu Centre, which included additional accommodation such as arts education facilities and increased open spaces. The Administration assured members that it was fully aware of its monitoring role and would request WKCDA to make every effort to adhere to the target budget of \$2.7 billion for Xiqu Centre and, where practicable, seek to further reduce the project cost. WKCDA advised that rigorous value engineering exercises were conducted with the aim of producing a cost-effective design and reducing the total project budget by up to \$100 million. WKCDA would continue to explore and implement other possible cost-saving measures for the project without compromising the overall functions and quality of the facility.

---

<sup>1</sup> [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)297/16-17\(02\)](#)

7. Members enquired about the reason for the reduction of the RDE spaces in Xiqu Centre. They were concerned that the reduction of RDE area in Xiqu Centre would have the effect of reducing the rental proceeds, which would be a major source of recurrent income for WKCDA to meet the operating costs of facilities in WKCD.

8. WKCDA advised that according to a consultancy study, the RDE spaces on the upper floors of Xiqu Centre were generally of less value than those on the ground floor given the lower pedestrian volumes. The proposed reduction of the floor area of RDE facilities in Xiqu Centre sought only to remove the less efficient RDE spaces on the upper floors so as to enhance the overall efficiency of the provision of such spaces in Xiqu Centre.

#### Design and facilities of Xiqu Centre

9. Some members expressed appreciation of the design of Xiqu Centre and the facilities included therein. There was, however, another view that the architectural design of Xiqu Centre appeared to be lacking in traditional Xiqu elements. WKCDA advised that eminent representatives of the Xiqu community had been engaged as members of the Jury Panel for the Xiqu Centre Design Competition, and the local xiqu community had specifically requested that a more modern design should be adopted for Xiqu Centre so as to enhance the appeal of xiqu to the younger generation.

10. Some members enquired whether WKCDA would consider increasing the seating capacity of the main theatre of Xiqu Centre. Members also called on WKCDA to make available appropriate set-ups in the main theatre and other theatres of Xiqu Centre to achieve the best acoustic effects. There was also a suggestion that a multi-media library/resource centre should be set up to facilitate access to collections of Xiqu performances and Xiqu-related educational software by students and members of the public.

11. According to WKCDA, the seating capacity of the main theatre, i.e. 1 050 seats, was proposed with reference to that of other Cantonese opera performance venues in Hong Kong (e.g. the Sunbeam Theatre), and was considered ideal by the local Xiqu community. The main theatre was designed specifically for the staging of Xiqu performances, where performers would be able to perform without microphones and speakers. Taking into account the needs of local troupes, WKCDA would provide rehearsal and production spaces in the venue to facilitate new productions and rehearsals by up-and-coming artistic talents. WKCDA had been in discussion with the Xiqu sector to explore methods to help preserve and reinvent the archives of Xiqu/Cantonese Opera. At the same time, WKCDA had been working on

collection of scripts of Xiqu/Cantonese Opera performances and development of an online database for relevant documentation.

12. On members' views that appropriate barrier-free facilities should be provided in Xiqu Centre, WKCDA advised that as it was expected that Xiqu Centre would appeal to elderly people in particular, the building had been designed with a focus on facilitating universal access. Various facilities such as escalators, lifts, staircases and ramps with handrails would be provided to satisfy all public access requirements.

#### Governance and management structure of Xiqu Centre

13. On the future mode of governance of Xiqu Centre, WKCDA advised that the Authority would directly operate Xiqu Centre, instead of engaging a single troupe to take on a residency role at Xiqu Centre. An advisory committee would be set up to advise the WKCDA management on various matters relating to the programming, partnership, management and operation of Xiqu Centre. An Artistic Director, who would be responsible to the management and the Board of WKCDA, would be appointed to take charge of the artistic direction of the venue.

14. Some members considered that apart from establishing the key artistic objectives for Xiqu Centre, WKCDA should also draw up quantifiable and objective indicators to facilitate review of the operation and evaluation of the performance of Xiqu Centre in different aspects. According to WKCDA, it was formulating a suitable business plan for Xiqu Centre that would actively support its artistic visions. Issues such as hire charges for the facilities in Xiqu Centre, charges for performances and number of performances to be staged, etc. would be considered.

#### Audience building

15. In response to some members' enquiries about the respective positioning of Xiqu Centre and the Yau Ma Tei Theatre ("YMTT"), the Administration and WKCDA advised that YMTT, with a seating capacity of 300, served mainly as a training venue for young artists of Cantonese opera. The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong, the current venue partner at YMTT, had the mission of nurturing up-and-coming young Cantonese opera performers, whereas Xiqu Centre would focus on the training of emerging talents of Cantonese opera and provide a venue for emerging talents to showcase their artistic performance.

16. There was a suggestion that WKCDA should engage an expert in Xiqu education to take charge of matters relating to the promotion of Xiqu education, audience building and community participation. Members also considered that WKCDA and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department should enhance their co-ordination in optimizing the usage of venues for Xiqu performances, and the nurturing of young artists and the building up of audience for Xiqu Centre.

