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

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 23 April 2013

Planning and development of M+

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the planning and development of M+ in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD"), and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project formed in the Fourth Legislative Council ("the former Joint Subcommittee") on the subject.

Background

2. In September 2003, the Government launched the "Invitation for Proposals" ("IFP") for developing WKCD. IFP specified a cluster of four museums with four themes (i.e. moving image, modern art, ink and design) and an art exhibition centre as mandatory requirements of the WKCD project. After IFP was discontinued in February 2006, the Chief Executive appointed the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities ("CACF") of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("the Consultative Committee") in April 2006 to re-examine the need of CACF for WKCD.

3. In May 2008, the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development ("the Subcommittee"), which was established under the House Committee in the Third Legislative Council ("LegCo") to study and follow up issues relating to the development of WKCD, received a briefing from the Administration on its proposed establishment of M+ in accordance with the recommendation in the Consultative Committee's Recommendation Report issued in June 2007. The mission of M+ would "focus on 20^{th} and 21^{st} century

visual culture, broadly defined, from a Hong Kong perspective and with a global vision", and "with an open, flexible and forward-looking attitude". Its aim was to "inspire, delight, educate and engage the public, to explore diversity and foster creativity". Given the breadth of visual culture, it was proposed that design, moving image, popular culture and visual art (including ink art) would be the four initial broad groupings for M+.

4. In its Report issued in June 2008, the Subcommittee raised concerns about the M+ project and set out a series of markers for its planning and development. The relevant extract from the Report is in **Appendix I**. At the meeting of the former Joint Subcommittee on 7 September 2009, the Administration provided a paper on its response to the concerns raised by Members in the Third LegCo in relation to the WKCD project. The relevant extract from the paper relating to the development of M+ is in **Appendix II**.

5. In June 2009, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") advised the former Joint Subcommittee of its establishment of a Museum Policy and Management Services Department under the Chief Executive Officer of WKCDA to undertake the M+ project. In June 2010, WKCDA appointed Dr Lars Nittve as the Executive Director of M+, and he took up his post in January 2011.

6. On 30 December 2011, WKCDA submitted the Development Plan ("DP) of WKCD to the Town Planning Board ("TPB") for consideration. According to WKCDA, following the submission of DP to TPB, WKCDA has been preparing the design competitions for several signature facilities, including M+, with a view to commencing the construction works as soon as possible upon completion of the statutory planning process. WKCDA has proposed that M+ (Phase I) will open after 2017 with more than 40,000 square metres floor area, of which 20,000 square metres will be exhibition space, and that M+ (Phase II) will be delivered beyond 2020.

Members' concerns

7. The subject of the development of M+ had been discussed at a number of meetings of the former Joint Subcommittee. Members' major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

M+ collections and acquisitions

8. Members considered that importance should be attached to the collections of M+ rather than the hardware. They were concerned whether M+ would need a lot of money to procure art pieces and how it would co-operate with existing public museums managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services

Department ("LCSD"). According to WKCDA, \$1.6 billion had been reserved for the purchase of collections for the first five years up to the opening of M+. M+ would try to open up dialogues and build up trust with existing collectors worldwide, who might be looking for a home to display their collections or might donate their collections to M+. WKCDA had also met with the curators in Hong Kong museums to explore collaboration and opportunities. WKCDA considered it possible to borrow artworks from public museums based on trust and formalized collaboration, but M+ would be mindful of the need to avoid repeating existing exhibits in LCSD museums and careful about the use of its funding.

9. Enquiries had been raised about M+'s strategy for collections and how the vantage-point of M+ was different from the leading museums in the West. As explained by WKCDA, the mission of M+ would focus on the 20th and 21st century visual culture, broadly defined, from a Hong Kong perspective, and with a global vision. M+ would set for itself the highest international standards comparable with those of other world-leading museums. M+ would be a museum for Hong Kong people and would create a friendly and open environment for the public, rather than standing aloof and inaccessible. M+ would be a hub for visual culture in WKCD, providing spaces for exchanges, not only within different fields of visual culture but also between performing arts and visual arts. M+ would reflect this interdisciplinary exchange by exploring the interface among visual art, design, architecture, film and various In WKCDA's view, while integration and aspects of popular culture. cross-fertilization would be the main theme of M+, it was also vital that the specificities of particular art disciplines could be presented. In addition, there were a number of local artists who had started to gain international recognition and M+ would be a place to display their modern and contemporary artworks.

