West Kowloon Cultural District
Stage 3 Public Engagement Exercise

One-day Conference for Urban Development, Information & Communications Technology and Green Groups

**Break-out Session - Landscaping**

Date: 22th October, 2011  
Time: 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm  
Venue: Imperial Room I, The Royal Pacific Hotel and Towers  
China Hong Kong City, 33 Canton Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

Attendance: West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA)  
1. Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member) (Moderator)  
2. Mr Michael Lynch (Chief Executive Officer)  
3. Mr Derek Sun (Head, Planning and Development)

Development Plan Consultant  
1. Mr Sion Edwards (Foster + Partners) (Presenter)

Panel Members  
1. Mr Tak Yip Wong (Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects)  
2. Mr Matthew Pryor (Division of Landscape Architecture, University of Hong Kong (HKU))

Participants  
1. URS Scott Wilson  
   Ms Cheng Ho Yan  
2. Team 73 HK Ltd.  
   Ms Jam Wing Sze, Cheryl  
3. AECOM  
   Ms Eunhye Jeon  
4. AECOM  
   Mr David Jung  
5. Team 73 HK Ltd.  
   Mr Pete Lau  
6. Team 73 HK Ltd.  
   Mr Raven Lee  
7. AECOM  
   Ms Nancy Lin  
8. Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects  
   Mr TH Tran  
9. Team 73 HK Ltd.  
   Mr CK Wong  
10. Earthisa Ltd.  
    Mr Paul Chan  
11. Earthisa Ltd.  
    Mr Lau Hing Tat, Patrick  
12. The University of Hong Kong  
    Ms Xue Bing, Sherly  
13. The University of Hong Kong  
    Ms Lin Jun Yu, Monica  
14. The University of Hong Kong  
    Mr Guo Feng, Franky

Views Analysis and Reporting Consultant  
Public Policy Research Institute  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
Dr King Chong
1. Opening Remarks:

Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCDCA):

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Andrew Lam, I will be the moderator of this session, which will focus on landscape. So if it happens that you're supposed to join the session on transport, connectivity or sustainability, make sure you move to other rooms. All right, so we're on landscape, clear? Great.

Now, I think today's arrangement is that we'll invite our consultant who actually worked very hard on the concept plan in the past months to share with us the latest work; and then we have actually the honour to have two guest collaborators, which I will introduce them later on, but without much ado, I would like to kind of invite Sion Edwards from Mott MacDonald to share with us what the team has done. Thanks, Sion.

2. Presentation of the Proposed Development Plan

Mr Sion Edwards (Foster + Partners):

All right. Okay. Well, this is the current master plan and this has been presented this morning, so I'm not going to go into this in detail; but I'm going to explain really something about the comprehensive strategy for landscape planning across the site that really underpins and is really a fundamental part of the master plan and the master planning exercise. The landscape is really fingered into all of the development in all areas, and so it's really an extension and an integrated elements with those developments. So just to recap a little bit, the key cultural components within the District are the ones in red here. These are the cultural facilities. I think the only thing I want to say is that there's a large number of them scattered through the urban edge of the development, deliberately so, and others which stand free within the wider open spaces.

These are the 17 cultural ventures. I won't go through them. They've been described this morning, but what I want to make a point about is really the 18th cultural venue is the park and the urban fabric; and what would I mean by the park and the urban
fabric is the Great Park on the peninsula, the waterfront promenade and all those major open spaces that run through the urban district, including the squares and the avenues and so on and so forth. So it is a comprehensive system of open spaces. The park is really a venue. It's almost like a semi-blank canvas for a lot of the activities that would be associated both with -- would be direct extension of the activities within the cultural district, but also those which will function as part of the community activities within the District as well. All of the open spaces that I'm referring to are free of traffic and this is an important step really in Hong Kong on this scale, is to provide safe public recreational space throughout an entire district.

The location of major open spaces, well, this delineates where they are, so there is a huge amount of course on the peninsula. Open space at grade which runs back all along the waterfront to Kowloon Park. There are linear open spaces within the framework of the urban district and the orange coloured areas are plazas, interlinked plazas, within the urban area, each of which will be activated in slightly different ways in relation to the cultural developments that adjoin them. There is also open space on the roof levels of the cultural developments, and these will have fantastic prospects out over the park and the waterfront and the harbour. This is what this looks like in terms of landscape master plan. So I think as we can see from here, there are a whole series of interlinked squares that lead you from the West Kowloon Terminus down to the waterfront to activity areas on the waterfront. Another square here, linear avenues of pedestrian space, which extend all the way around the peninsula and connect to the typhoon shelter waterfront, and a more organic arrangement of open spaces and open space structures out to the headland along the waterfronts.

