

For discussion on
24 November 2014

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. In the 2013-14 Legislative session, the Joint Subcommittee held eight meetings and the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) briefed and consulted Members on the following matters -

- Minor relaxation of the development intensity of the WKCD site;
- Progress on Arts Pavilion;
- Update on the development of Xiqu Centre;
- Artistic characteristic and partnership framework of performing arts venues in the WKCD;
- Implementation of the WKCD integrated basement;
- Update on the financial situation of and arrangements for the WKCD project;
- Roles and functions of the Consultation Panel;
- Development of cultural software (with deputation session);
- Integration and connectivity of the WKCD with its neighbouring districts (with deputation session);
- Update on the development of M+; and
- Update on the Park development – design, use and management

3. A site visit on the accessibility and connectivity of the WKCD was arranged for Members on 17 December 2013.

HARDWARE DEVELOPMENT

4. The successful implementation of the WKCD hinges upon the development of the integrated basement and associated public infrastructure works (PIW). The Government has announced to fully fund the integrated basement subject to funding approval by the Legislative Council (LegCo). The Government plans to develop the integrated basement in phases and has submitted a funding application to LegCo in June 2014 for the advance works for Zone 3A of the integrated basement and the design work for Zone 3B of the basement. However, there have been delays in the deliberation of the funding application by the Public Works Sub-Committee (PWSC) of LegCo. As the timely completion of the advance works in the M+ portion is part and parcel of the M+ development, any delay in obtaining funding approval from the Finance Committee (FC) will have significant cost and time implications on the development of M+ as well as other venues in WKCD.

5. In order to optimise the development potential of the whole WKCD site, a planning application for minor relaxation of the maximum gross floor area (GFA) and building height restrictions under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) was submitted to the Town Planning Board (TPB) in March 2014. The application was approved by the TPB on 14 November 2014.

Xiqu Centre

6. Xiqu Centre will be a world-class arts venue specifically built for xiqu (Chinese opera) performances. It is also a centre for the production, education and research of this unique art form. Works on the construction of the foundation for the Xiqu Centre has been completed and the substructure works are on track. Tender award for the construction of the main superstructure works is scheduled for early December 2014. The Xiqu Centre is targeted for completion in mid-2017.

The Park

7. Following the unveiling of the concept design in July 2014, work on the Park has moved on to the schematic design stage. A major new feature will be introduced in the Park tentatively named the “Cultural Boulevard”. A waterfront promenade that will heighten visitors’ harbour-front experience ensures that the Park will be an accessible urban oasis for cultural pursuits, relaxation and contemplation. A leisure cycling track will be provided. Over time, art installations will feature in the Park through the curatorial efforts of the M+ team.

8. In terms of the overall delivery programme, the Park design team is adopting an organic approach. Both permanent development and interim improvement works are being planned. The intention is to maintain partial opening of the Park area for public enjoyment throughout the development period with the construction works of a temporary tree nursery park to be completed in the second half of 2015 followed by the Arts Pavilion in 2016 and a major portion of the Park with the Freespace Black Box and Outdoor Stage in 2017.

M+

9. M+ is a new museum for visual culture in Hong Kong with focus on the 20th and 21st century visual art, design and architecture as well as moving image. This will also cover popular culture. Following an architectural design competition won by the Swiss architectural firm, Herzog & de Meuron, in partnership with Hong Kong-based TFP Farrells and Ove Arup & Partners HK, the design consultancy services for M+ commenced in September 2013. Work on the detailed design is progressing well. A major step forward took place with the commencement of foundation works in August 2014. Completion date for M+ is anticipated in the first half of 2018 but the programme is subject to FC’s approval of the funding applications for the related integrated basement and PIW.

Lyric Theatre

10. Lyric Theatre will be the second major performing arts venue to be provided in WKCD after Xiqu Centre. The theatre will be used for a wide variety of performing arts events including drama and musical performances, with a focus on dance as its artistic

positioning. The design of the Lyric Theatre commenced in May 2014, and the venue is targeted for completion by around 2020.