17. WKCDA advised that the Authority had been working over the past years on building new audiences of different generations and different types for the future Xiqu Centre through various pre-opening programmes such as the West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre and the Tea House Theatre Taster. WKCDA would conduct more audience building programmes after the opening of Xiqu Centre. In parallel, the Administration had introduced various initiatives in recent years to cultivate young talents in Cantonese opera.

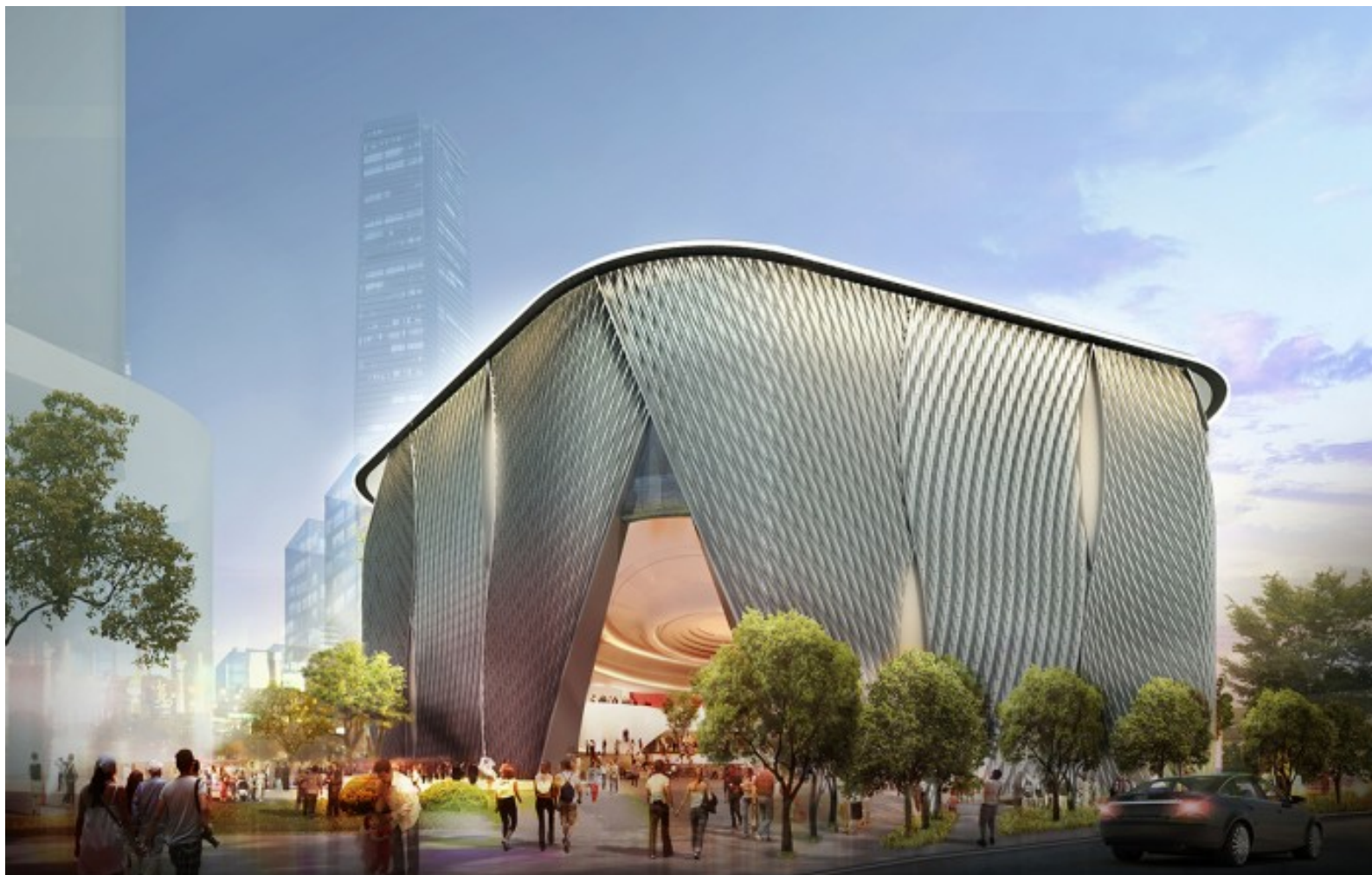
### **Latest development**

18. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee to be held on 13 June 2017, the Administration and WKCDA will brief members on the latest development of Xiqu Centre.

### **Relevant papers**

19. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in **Appendix II**.

戲曲中心外牆設計示意圖  
Illustration of the design of the façade of Xiqu Centre



由譚秉榮建築事務所及呂元祥建築師事務所設計  
Designed by Bing Thom Architects and Ronald Lu & Partners

資料來源：[西九文化區管理局網頁](#)  
Source: [Website of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority](#)

## Development of Xiqu Centre

## List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	25.2.2013 Item III	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	8.4.2013 Item II	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	3.7.2013 Item II	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	29.11.2013 Item III	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	28.3.2014 Item III	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	24.11.2014 Item II	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	19.5.2015 Item I	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>  <a href="#">Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	20.12.2016 Item III	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>