One of the changes that have really occurred in the last few sessions is that we have slightly changed the density of tree planting within these areas so as to create larger circumscribed openings within the tree canopy for other activities at ground level. These are the tops of slight berms with small hillocks within the park, and these will be open to the sky. And this is in response to a lot of comments that we received from consultations with the public previously. What that looks like under the treescape is shown here, and so now you can see how these spaces actually interconnect with each other, both on an east-west direction and a north-south direction, really bringing the waterfront back into the core of the development area. It's a flat site now, it won't be a flat site in future in that the urban district will be slightly raised, and so the edge of the
urban district will be slightly above the waterfront promenade; so you will have from the edge of the development, and that urban edge, views down onto the waterfront promenade and out across the harbour. Similarly there are small hills created within the park here to create a more three dimensionality within the plan, and these serve to both slightly conceal some of the ventilation buildings that are there now, which need to be retained, but also to circumscribe valleys and pedestrian spaces and plazas that will have -- that will be major functional areas within the park. They also serve to frame views out to the harbour from deep within the park area.

What that looks like from above is something like this, and this really shows the extent of greening on the roof level and the arrangement of roofs where there would be a mixture of greening and PV for power generation within the site.

Just a look at streets and squares. First of all, the major avenue is this one, which runs from the Xiqu Square right the way through to the Great Park. As stated previously, it extends all the way around here and connects to the typhoon shelter, and these are the principal squares along that route. So if we look at pedestrian streets, this wide pedestrian avenue going east-west through the site, the proportion to the street, and the way in which it's framed is really based on models that we looked at in the existing urban area to try and bring something of the resonance of existing Hong Kong streets into this project site. And so these are the dimensions - 15 metres across, 3 metres covered arcades on each side of the avenue.

In looking at the functions that are gathered around this area, this slide really just tries to demonstrate that the intention is that the functions residential, gallery, cultural, office are all mixed up, and that's going to help create this very vibrant urban district. And so it's envisaged that a lot of the retail and dining functions and the concert -- the cultural venue, lobbies and so forth, will themselves activate the adjoining streetscape and the waterfront areas that are nearby them.

What that looks like is like this. So these are the covered arcades lining the edge of the streets. The major planting is down the centre of the street and as much free movement space as possible within these areas. If you look at that structure, this is structure of planting through those areas, so long avenues of trees, staggered planting, with much larger open spaces piazzas set into the framework of the urban district.
These are largely free of landscape treatments in that it is envisaged that they need to be flexible spaces for a whole range of activities and programmes. But it is worth pointing out that the arcades, covered arcades, that provide shade, extend all around these spaces. In some areas in those squares there would be very large signature trees that really help create a local sense of place.

Just looking at that structure, this is the structure on the street, initially and ten years later, so that the arcade, it's on the top and bottom here, the tree framework is down the middle of the street and there is sufficient space on each side to provide vehicular movement along here. Now, that's for emergencies, but it could also be for activities and parades associated with the avenue.

Mostly the trees will not have underplantings so that there is free pedestrian movement between two sides of the street, but there will in some areas be some underplanting, which will nevertheless not overly inhibit that movement.

Narrow pedestrian streets are contrasting to the wide pedestrian streets and run in a north-south direction towards the waterfront. They basically connect the avenue to the waterfront promenade. The scale is quite different. The form is quite different, and they are really more like urban streets that you would associate with, say, the lanes in central, which provide these glimpses of the harbour, really framed glimpses of the harbour along their length, and this is an example of that. So here we have one of the large squares, with the lane connecting through to the waterfront. And it so happens that in the background here is the Bank of China on the other side of the harbour, but it's that feel of that Hong Kong urbanscape that we're trying to replicate here.

Other linear corridors which are linear corridors cum open spaces are as follows, really. This is a market street that runs from the Xiqu Centre down to the waterfront, and is intended to be quite vibrant and active in this form.

