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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 March 2015**

Development of Lyric Theatre and Artist Square Development Area

Purpose

This paper highlights the views and concerns of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on the development of Lyric Theatre and Artist Square Development Area ("ASDA") in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD").

Background

Lyric Theatre

2. In July 2013, the Administration advised the Joint Subcommittee that the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") would adopt a pragmatic approach to implement the WKCD project with its facilities to be delivered in three batches. Lyric Theatre is among the Batch 2 facilities and the second major performing arts ("PA") venue to be provided in WKCD after Xiqu Centre. According to WKCDA, the theatre will be used for a wide variety of PA events including drama and musical performances, with a focus on dance as its artistic positioning. The design of Lyric Theatre commenced in May 2014, with construction targeted to be completed by around 2020.

ASDA

3. In May 2014, WKCDA advised the Joint Subcommittee that in the planning and design process of M+ and the associated basement, it had identified an opportunity space by including the land parcels around the Artist

Square, which was planned as one of the activity nodes under the WKCD Development Plan, for early development into a mini-WKCD by around 2020. This area, referred to as ASDA, will comprise M+, Lyric Theatre, other arts and cultural facilities, retail/dining/entertainment ("RDE") facilities as well as office/residential developments. The boundary of ASDA and the development arrangement for WKCD are shown in **Appendix I**.

Members' concerns

4. The Joint Subcommittee has not specifically discussed the planning and development of Lyric Theatre and ASDA. Nevertheless, members have expressed views and concerns on relevant issues in the context of the discussions on the artistic characteristic and partnership framework of the PA venues in WKCD, the latest progress of the WKCD development and the implementation of the WKCD integrated basement at various meetings held between March 2014 and January 2015. The key views and concerns raised by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Development of Lyric Theatre

Artistic positioning

5. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the artistic characteristic and partnership framework of the PA venues in WKCD at its meeting on 28 March 2014, Hon Christopher CHUNG expressed concern whether it was appropriate to designate "dance" as the preferred art form at the Lyric Theatre, which was planned to have a seating capacity of 1 200 and would be equipped with a resident company centre, given the small audience base of dance programmes in Hong Kong. According to WKCDA, it was planned that each PA venue, except the Black Box in Freespace, should have one preferred art form, so as to create a strong identity for that art form and the venue concerned and to fully maximize the venue functionally. Various art forms would be able to use Lyric Theatre, although the focus would be dance.

Development schedule

6. Regarding the impact of the delay in the works of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL") on the development of Lyric Theatre, the Administration and WKCDA advised members in January 2015 that according to the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL"), a portion of the works area being occupied by XRL's barging facilities in Zone 3B of the WKCD integrated basement (above which Lyric Theatre would be built) would remain in use and was targeted for handing over to the Government/WKCDA around the fourth quarter of 2016. As a result,

the foundation works for Zone 3B of the integrated basement could only be completed in 2017 the soonest, which would have impact on the completion date of Lyric Theatre. The Government and WKCDA would continue to liaise closely with MTRCL to explore the possibility of handing over the works area of the XRL project to the Government/WKCDA earlier than MTRCL had proposed.

7. The Joint Subcommittee was further advised that in response to the demand from stakeholders of the film industry and arts sector, WKCDA was reviewing the scope of the facilities to be provided in Lyric Theatre, including the possibility of increasing the seating capacity from 1 200 to 1 450 and reconfiguring the building layout. The review of the design, coupled with the delay in the handover of the relevant XRL works area to the Government/WKCDA, would defer the design and construction of the foundations and basement of Lyric Theatre at Zone 3B of the integrated basement, and in turn the completion date of Lyric Theatre from 2019 to around 2020.

8. Concern was raised about the impact of the delay in the approval of the funding application for the advance works for Zone 3A (i.e. the M+ portion) and the design for Zone 3B of the WKCD integrated basement by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") on the implementation progress of the WKCD project. Miss CHAN Yuen-han pointed out that as the construction of the Batch 2 facilities (including Lyric Theatre) could only commence after completion of the relevant parts of the integrated basement, the Administration and WKCDA should be prepared to make alternative arrangements for financing the implementation of the basement where necessary, so as to ensure that the Batch 2 facilities could be completed as scheduled.

9. As advised by the Administration in January 2015, in view of the exceptionally high degree of integration between the integrated basement and Lyric Theatre, the Government had planned to entrust WKCDA with the design for Zone 3B of the integrated basement in parallel with the design of Lyric Theatre. While options had been allowed for the inclusion of the advance works for Zone 3A and the design for Zone 3B of the integrated basement in the M+ foundation works contract and the Lyric Theatre design consultancy respectively, a decision had to be made by WKCDA on the exercise of these options so as to mitigate the impact on cost and venue opening. Given the significant implications of the delay in obtaining LegCo's funding approval for the first stage of design and advance works of the integrated basement on the construction costs and development programmes of M+ and Lyric Theatre, WKCDA had decided, as an exceptional and one-off arrangement, to charge the costs of the relevant works to its endowment fund. On the other hand, the Government would, in its second stage funding application for the integrated basement tentatively scheduled for submission to LegCo in mid-2015, seek to

obtain LegCo's approval for such costs which would be transferred back to WKCDA afterwards.

