

For discussion on
21 February 2017

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

Update on the Development of M+ and Museum Matters

PURPOSE

This paper provides an update on the progress of the hardware and software development in relation to M+, as well as the public consultation exercise on the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM) project which is underway.

DEVELOPMENT OF M+

2. M+ is a new museum for visual culture in Hong Kong within the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). Its focus is on 20th and 21st century visual culture, broadly defined, from a Hong Kong perspective, the perspective of now and with a global vision. M+ is working on four fronts with a view to realising its vision and mission: to build a professional team; to build a collection; to build a museum building and to raise awareness through pre-opening programmes.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS OF THE M+ BUILDING

3. Designed by Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron, the M+ Building comprises a horizontal section that houses the exhibition galleries and supporting facilities, as well as a vertical section on top that provides space for office uses, retail/dining/entertainment (RDE) facilities and other arts and cultural Facilities (OACF). The M+ Building, together with the Conservation and Storage Facility (CSF), are targeted for completion by the end of 2018 with M+ scheduled for opening in late 2019.

4. The M+ main works contract, comprising the construction of M+ Building, CSF and the adjacent RDE/OACF building, the Interfacing Car Park and the Sewage Pumping Station, commenced in the fourth quarter of 2015. As of the end of January 2017, around 13% of the construction works of M+ Building, the CSF, and the RDE/OACF building, 20% that of the Interfacing Car Park and 30% for the Sewage Pumping Station have been completed. Excavation of the basement is now substantially completed; the basement reinforced concrete construction is 70% completed; and the truss steelwork installation (supporting the main tower) is 15% completed, with around 316 tonnes of steel erected. The erection of the trusses is expected to be completed by mid-2017. In other words, the more difficult below-ground-level works for the project is essentially completed and work above ground level for the M+ Building itself is progressing. Construction activities on site are expected to increase significantly during 2017 following the installation of the major trusses.

5. As the M+ Building is located immediately above the existing Airport Express Tunnels (AET), extreme care has been taken during the execution of the said construction works. The close monitoring of any settlement of the tunnel movement induced from the M+ foundation and building works is thus a key activity. An automated monitoring system was installed inside the AET and commissioned in November 2016 to provide real-time settlement readings. The situation is under control to date.

6. With reference to the 40-month construction programme of the M+ Building, the construction works is behind schedule by 19 weeks. West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) has undertaken mitigation measures including substantially increasing WKCDA's collaboration with and management of the Main Contractor to enhance their planning, coordination and progress. Notwithstanding the delay to the M+ Building, works in the basement area below the CSF and RDE/OACF building are progressing well and it is expected that CSF and RDE/OACF building construction will be largely on track. WKCDA will continue to carefully monitor and manage the progress of the construction works of M+, and endeavours to maintain its original plan to open M+ and the CSF in late 2019.

PROGRESS OF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF M+

Collection and Acquisition

7. M+ is a museum of visual culture. It is building a world-class collection to form the “backbone” of the museum, which will be in constant dialogue with the temporary exhibitions, programmes and educational activities in the museum. The three main disciplines that contribute to visual culture are visual art, design and architecture, and moving image. Each of these areas also encompasses many mediums and modes of expression. M+ focuses on the second half of the 20th century to the present in terms of chronology and it looks at visual culture from a Hong Kong perspective with a global outlook. This clearly defined position of M+ has been put in place since its inception and has been practised and communicated consistently through its public programmes as well as its growing collection.

8. The M+ collection currently includes about 6 000 works, of which works from Hong Kong accounted for around 26%. A set of acquisition policy for M+ has been drawn up and available for public information at WKCDA’s website.

9. A trustee company, M Plus Collections Limited, was incorporated on 12th August 2016 to serve as the trustee of the M+ Collections Trust (the Trust). The Trust is to hold the interest of the M+ Collection for the benefit of the Hong Kong community, with the intention of separating the legal and beneficial ownership of the Collection and protecting it from possible inappropriate deaccession in the future. Under the arrangement, there will be an agreement between M+ (as museum entity) and M Plus Collections Limited (as trustee company) to allow M+ to exhibit the M+ Collection, and to store, conserve and otherwise manage the collection for the Trust. Day-to-day administration, exhibition and conservation of the Collection items will be handled by M+’s management, whereas M Plus Collections Limited will be responsible for the Collection’s development and security through an audit process. The trustee company is a wholly owned subsidiary set up by WKCDA with its directors appointed by the WKCDA Board and has no direct connection with M+.