Artist Square Development Area

11. WKCDA proposes to develop the Artist Square, comprising M+, Lyric Theatre, other arts and cultural facilities (OACF), retail/dining/entertainment (RDE) facilities as well as office/residential developments, into a mini-WKCD, which is targeted for completion by around 2020. This area, referred to as the Artist Square Development Area (ASDA), will form a precinct supported by a balanced mix of various land uses to facilitate “destination building” in the early phased development of the WKCD and enhance vibrancy in the vicinity of M+. The public spaces in ASDA, including the interfacing area with the Park, open space at the Artist Square and the waterfront promenade, will be developed to create a sense of place for the general public and to bring vibrancy to the area.

AUDIENCE BUILDING

12. In order to nurture new audiences, cultivate public interest and appreciation of the arts, and raise public awareness of the WKCD project, WKCDA has initiated and co-presented a wide array of performances, events, exhibitions, forums and workshops online, at the WKCD site and other locations in Hong Kong throughout the year. Highlights of recent and upcoming events include –

- (a) ***M+ at Art Basel in Hong Kong (14 to 18 May 2014)*** - Art Basel in Hong Kong is one of the most important art events in Asia. M+ participated in the 2014 event and presented the M+ Collection, M+ Building design and selected M+ events in a unique interactive setting. The exhibition attracted well over 12 000 local and international visitors over five days.
- (b) ***Take a Swing (26 July 2014)*** - As the second programme of the Freespace Series, Take a Swing was Hong Kong’s first outdoor live music and street dance party. Held on 26 July 2014 in the Yau Ma Tei Community Centre Rest Garden, some of the best Hong Kong dancers were invited to perform different street dance styles accompanied by

funk and neo soul music from the Elektryk Laydee.

- (c) **DECADE** - DECADE is an interactive online platform that joins music and film to create a new cinematic and musical narrative of Hong Kong over 100 years. Following the public performance in Freespace Fest 2013, the online platform of DECADE was launched to the media and public on 7 July 2014.
- (d) **Freespace Fest 2014** (22 to 23 November 2014) - To explore the meaning of open space and the concept of Freespace as a future venue in the WKCD, Freespace Fest 2014 is a two-day outdoor event to be held at the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade. Run for the third year, Freespace Fest 2014 will feature local and international acts in music, dance, literary art and physical theatre. M.U.R.S, the first interactive anchor show in Hong Kong, will be staged to engage audience participation.
- (e) **Rising Stars Performance in Cantonese Opera 2015** (21 February to 2 March 2015) - To offer rising stars of Cantonese opera ongoing training opportunities and to nurture a new generation of Cantonese opera artists for the future Xiqu Centre, the “Rising Stars Performance in Cantonese Opera 2015” will be held at the Annex Building of Ko Shan Theatre. A total of eight Cantonese opera performances (four different casts for two full-length plays) and two nights of Cantonese Opera excerpt performances will be staged during the ten-day event. Mr LAW Kar-ying is the curator while 14 rising stars who received the “Cantonese Opera Young Artist Award” in 2014 will perform in the event.
- (f) **Mobile M+: Moving Images** (tentatively 27 February to 26 April 2015) – This will be M+'s inaugural moving image programme, presenting a broad range of moving image materials in different settings that strongly demonstrate M+'s distinctive curatorial approach to understanding and thinking about the field. It will also showcase a selection of works from M+'s growing moving image collection. This project will be a two-part multi-site project and will take place over a period of two months, featuring an exhibition as well as a series of thematic

screenings.

