



香港建築師學會

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

12 December 2007

Our Ref. : WKCDTF/HAB/AL/RC/cw/0712

Mr Tsang Tak Sing, JP  
Secretary for Home Affairs  
Home Affairs Bureau  
25/F Wanchai Tower  
12 Harbour Road  
Wan Chai

By Fax and By Post  
Fax No. : 3102 5997

Dear Mr Tsang

**Public Engagement on Recommendations for West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

Thank you very much for your briefing on the recommendations for West Kowloon Cultural District project on 17 October 2007 and inviting the Institute's response on the planning and development of West Kowloon Cultural District. We are excited by the Government's decision to establish a WKCD Authority to take on this task and to move on the design, planning and development of this potentially significant project, which would have profound benefit to Hong Kong.

On 23 October 2007, HKIA made a presentation to the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development of the Legislative Council, with regard to our views, visions and concerns on the future WKCD. Based on our professional judgment, we have also made some in-depth observations with regard to the design, planning and development of WKCD to ensure its success. These observations are summarized in a paper enclosed herewith. We would be happy to further discuss with HAB on any issue regarding WKCD, and would do whatever we can to assist in order to make WKCD a success and a pride of Hong Kong.

At the end of the LegCo hearing, the Chairman of the panel summarized views expressed by the public and organizations as follows:

1. The structure, representation and terms of reference of WKCD Authority;
2. The WKCD is an inseparable part of the city and the community and therefore needs all kinds of connectivity, action and reactions amongst the urban neighborhoods and their arts community with future WKCD activities;
3. Fair and just planning and development of WKCD to satisfy the needs of all Hong Kong citizens including the less privileged groups, such as open space, housing and social amenities..

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With regard to Item 1 above, HKIA opines that since the founding WKCD Authority would have to deal with the design, master planning and development of arts, cultural and supporting facilities in WKCD, it would be important to have expertise in these areas on the Authority's board.

Item 2 above has the full support of HKIA (Item 3 of HKIA position paper). However, the success in master planning and urban design to bring about regional integration would depend on an integrated 'Greater WKCD' concept. Therefore the scope of WKCD master plan should be extended beyond the physical boundary of the cultural district. The Government has to work hand in hand with the WKCD Authority, if the latter's jurisdiction is limited to the cultural district. The Government should first play the role as a partner of master planning and implementation for the areas beyond the cultural district, and a second role to guide an urban design and planning study with meaningful public consultation similar to the process adopted for South-east Kowloon. In order to attract the best talents and to educate the general public on the potential of this important project for Hong Kong, it is suggested to hold an open competition for urban design and planning concepts, prior to consolidating the favorable ideas into a master plan.

With regard to Item 3 above, we understand that there are provisions already allowed in the WKCD development brief, which may address to the call for fair and just planning and development of WKCD, e.g. open space, pedestrian access to public plazas and water front, residential development. However, it would not be possible to find out if the nature, quality and quantities of these proposed provisions can satisfy the aspiration of the community without 3 dimensional urban design and master planning study. For example, requirements for indoor/outdoor activity space for iconic buildings could create interaction between the arts community and general public, higher densities for the arts and cultural facilities could create land banking to cater for unforeseeable expansions in future. More concentrated developments for the supporting facilities for residential and commercial uses could leave larger areas for arts, cultural and community activities. All these are important considerations, which would require careful urban design study and public consultation before being adopted into the master plan.

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Lastly, we would like to reiterate the urgency of getting started on the actual work (Item 7 of HKIA position paper). In order to accomplish the Government's own goal to commence WKCD Phase 1 operation in 2015, we are anxious to know if the Government has already developed a time schedule to show how this date could be achieved. We understand that in order to move expeditiously on this project, the Government plans to update the OZP ahead of master planning, aiming to define three main parameters, viz. the land uses, the development density and the building height, by the end of this year. While we find the proposed land uses and the overall development density at 1.81 generally acceptable, we do think certain flexibility should be reserved for building height variations in the OZP before the urban design master plan is completed. We think the rigid application of building height control at 50-100 metres PD will be detrimental to creative design, for it would induce a monotonous flat building silhouette. Although we see the benefit for building height control, a sensible mechanism based on a set of meaningful urban design criteria, such as views from popular vantage points, sight lines of desirable views, landmarks and natural features such as the harbor and ridgelines would be more appropriate and conducive to a desirable environment for WKCD. The OZP should spell out such building height control criteria for the master plan to follow, rather than setting a rigid cut-off level.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ronald Lu, *CHKIA*  
President

Encl

c.c. Mr Bernard Hui, Honorary Secretary  
Mr K S Wong, Chairman, Board of Local Affairs  
Mr Alex Lui, Convenor, West Kowloon Cultural District Taskforce



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22 October 2007

By Fax and By Post  
Fax No. : 2869 6794

Our Ref. : BLA/WKCD/AL/cw/0710  
Your Ref. : CB1/HS/2/04

Hon Alan LEONG  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development  
Legislative Council  
c/o Legislative Council Secretariat  
3/F Citibank Tower  
3 Garden Road  
Hong Kong

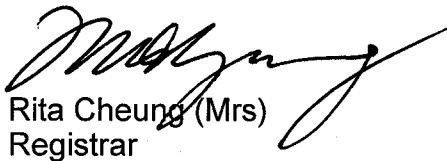
Dear Mr Leong

**Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development**  
**Meeting on 23 October 2007**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 September 2007 inviting the Institute to give views on the Recommendation Report on Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District at the captioned Subcommittee meeting.