Concern was expressed about whether curators had enough room of 10. freedom to decide on the artworks that they would purchase/display, and whether an artistic accountability system would be implemented in M+ where curators would be fully accountable for their decisions on acquisitions and the arrangement of exhibitions. WKCDA assured members that it would implement a management mechanism under which the curators could perform their work most effectively. The curators had different specialties and were responsible for acquisition of collections and solicitation of donations in their An acquisition policy would be worked out to particular art disciplines. outline the direction and the principles that M+ would take into account when Guidelines would also be drawn up to avoid any acquiring collections. possible conflict of interest of curators in purchasing artworks.

11. Noting WKCDA's plan to set up an interim acquisition committee ("IAC") before the governance structure of M+ was finalized, some members enquired about the terms of reference and membership of the proposed IAC.

WKCDA advised that the proposed IAC would be composed of members of the Museum Committee ("MC") and would comprise not less than four members and not more than six members. The proposed IAC would be chaired by the Chairman of MC. As regards the permanent acquisition committee to be established, it would comprise Hong Kong based experts outside MC and one or two international experts might be invited to join the committee.

Freedom of expression

12. Members generally considered that M+ should enjoy and preserve freedom of expression. As M+ would be developed as a museum of its time and place, it should preserve the independence of artists and encourage them to express their ideas about Hong Kong frankly. M+ should also have a forward-looking vision and be receptive to different views.

13. WKCDA stressed that the whole basis for the future success of M+ was Hong Kong's freedom of expression. There would be no interference with the contents of exhibitions at M+ as well as other public museums in Hong Kong. Apart from time and financial constraints in taking forward M+, WKCDA had not felt any pressure in formulating its visions and contents, among others.

Training and recruitment of curators

14. Concern was raised about the training and recruitment of curators for M+. According to WKCDA, it did not envisage great difficulties in recruiting curatorial staff. The M+ team had grown from a headcount of three in 2011 to 10 full-time staff plus three short-term contract staff as at April 2012, with more full-time posts advertised. Many of the more recent recruits were world-class curators. While the majority of the curatorial team had a Hong Kong background, there were also members from other parts of the world who had rich experiences working in major museums in Europe and the United States. Besides, M+ had three main routes in capacity building, including internship programmes, in-house training in collaboration with major overseas museums, and hiring of overseas experts for expertise transfer.

Audience building and programme development

15. The collaboration between WKCDA and artists to build up audience to support the WKCD development and how M+ could encourage audience participation were also matters of concern to the former Joint Subcommittee. WKCDA was called on to organize activities to introduce the concept and vision of M+ to the public.

16. According to WKCDA, the main strategy for building audience was to organize pre-opening exhibition programmes on the WKCD site and in different

parts of Hong Kong in the coming years, and after 2014, in the first of a series of Arts Pavilions that would be built in WKCD. The first public project was the M+ Bamboo Theatre Exhibition and Bamboo Cinema held during the Chinese New Year in 2012, which had attracted 4 000 visitors in one day. The Mobile M+: Yau Ma Tei, presenting exhibitions at six different sites in Yau Ma Tei during the period from 14 May to 10 June 2012, was another initiative to bring arts closer to the public and to bring life to the WKCD project. There were other projects under planning which also had a strong education component to instill knowledge about contemporary visual culture among the public. M+ would create a welcoming environment and strive to provide the highest quality experience possible for the audience. WKCDA was confident that convenient access would help increase public exposure to arts and culture.

Architectural design competition for M+

17. Members were concerned about the progress of M+ and hoped that the design competitions for M+ and other landmark facilities in WKCD would be launched as soon as possible. There was a view that while it was important to contain the project cost within the budget, WKCDA should ensure that the design competitions for the major CACF would allow sufficient room for creativity. Members were advised that in the light of the experience of the design competition for the Xiqu Centre, WKCDA intended to adopt the "One-stage Open Project Competition" mode for the M+ design competition and planned to launch a request for Expression of Interest ("EOI") for pre-qualification for the competition in the third quarter of 2012. WKCDA aimed to appoint the winning design team in the second/third quarter of 2013 for completion of the M+ Phase I project by 2017.

Recent development

18. On 12 June 2012, WKCDA announced that M+ had received a donation of 1 463 Chinese contemporary artworks, conservatively valued at HK\$1.3 billion, from Dr Uli Sigg, the world's leading collector of Chinese contemporary art. Under a part gift/ part purchase agreement, M+ acquired a further 47 works from Dr Sigg's collection for a sum of HK\$177 million. According to WKCDA, the donation and purchase were approved by the Board of WKCDA and a trust would be set up to hold the Collection.

