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HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF REAL ESTATE ADMINISTRATORS

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Ms Betty Fong
Clerk to Joint Subcommittee to
Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Fong

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

With reference to your letter dated 9 February 2009, we would like to offer our views on the following aspects concerning the implementation of the WKCD project:-

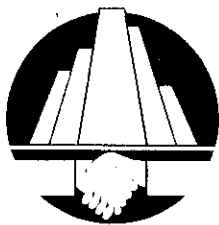
(i) Development Plan

Focus should not only be on land uses such as commercial, hotel, retail and public open space, but also on how the various land uses can combine into a mixed palette of exciting architecture blended into it an efficient infrastructure system, so unique that the design can only belong to WKCD and nowhere else in the world.

To enable the buildings to work well in WKCD, it is suggested that the architecture palette should contain certain iconic elements that will give WKCD the necessary "signature" as well as the more contemporary buildings to provide the functional groundwork. According to the Arts and Cultural experts, good artists do perform better and are able to give their very best when performing at world-class venues that they can be proud of. We would also suggest that the Town Planning Board, when considering the Development Plan, should adopt a flexible and comprehensive planning approach, and not bound by the traditional land parcel approach.

(ii) Planning and Construction of the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities

WKCD will become an arts and cultural destination by the harbour. As it is in close proximity to a concentration of residential, commercial and infrastructure facilities such as the future Express Rail



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Link, the planning of which has to integrate not only physically by the establishment of linkages for stronger accessibility with the neighbourhood and connecting routes, but also socially and culturally with the neighbouring areas and facilities.

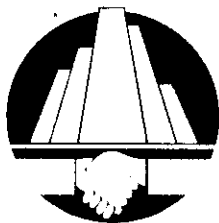
It should be noted that planning and construction of arts and cultural facilities are different from planning and construction of an office development or a commercial centre, in that a lot more flexibility/convertibility need to be built into the system for change and adaptation in accordance with the forever fluid needs of different users over time. The facilities must be so flexible that some of the venues should not be bound by walls but can be extended into certain significant open spaces for outdoor performance, public gathering, art display, exhibitions etc that will become a unifying Cultural District as the name suggests. Design corridors, precincts and the various building styles, each with its own character, will add diversity and vibrancy to the WKCD. A mix of commercial, retail, recreational, arts, cultural and tourism uses should be proposed at different locations to enhance the vitality of the harbourfront and the land-water interface.

In addition, the production of a well-considered development brief is fundamental to effective control on cost, time and quality of the project. It will form the basis for effective monitoring of project implementation.

(iii) Work and Operation of the WKCD Authority

The six committees namely, Audit Committee, Investment Committee, Remuneration Committee, Development Committee, Museum Committee and Performing Arts Committee established under the WKCDA, should work individually and collectively to achieve the objectives and discharge the duties of the WKCDA. The following are essential ingredients conducive to the smooth and successful operation of the Authority:-

- *Allocation of work.* The work that has to be done should be defined and allocated to functions, committees, work teams, project groups and individual positions. Related activities should be grouped together, but the emphasis should be on the process of developing the cultural district rather than hierarchy latching on to account for the need to manage processes which involve a number of different work units or teams under the WKCDA.



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- *Differentiation and integration.* It is necessary to differentiate between the different activities that have to be carried out, but it is equally important to ensure that these activities are integrated so that everyone in the WKCDA is working towards the same goals and objectives.

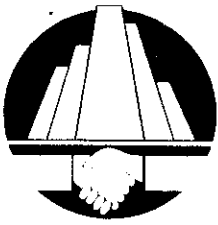
- *Teamwork.* As the members of WKCDA are from different walks of life and with different expertise, their duties should be clearly defined and roles described in ways which facilitate and underline the importance of teamwork at both the Authority and the committees level. Areas where cooperation is required should be emphasized. The organization should be designed and operated in such a way as to facilitate horizontal processes and cooperation across committee and functional boundaries. Wherever possible, self-managing teams should be set up and given the authority and responsibility to run their own affairs. Networking should be encouraged in the sense of people communicating openly and informally with one another as the need arises. It is recognized that these informal processes can be more productive than rigidly 'working through channels' as set out in the organization chart.

- *Flexibility.* The organization structure should be flexible enough to respond quickly to change and challenge. At the Authority and the committees level, a collegiate approach should be considered in which people share responsibility and are expected to work with their colleagues in areas outside their primary function or skill.

(iv) Public Engagement Arrangement for the WKCD Project

Interactive exchange of views and ideas among the society is a must. The Authority should constantly solicit the views of various stakeholders including prospective clients/customers, service providers, community representatives, NGOs and international organizations.

Public views and suggestions should be collected through various public engagement activities including roving exhibitions, focus group workshops, community engagement forums, comment cards, interview questionnaires, telephone polls, and briefings to relevant public and advisory bodies.



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Yours sincerely

Marco Wu
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(v) Development of Cultural Software to Complement the Project

In the WKCD Project, the development of cultural software is essential to underpin the sustainable operation of the Project. The cultural software consists of technologies, institutions and values interacting with each other within the WKCD development.

Cultural software is historically contingent upon, and continually constructed from older tools of cultural understanding that are applied to new contexts for which they were not originally adapted to. However, by recognizing the transcendent nature of cultural values; recognizing how our cultural software creates partial reconstructions of these transcendent values; and modifying our cultural software in order to understand others (ie learning other culture's historically shaped expectations), we can begin to understand and evaluate our own and others' views on the cultural values of Hong Kong.

We shall be pleased to discuss the above with the Legislative Council in more detail, and to provide further clarification on the above views where required.

Should you have any queries or require further information, please contact our Vice-President, Mr Kyran Sze on 2861 1728.