

For discussion on  
29 November 2013

**Legislative Council  
Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development  
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the  
West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

**Update on the Progress of the  
West Kowloon Cultural District Development**

**PURPOSE**

This paper serves to update Members on the progress of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) development.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The meeting of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) Board on 28 June 2013 endorsed a pragmatic approach to be adopted to implement the WKCD project according to the following principles –

- (a) Rigorous cost containment of individual facilities to a level as close to the recommendations of the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of WKCD as possible;
- (b) Emphasis on content rather than form of these facilities; and
- (c) Early delivery of the Park as well as some arts and cultural facilities for public enjoyment.

3. At the Joint Subcommittee meeting on 3 July 2013, WKCDA informed Members of their proposed implementation programme in light of the above-mentioned approach. Facilities will be implemented in three batches with completion starting from 2015.

## **HARDWARE DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Xiqu Centre***

4. The seven-storey Xiqu Centre, which sits on a prime site of 13 800 square metres on the corner of Canton Road and Austin Road West, will provide more than 23 700 square metres of gross floor area (GFA). The winning design was provided by a joint venture partnership formed by Bing Thom Architects and Ronald Lu & Partners Company Ltd. It will house a 1 100-seat main theatre and a tea house with a performance stage, in addition to 2 000 square metres of arts education facilities, and generous public leisure space. To give the audience an all-round experience, there will also be provision of retail space and dining facilities.

5. The ground-breaking ceremony for the foundation works for Xiqu Centre was held on 24 September 2013 and the works are progressing well according to schedule. Rigorous value engineering exercises were conducted with the aim of producing cost-effective design and reducing the total project budget by up to \$100M. The main areas of savings are attributable to design optimization in structure and façade, efficiency in floor space usage, reduction in floor area of the retail/dining/entertainment (RDE) facilities and optimization of the basement car parking arrangement. Stakeholders and experts of the Xiqu community were engaged and consulted throughout the design process. The tender out date for the main contract is scheduled for the first/second quarter of 2014 with target completion in 2016.

### ***M+***

6. Following an international competition, the Swiss architect firm of Herzog & de Meuron, in joint venture with Hong Kong-based TFP Farrells and Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong, has been selected to design and administer the M+ building project. Scheduled for completion in late 2017, the building project with approximately 60 000 square metres in GFA will create an iconic presence for M+ and Hong Kong, on the museum's site overlooking Victoria Harbour. A striking, semi-transparent vertical plane, housing education facilities, dining facilities and museum offices, will rise atop an impressive horizontal slab offering a diversity of well-considered gallery spaces. At ground and lower levels, access will be provided to the Park and other WKCD facilities, alongside a public resource centre, theatres, retail and dining facilities, and

back-of-house functions including conservation and storage facilities. Of particular note, Herzog & de Meuron, who is also known for its Tate Modern museum in London, National Stadium in Beijing and other notable designs, has firmly anchored the M+ building on its reclaimed-land site, excavating a new “found space” for large scale installations from around the existing Airport Express train tunnel that runs underneath.

7. The M+ design consultancy services commenced in September 2013 and the scheme design is progressing well with detailed design anticipated to start in February 2014. To implement the M+ project with a fast track approach, the scheduled tender out date for the foundation contract is end April 2014. The M+ project is targeted to be completed by end 2017.

### ***Arts Pavilion***

8. The Arts Pavilion aims to provide an exhibition and event space for artists, designers, organisations and other parties to stage independent small-scale exhibitions and events in the WKCD. In the run-up to the completion of the M+, the Arts Pavilion will also serve as the museum’s primary site for its exhibitions, to further extend the museum’s mission into the Park and public sphere. The Arts Pavilion is planned to be completed in 2015.

9. The Arts Pavilion Design Competition was launched on 27 September 2013. The competition was open to all interested parties including architects and designers, and submissions were anonymous. To ensure the successful delivery of the winning design, the contestants are expected to team up with a firm registered under the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, together with nominated Authorised Person and Registered Structural Engineer in the team. A total of 127 registrations for the competition have been received, of which over 100 teams satisfied the initial registration verification. Adjudication of the competition entries submitted by the closing date of 22 November will be held in early December and a final decision on the appointment of a design team is scheduled for end December 2013.

### ***The Park***

10. Further to the decision of the Board on 28 June 2013 to adopt a pragmatic approach for development of the Park which includes a black box and an outdoor stage, a revised scope for the

Park Design Consultancy emphasizing on early delivery, quality open space and cost containment while retaining the original design intention of the “City Park” concept under the WKCD Development Plan was issued to the original six shortlisted Park Design Teams for re-tendering. Tender proposals were returned on 27 November and the assessment process will be completed by end December 2013. Works for the Park is scheduled to commence in 2014 and targeted for completion by end 2015.

11. As a pilot scheme, the WKCDA will be launching a SmartBike system to provide an automated bicycle rental service on the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade for public enjoyment with potential collaboration with a local social enterprise as the operator.