Development of ASDA

10. In response to members' concern about the huge funding gap for the WKCD project and the delay in its implementation schedule, the Administration advised that WKCDA would accelerate the development of ASDA into a mini-WKCD, which would be supported by a balanced mix of land uses and was targeted for completion by around 2020, to facilitate "destination building" in the early phased development of WKCD and to enhance vibrancy in the vicinity of M+. The provision of RDE facilities in ASDA would also generate income for WKCDA to meet part of the operating expenses of the Batch 1 facilities, which were planned for completion between the second half of 2015 and the first half of 2018.

Latest development

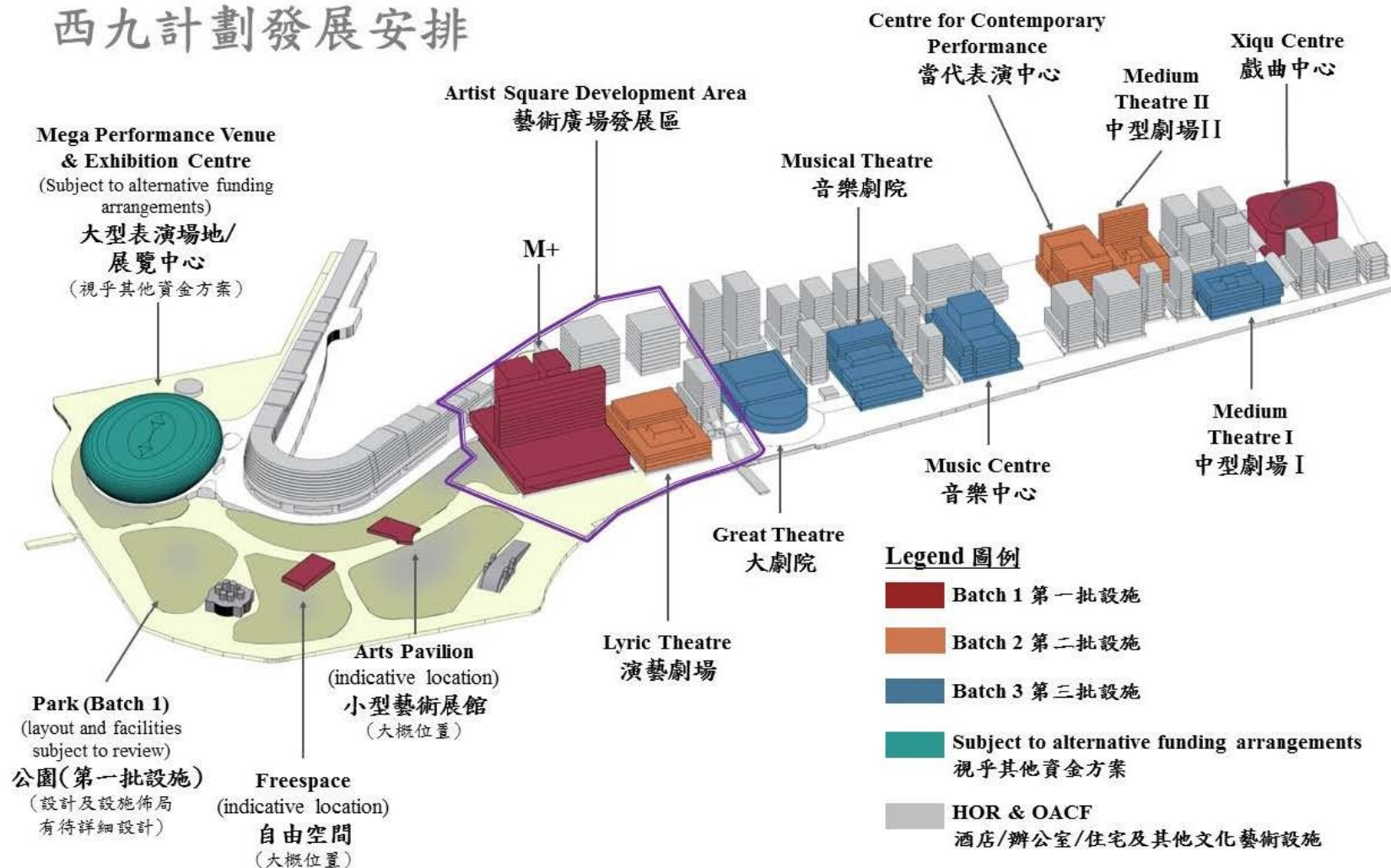
11. The Administration and WKCDA will brief the Joint Subcommittee on the design and progress of the building project of Lyric Theatre, and update members on the development of ASDA at the meeting on 23 March 2015.

Relevant papers

12. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks on the LegCo Website is in **Appendix II**.

WKCD Development Arrangement

西九計劃發展安排



Source: Annex A to Administration's paper entitled "Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Integrated Basement" (LC Paper No. CB(2)1591/13-14(03)) for the Joint Subcommittee meeting held on 28 May 2014.

Appendix II

Relevant papers on Development of Lyric Theatre and Artist Square Development Area

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	28.3.2014 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	28.5.2014 (Items I and II)	Agenda Minutes
	24.11.2014 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	12.1.2015 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes

Council Business Division 2
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