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

Meeting on 25 November 2019

Updated background brief on the development of Lyric Theatre Complex

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the development of the Lyric Theatre Complex ("LTC") and a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on the subject.

Background

2. The Lyric Theatre was originally planned to be a 1 200-seat venue for use by a wide variety of performing arts ("PA") events including drama and musical performances, with a focus on dance as its artistic positioning. It is among the Batch 2 facilities to be provided in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD").¹ In March 2015, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") proposed to increase the seating capacity of the Lyric Theatre and incorporate it with two other PA venues into a single complex, i.e. LTC, which would comprise the following facilities:

¹ The Government and the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority announced in June 2013 that a pragmatic approach would be adopted to implement the WKCD project, including delivering the major facilities in three batches, rigorous cost containment and emphasis on content rather than form. A table on the batching, status and target completion dates of the major WKCD facilities updated as at April 2019 is available in Annex 2 to [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)914/18-19\(01\)](#).

- (a) a 1 450-seat Lyric Theatre with installation of digital projection equipment for film screenings;
- (b) a 600-seat Medium Theatre (previously the Medium Theatre II ("MTII"));
- (c) a 250-seat Studio Theatre (previously a 250-seat Black Box Theatre in the Centre for Contemporary Performance ("CCP"));
- (d) a Resident Company Centre ("RCC") with eight dance rehearsal studios and a rehearsal hall at the northern side of LTC; and
- (e) retail, dining and entertainment facilities.

The layout plan of LTC is in **Appendix I**.

3. According to WKCDA,² the reconfiguration of multiple PA venues in one single complex would not only achieve design efficiency and synergy in future operation, but would also advance the completion of the originally planned MTII and one of the black box theatres in CCP. The current reconfiguration of LTC has been warmly received by the stakeholders including relevant major PA groups.

4. According to WKCDA,³ the construction of LTC and the Extended Basement in Zone 3B was carried out under the following two main construction works packages:

- L1 (the initial main works contract) includes the excavation and lateral support and most significant excavation works, pile-caps, adjacent public infrastructure works in Austin Road West and the integrated basement substructure/superstructure to receive LTC. L1 was awarded in January 2018 for completion in the third quarter of 2020; and
- L2 (the second main works contract) includes the construction of LTC and the building services installation for LTC and the integrated basement in Zone 3B. The works commenced in November 2018. The target was to obtain the occupation permit for LTC by 2023.

² Sources: LC Paper Nos. [CB\(2\)1766/15-16\(01\)](#), [CB\(1\)1105/16-17\(03\)](#) and [CB\(1\)914/18-19\(03\)](#)

³ Source: LC Paper No. [CB\(1\)914/18-19\(03\)](#)

Major views and concerns expressed by members

5. The major views and concerns of members of the Joint Subcommittee on the development of LTC are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Reconfiguration of performing arts venues

6. Some members asked whether the reconfiguration of PA venues in one single complex was due to the delay of the MTR Corporation Limited in releasing the works areas of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL") that were within the WKCD site for the construction of CCP and MTII. They asked whether the PA community had been consulted on the reconfiguration arrangement.

7. WKCDA advised that the reconfiguration of PA venues sought to deliver as many arts and cultural facilities as possible for public enjoyment within the available budget and planning constraints. Extensive consultation had been conducted with the relevant major PA groups on the proposed three-theatre model for LTC and no objection had been raised by the groups.

8. Some members sought clarification on whether the three Black Box Theatres originally planned to be built in CCP would be scaled down and whether there was any other plan for the land parcel originally planned for CCP. Some members enquired whether WKCDA would explore the feasibility of constructing some of the Batch 3 facilities (e.g. the Music Centre, Great Theatre and Musical Theatre) on the original CCP site.

9. WKCDA advised that there would be no reduction in the total seating capacity of MTII and the theatres in CCP. The previously 600-seat MTII and 250-seat Black Box Theatre in CCP would be moved to LTC, while the land parcel originally planned for MTII would be used for providing the other two Black Box Theatres (with 400 and 150 seats respectively) originally planned to be built on the CCP site. The original CCP site was being considered for providing other arts and cultural facilities or other uses, given that its location was above the West Kowloon Terminus of XRL and hence not suitable for venues for musical performances that had high acoustic requirements.

Construction of Lyric Theatre Complex

10. The use of substandard steel bars and couplers in the construction of the East Kowloon Cultural Centre ("EKCC") reported by the media in April 2019 had led to members' worries about the monitoring of the construction works for WKCD facilities including LTC. Members asked

whether WKCD had conducted safety test for the construction materials used in the WKCD project and sought details on the monitoring system in place to ensure construction quality and safety.