- (g) **Venice Biennale 2015** (*tentatively May to November 2015*) – After the successful collaboration between M+ and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ADC) for the 2013 Venice Art Biennale, ADC invited M+ to collaborate at the 56th Venice Art Biennale to be held in 2015. Mr TSANG Kin-Wah has been chosen as the artist to represent Hong Kong for the event. The selection was made by M+ and endorsed by ADC's 56th Venice Art Biennale Working Group. This collaboration will again ensure the best exhibition and marketing outcomes for Hong Kong's representation at the Venice Art Biennale, while giving the M+ team further opportunities to work internationally.

CAPACITY BUILDING

13. Well before the opening of its facilities, WKCDA has been striving to enhance Hong Kong's artistic capacity through initiatives including seminars, workshops, training programmes, internship schemes and other collaborative projects. These programmes seek to advance the artistic and professional development of arts practitioners; extend their professional network; facilitate knowledge and cultural exchange; and raise the awareness of different art forms in the community. Recent programmes and initiatives are highlighted as follows -

- (a) **Xiqu Centre Seminar Series** - In collaboration with the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Xiqu experts and artists from the Mainland and Taiwan region were invited to conduct dialogues with local experts and share their experience and insights on future development of Xiqu. Demonstrations and master classes were also arranged. Following the success of three sessions in 2013, the fourth session titled "Do Cities need Xiqu?" was held on 27 September 2014 at Yau Ma Tei Theatre. MAO Weitao from Mainland China (Yueju performing artist, Vice Chairman of the Chinese Theatre Association) and Liza WANG from Hong Kong were invited to share their views and discuss how xiqu could connect with modern city life.

A special workshop was held on 29 September 2014 with MAO Weitao sharing experience with young Cantonese opera artists.

- (b) **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. In addition to four episodes held in previous years, three episodes have been held in 2014 so far. The fifth episode of the M+ Matters series is titled “Postwar Abstraction in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan” with a symposium held on 28 June 2014, which sought to chart the development of postwar abstraction in an East Asian context and considered new methods of collecting and displaying through a comparative art history framework. The sixth episode titled “Import/Export: Postwar Design and Industry in East Asia” consisted of public sessions took place in Hong Kong and Shenzhen on 12 and 13 September 2014 respectively and they presented and discussed the key manufacturers, products, policies, exhibitions, trade shows and other events that made an impact on the industrial design history of East Asia. The seventh episode of the series consisted of two parts. The first part was titled “Theorising Art Histories Globally” with a symposium held on 18 October 2014, which gathered leading and respected art historians to explore the rapidly transforming landscape of contemporary art, a brand new world where M+ will be a crucial player. The second part of this episode was titled “Global Museums’ Collection and Display Strategies Today” with a symposium held on 18 November 2014 where head curators from leading institutions of modern and contemporary art in the world shared their main concerns and questions, ambitions and plans for their museums as well as for the international art world at large.
- (c) **New Works Forums** – In preparation for the opening of Freespace, a series of New Works Forums are organised to provide a platform for Hong Kong artists to explore innovative ways of creating and performing, thinking and discussing topics around contemporary performances. A New Works Forum on “Challenging Perspectives on Physicalities and Bodies” was held on 7 June 2014 to

explore ways of producing inclusive performances for artists with diverse backgrounds and physical abilities at different venues. Overseas speakers were invited to share their creative processes with reference to their respective productions. Another New Works Forum on “Social Acupuncture” was held on 18-22 August 2014 at the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences. It was a five-day intensive workshop where artists were invited to engage the local community in Tai Ping Shan area as a case study to improve their shared culture in a changing society. Darren O’Donnell, Artistic Director of Mammalian Diving Reflex (Canada), and local artists were invited to join this community workshop.