19. On 17 September 2012, WKCDA announced the launching of the design competition for M+. Overseas and local design teams were invited to submit EOI to WKCDA to pre-qualify for the competition by the deadline of 15 October 2012. On 10 December 2012, WKCDA announced that six design teams had been shortlisted for submission of proposals for the architectural design of M+. According to WKCDA, entries from the shortlisted teams

would be examined by a Jury Panel together with assessment through interviews. The selected team would be recommended to the Development Committee and the Board of WKCDA for appointment in mid 2013 to develop the detailed design for and administer the M+ project in collaboration with the M+ team and WKCDA.

20. At the Council meeting of 6 February 2013, an oral question was raised on WKCDA's policy on, and arrangements for, acquisition of artworks. The Secretary for Home Affairs advised that to seize acquisition opportunities as soon as possible, the Board of WKCDA established IAC in June 2012 and approved the acquisition policy, which set out the reporting and approval procedures for acquisitions by the M+ team. IAC had so far approved the acquisition of 364 items, among which over 90% were works of local visual culture. WKCDA would make public the list of these works together with that of the M+ Sigg Collection.

21. In March 2013, WKCDA uploaded the lists of acquisitions by M+ and the M+ Sigg Collection onto its website for reference of the public.

22. The Administration and WKCDA will brief the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project on the latest progress of the development of M+ at the meeting on 23 April 2013.

Relevant papers

23. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks at LegCo's website is in **Appendix III.**

Council Business Division 2 <u>Legislative Council Secretariat</u> 19 April 2013

Report of the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development on Phase III Study to the House Committee (issued on 20 June 2008)

Extract from Chapter VI - Conclusions and the way forward

Careful planning for M+

6.18 On museum facilities in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD"), the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development ("the Subcommittee") remains doubtful of the prospect of the 43 365 m2 M+ in becoming the kind of visual culture institution with the international standing it has aspired to achieve especially during the first few decades of its operation. The Subcommittee notes that the M+ concept, which aims to provide an interactive platform to inspire, delight, educate and engage the public, encourage dialogue, interaction and partnership, explore diversity and foster creativity and cross-fertilization, has not been fully tested in current public museums. The Administration intends to provide the space to facilitate non-conventional display of "visual culture", which includes not only visual art (such as installation, painting, photography and sculpture), but also architecture, design (such as fashion, graphic and product design), moving image (such as film, video and television) and popular culture (such as advertising and comics). The Subcommittee considers that there is a market for the development of visual culture, but the success of M+ does not only lie in what it brings to the public but how to make it happen.

6.19 The Subcommittee shares the concern of some deputations that the entire M+ proposal is still at the conceptual stage. Bearing in mind that M+ would amount to a substantial increase by 52% of the total space provision of all the existing public museums in Hong Kong, and that its total capital costs will amount to \$4.749 billion and 78% of the operating deficit of WKCD will come from M+, there is a need for M+ to proceed in a more cautious manner. Given that the international status of a museum can only be built up over time, the provision of a net exhibition space of 16 000 m2 in Phase I may be on the high side. Consideration should therefore be given to whether the implementation of M+ could be deferred until sufficient experience has been built up or be further phased to allow for a more progressive implementation timeframe.

6.20 The Subcommittee is aware that the Administration has no intention to downsize M+ or further phase its implementation. The Administration remains confident that M+ would proceed as planned so long as they could hire the right curatorial team and they could make use of the rich collection on visual culture (over 62 000 items) already acquired and currently kept by Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"). The Administration insists that further downsizing would hinder the development of M+ into a world-class contemporary cultural and arts institution, making it difficult to realize its vision.

6.21 The Subcommittee is gravely concerned that notwithstanding the huge sum of money injected into the building infrastructure and exhibits, the patronage of M+ might be far below FA's estimates, and in turn it would be even more difficult for M+ to build up its status as a world renowned museum facility. The Subcommittee recognises that the engaging of an international operator to operate M+ so as to benefit from the collection and brand name of these international operators may not be consistent with the "Now" and "Hong Kong" perspectives of M+. Nevertheless, co-operation and partnership with overseas and Mainland institutions would effectively raise M+'s international status in particular in the early years of its establishment and this in turn may help in its long-term growth. Need for building a competent curatorial and management team for M+

Need for building a competent curatorial and management team for M+

6.22 The Subcommittee is not convinced that there is no scope of trying out the new curatorial concept in existing museums facilities. The Subcommittee is rather perturbed by the Administration's explanation which implies that the "innovative" approach of M+ is far beyond the reach of the curatorial expertise and experience of the existing museum professionals engaged by LCSD. The Subcommittee does not consider it sensible to entrust such a huge project entirely in the hands of a head curator no matter how competent he/she is. It is important that this head curator is supported by a large team of competent professional and managerial staff who share the same vision, who know Hong Kong and who are prepared to work under a sound corporate system.

