



香港工程師學會

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By mail and by fax at 2509 9055

6 March 2009

Clerk to Subcommittee
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation
of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project
Legislative Council Secretariat
3rd Floor, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road, Central
Hong Kong

(Attn: Ms Betty FONG)

Dear Ms Fong,

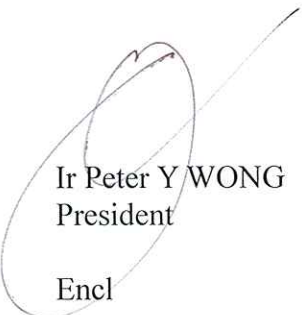
**LegCo Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon
Cultural District (WKCD) Project –
Views on the implementation of the WKCD Project**

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 2009 inviting the Institution to put forth our views on the captioned subject.

Together with expert views received from our Task Force on WKCD Development as well as our veteran fellow members in the field, we are pleased to provide herewith our views and suggestions for consideration of the Joint Subcommittee.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,


Ir Peter Y WONG
President

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Enclosure

**Legislative Council – Joint Subcommittee
to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project
Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
on the implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

General

1. The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) refers to the LegCo paper on the Current Position of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Project prepared by the Home Affairs Bureau (LC Paper No. CB(2)612/08-09(01)).

The Development Plan for WKCD

2. The site of WKCD is really the last of a substantial plot of land along the Harbour front of Hong Kong. The HKIE believes due consideration must be given to ensure it is of good use and the structures on top built with a world class caliber. In this regard, a thorough quality planning is crucial and constant monitoring on its progress is necessary. At this juncture the HKIE is pleased to submit some of our preliminary views.

3. The HKIE fully supports transparency and public consultation in the development of WKCD.

4. Noting that this topic has been dragging on for more than 6 odd years, the original proposal of workflow leading up to commencement of construction appears too slow and borders on being inefficient making it unacceptable. Taking a sampling course of the proposed workflow, it is likely that not one major facility for the art and cultural community will be built and put in use until 2017 and not 2015 as envisaged in the paper.

5. Without sacrifice to an overall quality planning the HKIE invites the Administration to seriously consider whether it is viable to separate the Development Plan into two parts, one for buildings and the other for supporting infrastructure works.

6. In this way, the first part covers those building land plots' planning to follow the suggested route in the paper with ample and adequate consultation where required. The second part covers those infrastructure and less controversial developments and hopefully a faster track may be viable. Without prejudice to the returning coordinated design, works on drainage; harbour front promenade; general road routing and underground utilities may be able to get on an early start for construction first.

7. This benefits the society in two ways: accelerate art and cultural buildings developments in the district by constructing essential infrastructure first while concentration on building designs is ongoing, and secondly create urgently needed

employment through earlier implementation of infrastructure construction.

8. The eastern one quarter of the WKCD interfaces with the underground terminal of the Express Rail Link. The railway has particular design and interface control requirements which will affect the buildings above. The development above the railway terminus should logically be relevant to cross border business activities such as exhibition centers, hotels, offices, shopping centers. We suggest WKCD Authority to collaborate with MTRC in working out the planning and design considerations of the eastern section soonest so that the railway works will not be dragged down by the planning debates of superstructure on top. In this context, apart from the general programme for the overall WKCD, a specific planning programme would need to be put in place for this “overlap” portion of the WKCD, taking all the particular design and construction interface issues into consideration, to advance the necessary interface works in a collaborative and timely manner between WKCD Authority and MTRC. Furthermore if cross border trade related land use is agreeable to the public for this part of the WKCD, then the HKIE suggests to phase the land above the railway terminus for early submission to Town Planning Board and construction commencement earlier.

9. The HKIE’s position is that since the Government already committed \$21.6 billion into the coffers of WKCD Authority, there is no need for WKCD Authority to sit 3 years before spending what eventually need to be spent. It is sensible and conducive to use part of the money as earliest as possible to help and alleviate the worsening unemployment.

Planning and Construction of Core Arts and Cultural Facilities

10. The HKIE supports the previous Town Planning Board’s recent decision to relax the height limit of the stand alone core arts and cultural facilities. Only by giving architects and engineers freedom of expression, we can have signature landmark in the prominent harbour front that citizens of Hong Kong find pride in. Needless to say, the HKIE trusts the WKCD Authority will draft Development Plan in pursuit of that spirit such that West Kowloon new area will not only be center of creativity in culture but also the center of creativity in architecture and engineering of buildings.

Connectivity

11. Viewing that the art and cultural facilities in the WKCD area would attract huge flow of passengers, it would be necessary to have a well-developed transportation network for commuters to travel to and fro the area in an efficient and effective manner.

Works Operation for the WKCD

12. To speed up the operation of the WKCD, we suggest many temporary contract staff in planning the projects be employed as a transitional measure such that the idea of advance award of contracts will not be made impossible due to lack of project staff and

also offer much needed employment.

13. We noted from the recruitment advertisement of the WKCD Authority that the job requirement and salary range of engineering related positions are not comparable to similar grade in the Government. We opine that in order to maintain the professional standard, qualified professionals should be remunerated with reasonable market salary. In the long run, the HKIE suggests that those temporary/contract staffs should be considered changing to permanent staff with priority to retain expertise and valuable experience acquired.

Sustainability in Planning and Design

14. With an aim to attain a sustainable planning and design for the WKCD area, the HKIE recommends Government to consider using more renewable energy in the area. Buildings in the WKCD area should not only follow the Building Energy Codes to enhance energy efficiency but should strive for higher standards. The HKIE suggests that opportunity should be taken by WKCD by specifying buildings to apply the latest state-of-the-art zero-carbon-principle. The HKIE also suggests this new area to use District Cooling System similar to that to be installed at Kai Tak. In addition, the HKIE recommends to build a common utility service tunnel under the main road of WKCD for the convenience of maintenance and avoid frequent road opening in the future.

Public Consultation

15. The HKIE cautions that 3 choose 1 approach in planning design for the western and central portion of the site is likely to attract criticism. Experience witnessed that tendencies were various stakeholders would wish to be consulted for ideas on basic issues on one hand and preparing their own schemes on other. The option to give the public a choice of one out of three models whilst WKCD Authority came up with another needs to be assessed carefully.