- (d) ***M+ Docent Volunteer Programme*** – M+ has a team of 47 docents. The team is being regularly trained to prepare for the coming exhibitions, and had provided guided tours for the “Building M+: The Museum and Architecture Collection” and “Mobile M+: Lee Kit Venice Biennale Response” exhibitions in 2014.
- (e) ***M+ Internship Programme*** – This is a recurring programme, with intakes in fall and spring every year (three interns are recruited for each intake). The targets are individuals who want to pursue a career in the visual culture field. During the three-month programme, 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.
- (f) ***Fellowship Programme (M+/Design Trust Fellowship 2014-15)*** – M+ was invited by Design Trust, a new initiative launched by the Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design, to be a partnering institution for an annual research fellowship grant. The purpose is to benefit design and architecture related curatorial work, collection and exhibition at M+. Design Trust will provide financial support for the Fellowship for up to six months whereas M+ is responsible for supervising the Fellowship and funding and organising a public talk.
- (g) ***Performing Arts Internship Programme*** - This programme is launched this year to provide practical and

theoretical training in programming, operational development, research and venue design for those who are interested in developing a career in the performing arts field. This three-month full-time internship runs on a recurring basis, with openings every year. The total intake for year 2014-15 is 10 interns. Since summer 2014, three interns have joined the programme and worked closely with the Performing Arts team of WKCDA. Interns take part in the ongoing performing arts projects to gain hands-on experience which help them develop their careers in the performing arts field. They learn about planned facilities and their current development, artistic positioning and programmes.

- (h) ***Overseas training / research programme for leaders from local arts groups on future arts development in Hong Kong*** - WKCDA, together with ADC, undertook this programme which aimed to nurture the artists and arts administrators of local arts groups by expanding their vision and extending their networks globally in the form of an overseas attachment in their respective artistic areas. The insights gained from the experience could provide them with useful strategies and ideas which would contribute to the local cultural development as well as the long-term development of the WKCD. Five talented artists from drama and dance disciplines were selected and have started their attachment programmes in the US, Europe and Asia in 2013-2014. The programme provides a platform for local and international artists to experiment, create and collaborate. The first sharing session was held on 3 November 2014 at Fringe Club in which two artists participating in the programme shared with other members of the art sector their insights and the successful cases of overseas arts organisations, centres and festivals, with reference to their recent visits to Europe and Asia.

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

14. To ensure that future arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD site will meet the expectations of the public and users, WKCDA has been constantly communicating with the public and

stakeholders to gather their views and update them on the latest development of the WKCD project.

15. M+ Public Forum is an event held regularly to inform the general public about the latest development of M+. The fourth forum will be held in early 2015 to update the public of the progress of museum building and the Arts Pavilion project, M+'s expanding collection and collection strategies as well as M+'s forthcoming exhibition projects.

16. 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 different institutions and universities; participating in public panels 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.

17. Over the past 12 months, the M+ team gave about 110 talks, attended some 1 000 openings of Hong Kong galleries, museums and exhibition spaces, dinners or receptions, over 750 exhibitions (after the opening), as well as arranged over 200 studio visits, architecture offices or one-on-one meetings. Internationally, M+ has so far made over 65 trips and overseas meetings with artists, galleries, museum colleagues, architects, giving talks or being on panels, to list a few.

18. On the other hand, the Performing Arts team has also held 10 engagement meetings in the past 12 months to gauge view from different arts and cultural stakeholders of drama, dance, music, and xiqu art forms, as well as other institutions. More than 90 discussions had been held with over 80 arts and cultural groups/institutions since 2010.

19. In addition to the engagement work undertaken by the M+ and Performing Arts teams above, WKCDA continues to gather public views through its Consultation Panel (CP) established under Section 20 of the WKCDA Ordinance (Cap. 601). Two meetings were held in May and August 2014, with one more to be scheduled towards the end of the year. In the past year, the focus of the CP was the engagement exercise to collect public views on the operation of the future WKCD Park. The engagement exercise was completed in June 2014, with the final report published in October 2014.

Findings of the exercise are being used as references for drafting the Park bylaws. The CP noted that WKCDA will maintain ongoing dialogues with different stakeholders with regard to the future operation and management of the Park. Going forward, CP would assist WKCDA to involve young people in the WKCD development and actively engage the community to nurture a sense of ownership in the WKCD project.

West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
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