Need for integration with the LCSD museum staff

6.23 The Subcommittee considers that the local museum professionals, the majority of which are engaged by LCSD, should not be marginalized in the course of planning and developing M+. Future co-operation will be extremely difficult especially when M+ needs to make use of the 62 000 items of collection in visual culture currently kept by LCSD. Besides, it would be a waste of public resources if there is no integration between M+ and

other public museums, and no sharing of experience and expertise between their staff. It will be for the good of Hong Kong's long-term development if the museum staff in LCSD and other local museums are exposed to the same kind of curatorial culture in M+. In the circumstances, there should be some established arrangements to facilitate secondment of suitable LCSD staff to the interim M+ so that it can have the first core team to test out the M+ concept at the earliest opportunity and speed up the transfer of knowledge and expertise.

Markers for the planning and development of M+

6.24 Having set out the above observations and concerns, the Subcommittee would like to state its position that it supports the development of a flagship museum facility with a focus on the Hong Kong perspective as this would be conducive to developing WKCD into a cultural hub in the Pearl River Delta or even the Asian region. The Subcommittee is also keen to see the success of M+ and would invite the Administration and the future WKCD Authority ("WKCDA") to give attention to the following matters in taking forward the M+ proposal –

- (a) the Administration should explain to the general public in an easily comprehensible manner what M+ is meant to be, before starting to design and build the M+ infrastructure;
- (b) the Administration should make the optimum use of the interim M+ in North Point not just as a training ground for future staff of M+ but as a temporary exhibition centre for public viewing and for testing out the M+ concept in a smaller scale;
- (c) the Administration should ensure full co-operation between M+ and the existing museums under the management of LCSD by promoting staff integration, such as staff attachment programmes, and putting in place contractual arrangements over the borrowing of collections from existing museums;
- (d) the Administration should encourage current local curatorial staff to take on the new challenges in M+ instead of relying entirely on curators coming from overseas as they may not understand the "Hong Kong perspective" as much as local curators;
- (e) the future WKCDA should conduct more extensive consultation with the

museum community before proceeding to establish the management board of M+ and recruiting the M+ staff;

- (f) WKCDA should not adopt Design-and-Build mode of development for constructing M+ and should conduct a design competition if the iconic effect of M+ is crucial to the attraction of quality collections in future; and
- (g) to enhance M+'s position as the major museum icon in Asia, M+ should also work closely with museums in the Mainland as well as those in the Asian region to facilitate exhibition of important collections from these places.

Source:

Report of the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development on Phase III Study to the House Committee (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/hc/sub_com/hs02/reports/hs02-rpt080620-e.pdf)

Appendix II

Extract from the summary of concerns raised by Legislative Council (''LegCo'') Members in the Third LegCo in relation to the West Kowloon Cultural District project and the Administration's response

(D) Development of M+

Issues/suggestions raised	Administration's earlier response	Administration/ West Kowloon
by LegCo Members		Cultural District Authority's
		response
		(as at 7 September 2009)
 (1) Separate design and construction contracts for iconic facilities such as the M+ 	• West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") would have the flexibility to decide on the procurement approach for the arts and cultural facilities in West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD"). According to the Financial Adviser, even though the design and construction of the facilities were procured in two independent contracts, there would not be significant difference in the construction cost estimates.	• The major consideration for the architectural design of the museum should be the functions of the museum and the activities to be held there. The curator of the museum, once on board, would draw up well-conceived plans for M+ and consider the most appropriate option.
(2) Downsizing M+	 M+ would be developed in two phases to tie in with the overall development of WKCD. As the scale of M+ would be comparable to that of world-renowned museums, further downsizing would hinder the development of M+ into a world-class contemporary cultural and arts institution, making it difficult to realize its vision. 	 An on-going consultancy study on market analysis of the museum commissioned by the Authority would ascertain through market researches the existing and potential audienceship/ clientele of the museum. Based on the findings of the study, the Authority would critically examine the appropriate phasing of development of the museum.