11. The Administration and WKCD advised that the development of LTC was subject to the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) ("BO"). As required under BO, registered building professionals should ensure that their design was compliant with the requirements of and approved by the Buildings Department ("BD"). Furthermore, the registered building professionals and the Technically Competent Persons appointed by them would supervise the appointed Registered General Buildings Contractors ("RGBCs") to ensure that the works were carried out in accordance with the design approved by BD and the conditions it imposed, and at the same time in compliance with the codes of practice and practice notes issued by BD. Apart from the statutory requirements, WKCD additionally required the independent resident site staff team to provide assistance and conduct inspections to ensure that the RGBCs concerned complied with the contract requirements, design drawings and specifications throughout construction.

12. Some members asked whether the location of LTC which was above the Airport Express Line ("AEL") and Tung Chung Line tunnels had caused any particular technical difficulties in the construction of LTC, given the high acoustic requirements for its theatres. WKCD explained that AEL sat on the ground and was subject to ground-borne noise and vibration. As LTC was located above AEL and sensitive to surrounding noise and vibration, the design consultant had studied the impact of noise and vibration on LTC and vibration isolation springs would be installed to protect the structure of LTC from any ground-borne noise and vibration.

Operation mode, hire charges and residency arrangement

13. Some members enquired about the operation mode of the three theatres in LTC and how WKCD would enhance exchanges and collaborations between local arts groups and resident companies from overseas through RCC. They also sought details about the residency arrangement of LTC, including the policy of selecting the resident companies, and whether these companies would be appointed on a rotation basis.

14. WKCD indicated that only dance-related arts groups could be resided in RCC. The resident arts groups would be provided with the administration, rehearsal and other supporting facilities in RCC, have priority access to the three theatres in LTC and participate in the operation of the venue. WKCD was engaging local and overseas arts groups in developing

a tier-scheme for the arts groups to be resided in RCC, and was also looking at a sustainable business model for the resident arts groups and RCC, as well as devising the residency arrangement (number of resident arts groups, forms of residency, etc.).

15. Some members were concerned about the hire charges of the LTC facilities and their affordability to PA groups of different sizes and art forms. WKCDA advised that it would work out the hire charges of the LTC facilities in the next one or two years, taking into account factors like the differences between the PA venues managed by WKCDA and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and the views of the potential users. Moreover, differential hire charges would be set for the Lyric Theatre, Medium Theatre and Studio Theatre in LTC to enable small PA groups to hire smaller theatres at lower charges.

Artistic positioning

16. Noting that LTC would include a dance-focused theatre (i.e. the Lyric Theatre) which could be used for film screenings and a wide variety of PA events, some members queried whether such arrangements ran counter to the original plan of WKCDA that each of the PA venues in WKCD should have a clear and focused art form so as to create a strong identity for the venue concerned. Members also enquired how the artistic positioning of the Lyric Theatre with its focus on dance would be reflected in its programming policy and venue hiring policy.

17. WKCDA advised that LTC would provide options for both dance performance groups and other PA groups to organize events of different scales. The model of a "shared theatre" (i.e. theatre-units for different art forms sharing the same complex) was well-established and had been adopted in many parts of the world. Such a model could maximize the functions of the venue, achieve more efficient use of space and resources, and provide the audience with a wider range of choices in PA events. The Lyric Theatre would remain to be dance-focused, whereas the Medium Theatre and Studio Theatre would be theatre-focused. Under the artistically-driven PA venue hiring policy, dance groups and theatre groups would be given a longer advance booking period for relevant LTC facilities. Notwithstanding this, other hirers could make bookings of the LTC facilities if these facilities were vacant.

18. Some members considered that the Administration/WKCDA should fine-tune the respective positioning and facility framework of LTC and EKCC

so as to ensure that they would complement rather than competing with each other in terms of target audience and hirers.

19. WKCD advised that while EKCC was intended to be a cross-district cultural venue serving mainly the local communities and the local arts and cultural groups especially those in the East Kowloon region, WKCD would provide a cluster of major arts and cultural facilities, including LTC, for the staging of world-class performances by arts and cultural groups from around the world. EKCC and LTC should be able to complement each other in meeting the demand.

Audience building

20. Some members expressed worry that upon the opening of LTC, there might not be sufficient audience for the arts and cultural performances to be staged at the venue. They asked how WKCD would enhance the utilization of LTC after its opening.

21. WKCD advised that it would strive to ensure the quality of the productions to be staged at LTC to enhance its appeal to audience. Apart from building the interest of local audience in LTC, WKCD would also develop new audiences coming from the Mainland and other parts of the world given the proximity of WKCD to various major transport nodes. Besides, WKCD would bring in resident companies at LTC to activate the venue and to support and collaborate in the programmes initiated by WKCD. WKCD was confident that the demand for PA facilities in LTC would be more than enough to support the operation of the venue.

