

香港工程師學會

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13 November 2003

Clerk to Panel on Planning, Lands and Works  
 Legislative Council Secretariat  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Citibank Tower  
 3 Garden Road, Central  
 Hong Kong  
 (Attn: Ms Sarah Yuen)

By Fax and By Post

Dear Ms Yuen

**Panel on Planning, Lands and Works and Panel on Home Affairs – Joint Panel Meeting**

Thank you for your letter of 24 October 2003 inviting the Institution to attend the LegCo joint panel meeting to discuss the Development of the West Kowloon Cultural District.

We are pleased to submit our views on the subject in relation to areas that are of concern to our members. We have in particular put forth our observations on the matters of Invitation For Proposals (IFP) in the attachment for your consideration. The proposed IFP, as far as we are concerned, might not reflect appropriate emphasis on ways to promote local arts and cultural development. We hope that our views on the details of the IFP can help contribute to the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely

Ir Dr Alex S K Chan  
 President

Encl.

**The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers****LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works and Panel on Home Affairs  
Joint Meeting on 18 November 2003****Summary of the HKIE's Views on  
"The Development of the West Kowloon Cultural District "**

Having considered the importance of Development of the West Kowloon Cultural District, the HKIE would like to put forth herewith our views on the project, in particular, the appropriateness of the issuing of "Invitation For Proposals" (IFP) for consideration of the Panels:

The main objective of the project, according to the Government, is to enhance Hong Kong's position as Asia's premier centre of arts, culture and entertainment. We hope to develop the objective into great detail to facilitate discussion of the joint Panel meeting. We envisage that in order of priority, the objectives should be:

- To promote local arts and cultural development, improvement of quality of life in Hong Kong and development of creative industry;
- To provide facilities for performing arts, exhibition and entertainment both for locals and overseas visitors; the less privileged as well as the well-to-do; and
- To construct signature buildings along South Kowloon's water front to enrich the harbour skyline.

We consider the current IFP terms of development mode not satisfactory and inadequate to achieve the aforementioned objectives because:

- a. The emphasis of the IFP is not arts and culture while it requests a property development proposal with over 500,000 sq.m. commercial residential floor area but with no upper limit, and since the site is zoned OU, there is no statutory public body to control the property development intensity; and development intensity is likely to be higher and planning merits overlooked and this seems unsatisfactory;
- b. The proposal specifies some 210,000 sq.m. of arts and cultural facilities. The successful bidder is a developer and is likely to put its emphasis's into the hardware of performing arts. The IFP only specifies sketchy requirements of a culture management plan. An arts and cultural district requires much more than grandeur buildings to be successful in promoting local cultural developments. A developer emphasizes financial viability more than arts and cultural activities; the interest of unprofitable cultural activities, the grass-roots population who wish to have affordable cultural entertainment may be overlooked;
- c. There is no compelling necessity to build the 120m. high glass canopy; there are long term maintenance and replacement considerations similar to the problem of

aging high rise buildings in Hong Kong with this canopy. The high cost of the canopy do not come free, so is the high recurrent maintenance cost. It will be at the expense of the performance tickets and office/home monthly management fees. The Sydney harbour shoreline does not have a glass canopy, yet it is still world acclaimed. The glass canopy's construction and maintenance cost must be weighed against the benefit it brings. A number of coordinated and world-class design theatres and museums along the South Kowloon waterfront will create the same signature skyline like Sydney even without the glass canopy. Even if one were to build the glass canopy, it is not a deterrent to separate the project's property development part from the cultural district part at the west end because the canopy will in any case be built in several phases and the phased canopies will be structurally independent. A IFP for property development and a separate cultural district IFP funded by the Government (with proceeds from the 700,000 sq.m. GFA lands sale) will relieve the artist from the developer in financial and in management entangle.

In short, the IFP does not reflect sufficient emphasis on ways to promote local art and cultural development. The development contract terms do not have effective control and public participation on development planning. There is insufficient justification to support the claim of no other choices but a single developer approach which have been pointed out by some organisations to have deficiencies.