Issues/suggestions raised by LegCo Members	Administration's earlier response	Administration/ West Kowloon Cultural District Authority's response (as at 7 September 2009)
(4) Building up collections for M+	 Major museums managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") had in place a very rich collection on visual culture which amounts to more than 60 000 items of exhibits. There should be ample room for M+ to make use of these collections in store. The initial capital of \$1 billion assumed by the Financial Adviser would help to build up collections commensurate with the status of M+ upon its opening in 2015. WKCDA would enrich the collection of M+ in an on-going manner with its own financial resources and other sources of funds available. 	 It took a long time to build up the museum's collection, which should be expanded step by step in accordance with the goal and the direction set out for the museum. The upfront endowment provided by the Government had already included a sum of \$1 billion for building up M+'s initial collections upon its commissioning and an annual collection budget of \$20 million thereafter as well. In addition, museum's collection could be obtained from donation and subscription. M+ could cooperate with individual art galleries, collectors and artists to borrow collections for short-term exhibition use.
 (5) Collaboration between M+ and museums in the Mainland as well as those in the Asian region 	• WKCDA would establish links and network with museums in Asia and other parts of the world to explore future cooperation opportunities.	 M+ would work closely with museums as well as arts and cultural circles from different regions by organizing exhibitions, exchanges and seminars. These activities would not only provide a platform for the artists to showcase their works but also presented an opportunity for the citizens to appreciate the arts and cultures of other regions.

	ues/suggestions raised by LegCo Members	Administration's earlier response	Administration/ West Kowloon Cultural District Authority's response (as at 7 September 2009)
(6)	Arrangement for ownership of collection of M+	 The ownership of M+'s collections, obtained through donation, acquisition or any other means, should rest with WKCDA. To ensure proper protection of the collections of M+, WKCDA might, when establishing M+ and its governing structure deal with the ownership of the collections of M+ through the making of by-laws which would be subject to LegCo's approval. 	• The upfront endowment given to the Authority included the provision for the initial collection and the annual collection budget thereafter for the M+. Since the construction of M+ and collection purchase were paid out of public money, it would be necessary that the Authority should handle the ownership matter with care so as to ensure proper use of public resources and protected public interest. The Authority would consider the findings of the consultancy study on the mode of governance of the museum and make reference to the practices of similar overseas museums in dealing with the ownership issue of M+'s collections.
(7)	Co-operationandintegrationbetweenM+ and the existingmuseumsunder themanagementofLCSD	• The Government would work closely with the WKCDA and establish links in various aspects.	• Museums managed by the LCSD would collaborate with M+ and explore different levels of collaboration.

	ies/suggestions raised by LegCo Members	Administration's earlier response	Administration/ West Kowloon Cultural District Authority's response (as at 7 September 2009)
(8)	Long-term plan for the development of curatorial professionals in parallel with the development of M+	• The Administration undertook to advise members on the existing number of curatorial staff in Hong Kong, the manpower project, requirements and training plan for curators to complement the scale and themes of M+.	 HAB had started the preparation for the Manpower Mapping Study on the Arts and Cultural Sector. It planed to commission the manpower mapping study in the second half of 2009 for completion in 2010. The findings of the study would shed light on the needs of the arts and cultural sector for all sorts of talents. The Authority would also draw up appropriate plans for the manpower needs in different areas for the WKCD facilities to tie in with the manpower requirement when the construction of WKCD facilities were completed.
(9)	Public education on M+ and consultation with the museum community before proceeding to establish the management board of M+ and recruiting the M+ staff	• The WKCDA would engage the arts and cultural sector to gauge their views (in particular the concerned museum organisations) on the planning and development of the museum facilities in the WKCD to ensure that facilities and operation of the museum could meet their needs.	• The Authority conducted public education campaigns and consultation exercises at different stages of development in order to gauge the views of the public and stakeholders through different channels. This was to ensure that their needs were taken care of and considered at different stages of development and planning.

Source: LC Paper No. CB(2)2433/08-09(01)

Relevant papers on Planning and development of M+

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development		Report of the Subcommittee on WestSubcommittee on WestKowloon CulturalDistrict Developmenton Phase III Study to the House Committee
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West	13.1.2009 Item II	Agenda Minutes
Kowloon Cultural District Project	27.2.2009 Item II(a)	Agenda <u>Minutes</u>
	14.4.2009 Item II(b)	Agenda Minutes
	19.6.2009 Item II(c)	Agenda Minutes
	7.9.2009 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	16.4.2010 Item II(b)	Agenda Minutes
	11.7.2011 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	26.8.2011 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	23.4.2012 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	27.6.2012 Item II	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Council meeting	6 February 2013	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 6475 – 6485 (Oral question on "Acquisition of artworks by the West Kowloon Cultural
		District Authority")

Council Business Division 2 Legislative Council Secretariat 19 April 2013