Supporting Young Artists

10. M+ is acquiring works of many young artists from Hong Kong and the Mainland to add to its collection. M+ has also engaged young artists in exhibitions and other public programmes. For example, two young emerging artists from Hong Kong, namely Siu Wai Hang and Tang Kwok Hin were engaged in the first run of the M+ Rover in 2016, and another artist Rainbow Leung for the second run to be launched in February this year.

11. M+ Sigg Collection, comprising more than 1 500 works, positions M+ as the singular institution in the world to narrate the history of contemporary Chinese art from the 1970s to the 2010s. To further strengthen this position, M+ will continue to document the development of contemporary Chinese art by acquiring works of the most important emerging artists. The new initiative of the M+ Council for New Art, a patronage scheme to raise funds to support such acquisitions, is one example of M+ actively supporting the work of emerging young artists in the Greater China region including Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Engaging Overseas Institutions

12. M+ continues to engage and cooperate with many overseas museums as it has done in the past. Some of the examples include: a potential touring exhibition of highlights from the M+ Sigg Collection; engagement of two curators from overseas museums to participate in the jury of the Brown Family Annual Acquisition Fund for selecting art works at the Art Basel Hong Kong 2017 for acquisition using the Fund; organisation of an international conference on South and Southeast Asian art and architecture in fall 2017, with museum professionals from the regions; discussions about future collection sharing with museums in Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America. These and other prospective areas of collaboration will continue to be pursued.

57th Venice Art Biennale 2017

13. The 57th Venice Art Biennale 2017 will be held from 13 May to 26 November 2017 in Venice, Italy. M+ will co-present with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) the local artist Samson Young during the Biennale. This is the third collaboration between M+ and HKADC, following the acclaimed 2013 and 2015 editions, on this representation of Hong Kong contemporary art at one of the most important international platforms.

14. At the 2017 exhibition, we have decided to introduce a new feature to nurture young talents through offering opportunities for local curators to gain experience in a major international setting. In close consultation with Mr Samson Young, Ms Ying Kwok, a widely respected Hong Kong-based curator, has been appointed as the guest curator. Mr Doryun Chong, Deputy Director and Chief Curator of M+, will serve as consulting curator.

15. Mr Samson Young will have a response exhibition at M+ Pavilion in Hong Kong subsequent to the Venice exhibition in 2018. This will allow Hong Kong people to experience his work after the Biennale closes.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HKPM

16. Shortly after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Palace Museum, WKCDA launched a six-week public consultation exercise on the development of HKPM in WKCD on 11 January 2017 (background of the HKPM project was reported to the House Committee vide CB(2)544/16-17(01)). WKCDA is presenting physical and online exhibitions at the City Gallery in Central and its website respectively on the HKPM project. The exhibition has received nearly 15 000 visitors and its online version has registered over 14 000 pageviews from 11 January to 14 February 2017. Members of the public are invited to express their views and suggestions through filling in questionnaires available at the exhibition and on the website of WKCDA.

17. The WKCDA Consultation Panel (CP) discussed the HKPM project on 12 January 2017. In addition, WKCDA has organised a series of consultation sessions for relevant stakeholders: a consultation session was held on 23 January 2017 for architectural, engineering, landscape, planning and surveying professional groups; another session was held on 26 January 2017 for the arts and culture groups. WKCDA also attended the meetings of the Travel Industry Council and the Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing of the Harbourfront Commission on 14 February 2017 to brief members and invite their comments on the project.

18. To allow WKCDA more time to meet the organisations/stakeholders who have indicated interest in expressing their views on the project, including the internal layout and spatial design concepts proposed by the design consultant, WKCDA has extended the public consultation exercise by two weeks to 8 March 2017. Further consultation sessions with stakeholders and another CP meeting are being arranged the details of which are available on WKCDA's website.

19. Upon completion of the public consultation exercise, WKCDA will consolidate and consider comprehensively all the views collected during the public consultation exercise, as well as report the outcome of the consultation to the Board and to this Joint Subcommittee.

ADVICE SOUGHT

20. Members are invited to note the progress of the development of M+ and the public consultation exercise on the HKPM project.

**West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
February 2017**