### **MINOR RELAXATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY OF THE WKCD SITE**

12. The WKCDA is conducting a study on the feasibility to increase the development potential of the WKCD site. Potential uses of the additional GFA would include other arts and cultural facilities, RDE facilities and hotel/office/residential uses to increase the efficiency and vibrancy of the WKCD. If the proposal is proved to be feasible, an application for minor relaxation of the total GFA restriction will be submitted to the Town Planning Board around March 2014. The WKCDA will consult this Joint Subcommittee and relevant stakeholders including the Yau Tsim Mong District Council and the Harbourfront Commission early next year.

### **AUDIENCE BUILDING**

13. Alongside planning and development of various facilities, the WKCDA continues its commitment to developing cultural software for the project and the cultural sector as a whole. In terms of audience development, the WKCDA has been planning a wide array of performing arts and visual culture events for the coming months on the WKCD site or at other locations for public participation, which are highlighted as follows –

- (a) ***Freespace Fest 2013*** (14 to 15 December 2013) – With an expanded event space in the WKCD headland area, the second round of this two-day outdoor festival will offer

performances and activities covering music, dance, theatre, literature, media art, parkour, workshop, talks and open-call programmes curated by 10 programme co-curators, and performed by over 400 local and overseas artist units;

- (b) ***Building M+: The Museum and Architecture Collection Exhibition*** (9 January to 9 February 2014) – This exhibition aims to present, in greater detail, the winning design of Herzog & de Meuron + TFP Farrells and the shortlisted entries of the M+ Design Competition as well as M+'s growing architecture collection, with an aim to broaden the public's understanding of architecture and the role of architecture within M+'s visual culture mandate;
- (c) ***West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre 2014*** (17 January to 9 February 2014) – Running for the third year, it has become one of the signature programmes of WKCD and a highlight event during Chinese New Year. The West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre 2014 will feature mainly Chinese opera programmes, with performances by award-winning artists of Plum Blossom Prize from the Mainland, local Cantonese opera performances by an acclaimed cast of virtuosi and young talents, screening of classic Chinese opera-related movies, talk on Chinese opera development, as well as education activities;
- (d) ***Mobile M+: The Neon Project*** (starting in March 2014) – This multi-platform, interactive project will investigate, document and contextualize neon signs – a significant feature of Hong Kong's urban environment – within a local and global context. It will incorporate an online exhibition with multiple curator-generated sections, an online crowd-sourced component that would engage the public in identifying and uploading images of the fast-dwindling number of neon signs remaining in Hong Kong, as well as a series of “neon walks” in various districts of the city; and
- (e) ***Mobile M+: Lee Kit Venice Biennale Hong Kong Response Exhibition*** (March to April 2014) – This project is intended to be both a response and a thematic

expansion on the solo exhibition 'You (you).' by Lee Kit at the 55th Venice Biennale which just closed on 24 November 2013, and aims to build on the positive feedbacks and critical success of the Venice Biennale exhibition. Apart from docent tours, M+ will be organizing special events to enhance the public's understanding of the artist's practice.

14. In addition to the WKCDA's own programmes, a number of major cultural events organised by external organizers have recently been or will soon be held on the WKCD site, including the Lion Rock Music Festival, Clockenflap Music and Arts Festival and The BLOHK Party, attracting tens of thousands of cultural lovers to the site.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

15. The WKCDA is dedicated to artistic and professional development through capacity building initiatives. Recent development of these initiatives are highlighted below –

- (a) ***Xiqu Centre Seminar Series*** – In collaboration with the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the WKCDA invites Xiqu experts and artists from the Mainland and Taiwan region for dialogues with local experts, and sharing of their experience and insights on the future development of Xiqu. Since June 2013, three seminars have been arranged to feature prominent speakers such as Pei Yanling (裴豔玲), Yuen Siu-fai (阮兆輝), Luo Huaizhen (羅懷臻), Cheung Ping-kuen (張秉權), Shang Changrong (尚長榮) and Law Ka-ying (羅家英), attracting about 800 participants in total;
- (b) ***The Arts-ray Series*** – Co-organized with the Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association since 2012, the series provides a platform for overseas experts to share with local arts administrators their insights, expertise and practice in their respective fields. Three recent seminars, which were held in August, October and November 2013, explored the themes of art accessibility, theatre design and touring shows respectively;

- (c) ***M+ Matters Series*** – This series of public talks aims to explore critical issues with key players in the field of visual art, design, architecture and moving image. The fourth episode, titled “M+ Matters: ARTDOCUMENTATION”, was recently held in November 2013 with two public talks and panel discussions focusing on future collecting and displaying strategies;
- (d) ***M+ Docent Volunteer Programme*** – M+ has a regular group of 47 Docents (selected from approximately 900 applications). The team is being regularly trained to prepare for the coming exhibitions, and had provided guided tours for the *Mobile M+: INFLATION!* exhibition held from April to June 2013; and
- (e) ***M+ Internship Programme*** – It is now developed as a recurring programme, with intakes in fall and spring every year (three interns are recruited for each intake). The Programme targets individuals who want to pursue a career in the visual culture field. Within a three-month term, each intern is placed directly with an M+ staff mentor and takes part in M+’s ongoing projects to gain hands-on experience in museum operation, education and exhibitions.