Recent developments

22. In July 2019, it was reported in the media that a flooding occurred at the construction site of L1 works contract for LTC and the Extended Basement in WKCD in the early morning of 25 July 2019 resulting in a shallow sinkhole of around 25 metres in diameter adjacent to the site. In response to the letters from some members of the Joint Subcommittee requesting WKCD to give an account of the incident, WKCD advised that immediate action was taken by the appointed contractor of the site, Gammon Construction Limited, and the leakage stopped at around 9:30 am that day. There were no safety issues or

injuries resulting from the incident and works had largely resumed.⁴ According to the latest [press release](#) issued by WKCDA on 29 October 2019, a report of the incident had been completed and would be submitted to the Joint Subcommittee in due course.

23. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee to be held on 25 November 2019, the Administration and WKCDA will update members on the construction of L1 and L2 works contracts for LTC and the Extended Basement.

Relevant papers

24. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
19 November 2019

⁴ See members' letters (LC Paper Nos. [CB\(1\)1282/18-19\(01\)](#), [CB\(1\)1297/18-19\(01\)](#) and [CB\(1\)1355/18-19\(01\)](#)) (Chinese version only) and WKCDA's and the Administration's responses (LC Paper Nos. [CB\(1\)1283/18-19\(01\)](#), [CB\(1\)1320/18-19\(01\)](#) and [CB\(1\)1355/18-19\(02\)](#)).

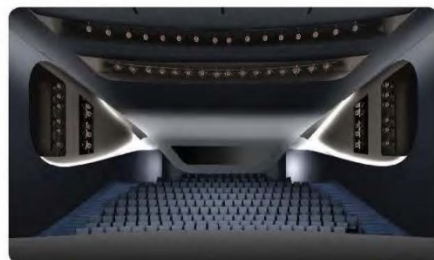
演藝綜合劇場平面圖
Layout plan of Lyric Theatre Complex

劇院群

演藝劇場 + 中型劇場 + 小劇場

Family of Theatres

Lyric Theatre + Medium Theatre + Studio Theatre



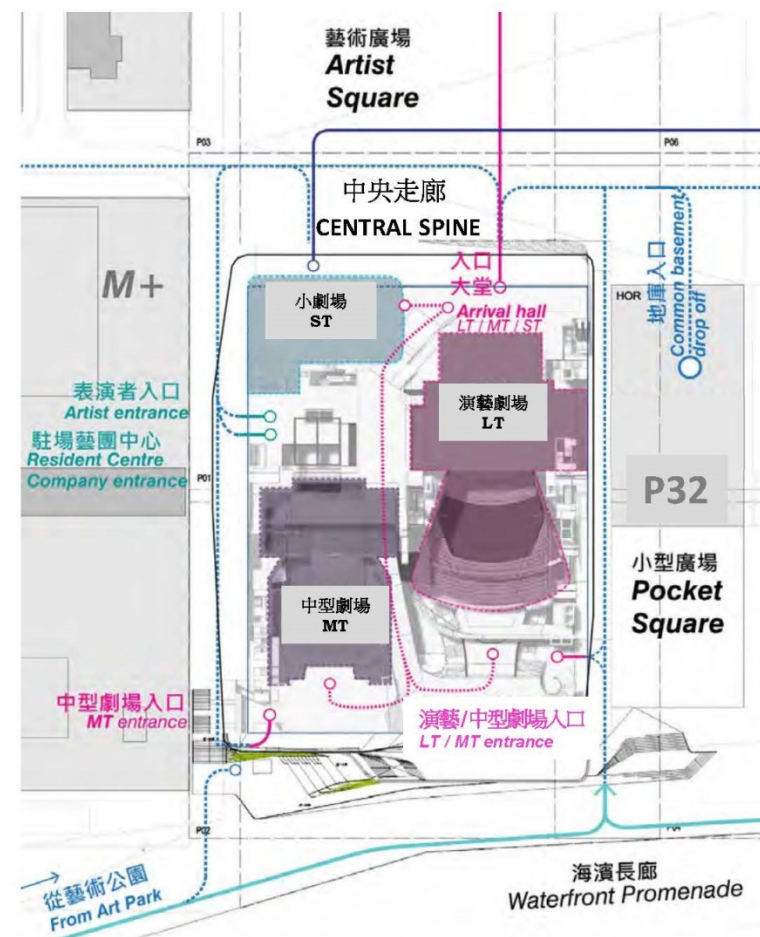
250-seat
Studio Theatre (ST)
250 個座位的小劇場



600-seat
Medium Theatre (MT)
600 個座位的中型劇場



1450-seat
Lyric Theatre (LT)
1450 個座位的演藝劇場



資料來源：[立法會 CB\(1\)914/18-19\(03\)號文件的附件三](#)
Source: Annex 3 to [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)914/18-19\(03\)](#)

Development of Lyric Theatre Complex

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project formed in the Fifth Legislative Council	23.3.2015 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	7.7.2015 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	24.11.2015 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	30.5.2016 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	21.6.2016 Item I	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	20.12.2016 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	13.6.2017 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	6.11.2018 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	29.4.2019 Item IV	Agenda