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Date: Sunday, May 20, 2012 07:03PM

Subject: Submission on West Kowloon Cultural District and the Draft Development Plan

History: ↪ This message has been forwarded.

Further to your requests for submissions, Designing Hong Kong has the following comments on the Draft Development Plan for the West Kowloon Cultural District:

1. It is unclear from the Draft Development Plan what role and responsibilities the West Kowloon District Authority will have in controlling the overall urban design, layout and development of the area beyond the venues. To maintain consistency and quality it is essential that the Authority retains specified controls over all aspects which determine the implementation of the draft development plan, including land lease conditions, zoning, building and design approvals, and road and infrastructure works, operations and maintenance, as well as services and amenities.
2. The use of 'non-building areas' of sites to create space for public passage will lead to unnecessary complications in the ownership and management of the passage ways. We recommend that lot boundaries are set back to create land reserves for public passage ways, and to make the area highly permeable for both pedestrians and cyclists.
3. No land has not been reserved for cycling facilities such as links and parking for through-traffic and local distribution traffic. We recommend that cycling is recognized as a mode of transport in West Kowloon for security, venue management, technical staff and performers/artists, as well as for those visitors who arrive by bike.
4. Mass transit and pedestrian connectivity with the hinterland – Kowloon Park, Jordan, Yau Ma Tei, Mongkok – remains weak and unresolved in the draft plan.
5. The breakwater of the former Yau Ma Tei Typhoon shelter (now used for as a fire boat pier) and various piers and pontoons which have been proposed and suggested by members of the public and various bodies during the many years of discussion over West Kowloon Cultural District. They are mentioned but not included in the Draft Development Plan. These should be included in the plan, so that the consultation allows the public to comment on such facilities. The failure to now include these facilities which are necessary to enable water transport including ferries, water taxis, harbour tours, dining cruises, yachts, junks, and other vessels, will unnecessarily hamper the opportunity to establish the public need and support for these in an efficient and effective manner which creates the cogent materials required in relation to the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance. Failing the above, a clear schedule with a timeline for consultation should be published.

6. With the available transport infrastructure, and given the lack of high quality commercial space driving up the cost of Hong Kong as a financial and trade services centre, a review of the agglomeration of commercial space in West Kowloon (the development mix) is recommended. Any increase in land revenues from additional development can be applied to fund the increased cost of the West Kowloon Cultural District project.

7. Finally, we continue to be concerned over the implementation, management and financing model of the individual venues. We urge for the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority to take on the role of incubator, and to identify and to allow individual organisations to take on the development, implementation and management of individual venues rather than to try and control all details in-house. A more competitive and more dynamic environment will result in outcomes which are more adaptive to aspirations, opportunities and market.

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