## **STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

16. The WKCDA maintains constant communications with the arts community and different stakeholders, both to listen to and gather their views, as well as to share the latest development of the WKCD project. Recent key activities are listed as follows –

### ***Performing Arts***

17. To prepare for the opening of the Xiqu Centre, the WKCDA works closely with the Xiqu community to ensure that the future venue will meet the needs of the art form –

- (a) The Xiqu Centre Advisory Group comprising experts and stakeholders in the field was formed in September 2013. The group gives advice to the WKCDA on the development

of artistic direction, artistic planning, and the establishment of the governance structure, management structure and partnership arrangements for the Xiqu Centre;

- (b) The WKCDA has engaged the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong to be the Accessibility Consultant for the Xiqu Centre. The design team reviewed the Xiqu Centre design and provided a number of features that can achieve the goal of making Xiqu Centre “a performance centre for all”; and
- (c) Nine meetings were held with the designers, members of the Jury Panel and Technical Committee for the Xiqu Centre so far in 2013. Xiqu Centre Teahouse Mockup test and seven progress update meetings were also held with Xiqu stakeholders.

18. Apart from the Xiqu community, the WKCDA regularly meets with stakeholders of other art forms to gather their views and expectations for future venues. The WKCDA Management met with the nine major performing arts groups<sup>1</sup> in April and September, and has had six progress update meetings with stakeholders of drama, dance and music so far in 2013, involving more than 30 arts organisations.

### **M+**

19. M+ Public Forum is an event held regularly to inform the general public about the latest development of M+. In the third forum held on 18 November 2013, the M+ team updated the public of the progress of the museum building project and the Arts Pavilion Design Competition, M+'s expanding collection and collection strategies as well as M+'s forthcoming exhibition projects.

20. Apart from official programmes and events, communication and engagement with stakeholders also take the form of attending local art and cultural events; giving lectures in

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<sup>1</sup> The nine major performing arts groups are, namely, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Hong Kong Dance Company, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong Ballet, City Contemporary Dance Company, Chung Ying Theatre Company and Zuni Icosahedron.



different institutions and universities; participating in public panel as well as small group discussions; one-on-one and small group meetings with members of the arts community; and interviews with local as well as international media etc..

21. Over the past 12 months, the M+ team gave about 75 talks, attended some 750 openings of Hong Kong galleries, museums and exhibition spaces, dinners or receptions, 500 exhibitions (after the opening), as well as arranged over 150 studio visits, architecture offices visits or one-on-one meetings. Internationally, M+ has so far made over 45 trips and overseas meetings with artists, galleries, museum colleagues, architects, giving talks or being on panels, to list a few.

### ***The Park***

22. The Consultation Panel of the WKCDA met on 1 November 2013 to discuss how best to gauge public views on the use and management of the Park so as to assist in the drafting of by-laws governing the Park in the WKCD. Members agreed to the formation of a task force, chaired by Chairman of the Consultation Panel, to devise a simple engagement plan for the purpose.

23. To start with, during the Freespace Fest 2013 to be held in mid-December, a Freespace Tent will be set up on site to solicit views from the public on the use and management of the future Park through games, engagement and discussions.

24. To prepare for the development of the future Park, the WKCDA has built an 18 000 square-metre temporary tree nursery on the western end of the WKCD site for acclimatization of trees, which serves to test the adaptability and suitability of different plant species and to provide tree related educational opportunities. The tree nursery works were completed in July 2013, and some 988 trees of 96 species have been planted. The WKCDA will also be launching community engagement programmes at the temporary tree nursery starting next year, where community groups and schools will be invited to take part in guided tours and interactive activities to familiarize themselves with the WKCD and its green initiatives.

## ***New Website***

25. To provide a more effective platform for communication and engagement with the public and stakeholders, the WKCDA has revamped its official website with fresh user interface, enhanced functionality and interactive content. The new website went live in early November 2013, and provides a user-friendly, responsive platform for the public to find out more about all of its activities from construction, collection to programmes and events. It targets to become a one-stop shop to promote current and forthcoming cultural events in Hong Kong. By making use of video and images more effectively, it aims to provide the people of Hong Kong with a greater understanding of what the district will add to the city and provide a tool to grow audiences and increase engagement with the community as a whole. The new website can display artworks in the M+ collection and already features a sample of the acquisitions to date. It also provides a What's On section for easy listing and search of events. The new website can be accessed by the public via a user-friendly URL [www.westkowloon.hk](http://www.westkowloon.hk).

**West Kowloon Cultural District Authority  
November 2013**