We are pleased to present our views in the captioned meeting and to deliver our written submission on the above subject. Please find enclosed herewith our paper for your consideration and record.

Yours sincerely

  
Rita Cheung (Mrs)  
Registrar

Encl

c.c. Dr Ronald Lu, President  
Mr Bernard Hui, Honorary Secretary  
Mr K S Wong, Chairman, Board of Local Affairs  
Mr Alex Lui, Convenor, West Kowloon Cultural District Taskforce



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**THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
VIEWS AND VISION OF WEST KOWLOON CULTURAL DISTRICT  
For submission and presentation to Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District  
Development of Legislative Council on 23 October 2007**

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) is highly appreciative of the Government's decision to scrap the developer-led mode for West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) development and the establishment of a WKCD Authority. Members' responses to Government's consultation paper have generally been positive. The 6 visions outlined in the consultation paper are shared and supported. There will be many exciting, yet extremely challenging tasks ahead for the realization of these visions. In this context, HKIA has the following views and vision of WKCD, to present to the LegCo and the Government for consideration and action :

**1. PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

WKCD will be an area of great significance to Hong Kong. It is also an important public asset to be shared and enjoyed by the community. It should serve the interests of the mass as well as the elite of our community. To ensure its success, meaningful and accountable public consultation is essential.

**2. SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE DESIGN**

HKIA would have high expectations for WKCD development to adopt sustainable and innovative design. Appropriate policies and requirements should be included in the design, planning and development briefs.

**3. INTEGRAL PART OF OUR CITY**

WKCD is a site of enormous potential. It is also an integral part of our city and should be treated as so. Connectivity and interactions with urban areas near and far would bring enhancements and synergies benefiting the entire city. Its harbor front presence is expected to add charm and vitality to our harbor and urban scenes.

**4. DESIGN COMPETITION**

HKIA strongly advocates for open design competitions as ways to generate creative design and planning ideas worthy to such a significant undertaking. Open design competition should not be limited to just the 3 icon facilities. It should be adopted for the WKCD master plan and major development packages.



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**5. VISIONARY MASTER PLAN**

An urban design led visionary master plan of much wider perspectives and greater depths than the usual Government approach, is essential to realize the invaluable potential of this development, to provide a broad and sustainable framework for the general layout, major development packages, much needed open space with high environmental qualities, responses to the harbor and YTM region, pedestrian connectivity, linkage to rail systems, traffic circulation and important parameters of various development elements in WKCD and potential synergies amongst them to foster arts and cultural activities. A simplistic, rigid building height control can only hinder creative design. It can never nurture a desirable outcome.

**6. DEVELOPMENTS TO SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURE**

Apart from the arts and cultural facilities proposed, which will be further debated amongst the arts and cultural community, HKIA takes a strong view that residential and commercial developments proposed for WKCD should contribute meaningfully to the promotion of arts and culture. This should be a key criterion in scheme selection for any development proposal made to the future WKCD Authority. Furthermore, to ensure compatibility with the overall WKCD goals, master development plans for all individual packages should be scrutinized.

**7. DEFINE EXTERNAL CONDITIONS**

For the promotion of arts and culture in Hong Kong, the proposed WKCD brief demands for a large scale and complex development of multiple uses, which requires an extended period of time for design, planning and execution. There are further technical implications due to impending massive rail facilities in this area, such as engineering conditions, potential encroachment, connectivity and acoustic interferences. Therefore, it is important for the Government to define all the external conditions as early as possible, so that WKCD could be planned and designed in response to these external conditions.

**8. PROVISIONAL WKCD AUTHORITY**

HKIA echoes the Hon. Patrick Lau's suggestion for a Provisional WKCD Authority. Design and planning should commence urgently if the Government's proposed schedule to complete Phase I by 2015 is to be accomplished.

**9. ADEQUATE FLEXIBILITY**

Although there are many examples of similar arts and cultural districts in overseas countries, but each one is quite unique on its own. There is no precedence in Hong Kong, which may indicate conditions for success in WKCD. Therefore, it is prudent to allow adequate flexibility in the scale and components of main facilities, development requirements and modes of operation, so that there are rooms for adjustment in future.



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#### **10. ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITY NETWORK**

WKCD should not be perceived as an independent facility. It should be a part of and fit into an overall arts and cultural facility network of Hong Kong to foster and promote arts and cultural activities.

#### **11. MECHANISM TO ENCOURAGE CREATIVE DESIGN**

HKIA is painfully aware of the severe detriments to creative ideas caused by rigid and unsympathetic building laws. To enable WKCD design to flourish, it is essential to device a mechanism to encourage the adoption and realization of creative design, provided that the basic requirements for safety, health and welfare of the occupants are satisfied. HKIA sincerely appeals to the legislature to support this effort.

#### **12. SOFTWARE TO LEAD HARDWARE**

HKIA understands that the ultimate success of WKCD would depend largely on the software. The hardware could only provide a desirable environment to support the activities and operation. WKCD's well being, including financial viability depends on a sensible plan to run, manage and operate, which should be formulated early to guide the design and planning of the physical development.

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