We move further along. This is really a very wide open spaced corridor, and it is really essentially a series of squares going from the Station Square through to the waterfront and to a viewing platform that's set within the harbour which provides uninterrupted views across the harbour to Hong Kong Island. Just a look at that briefly. This is where the corridor is. That's the view through. So there will be views right the
way through to the waterfront from the open space within the West Kowloon Terminus area. The Station Square is a big open square and there are a series of then framed and arcaded squares running down towards the waterfront.

This object here is actually a vent shaft that allows ventilation of the roadways beneath, and so we're suggesting that actually that would be clad in digital screens which would provide passenger information. It could provide live feeds from performance venues, it could be interactive. It could actually be something for displaying digital artworks, so I think it's one big elements within that space that really provides something interesting at the hub of these routes into the site.

When we come to the Great Park waterfront, these are principal spaces, green spaces. And one important aspect is obviously to activate the long linear length of the waterfront. The length of the waterfront is something like from Star Ferry across to Hung Hom, so it is quite a long waterfront; but there are a number of elements along the waterfront that would of themselves help to activate that waterfront area. We start really with the landscape bridge connection to Kowloon Park, a real vital connection to Nathan Road and Tsim Sha Tsui. Pontoons within the water areas, viewing platforms, piers and landing steps all the way around.

The character of the waterfront promenades we feel is going to change, depending on the particular context along its lengths. In some areas, it would be good if this could be quite soft in feel; and in other areas where it particularly has a relationship with the adjoining developments, it's more hard, and in these areas these kind of activities could then take place along its length. The promenade is a minimum of 20 metres wide. In most areas it's about 30 metres wide and extends in some areas back as far as 90 metres from the waterfront. So where the promenade extends back into the area, it creates squares like this where there would be the focus of activity.

Starting from Kowloon Park, this is the idea that connects the waterfront to Kowloon Park. It's an open space bridge which extends from here right the way through to the square on the main north-south avenue through Kowloon Park, from which it's possible to then have direct entry across to Nathan Road. This is going to require the cutting of the existing hill here, a minimal cut to the hill. That's not going to affect any historic elements within the park, but it is felt that by doing so, we can get a very fairly
level movement from this area right the way through to the same level in the park. That cut will be greened, and where the existing paths cross that cut, they can be replaced with bridge connections that make the park -- retain the completeness of the park. As you come from Kowloon Park across here at this point, you can then descend to ground level and connect with the waterfront promenade. But this is also a lookout from which you can look right the way down the full length of the waterfront towards the peninsula park. This is the intended character of the open space bridge link, and I think you can see the way in which this connects visually then with the promenade along the waterfront.

Moving on, this is a viewing platform at the end of the open space corridor from the West Kowloon Terminus to the harbour, and it's intended to really provide a big promontory for people to look out on the harbour, for festivals within the harbour, and just see Hong Kong Island's displays at night, lighting displays and so forth. So this is the basic form of that, and it sits within the water and creates a different sense of connection with the water body than on the promenade itself.

Floating art pontoons. The idea here is that there are elements, platform within the harbour that really can act as a stage for events that can be viewed in a very casual way from the waterfront promenade. Landing steps and ghats, while they're scattered all along the headland, landing steps provide obviously public access to the area. Steps down to the waterfront really provide a greater degree of connection in some locations to the water itself. Clearly, there are safety issues that need to be addressed, but this is something that we address in the detailed design. Public piers. There are two ferry pier points. These will themselves have plazas in front of them and will be an active space along that waterfront.

This is the one that's next to the urban edge and shows the basic building framework around the ferry pier. Retail and dining is a major activator within the -- or is felt to be a major activator. It needs to respond to all different types of people and budgets, and the retail and dining framework is to some extent entirely embedded within the urban direct, but it is also scattered along the front of the District in the form of kiosks and pavilions, right the way into the park. This shows roughly the strategy that's proposed for that.

So typical edge might comprise of the cultural building here, an expansion space
to allow activity to go inside, outside from the threshold of that development, some discreet landscape elements that casually divide those areas from the more public waterfront areas. Large amounts of hard space in some areas with tree cover that allow for these kind of street activities to take place. Art installations along the waterfront promenade, and kiosks with pavilions which could be temporary, which could extend all the way along the promenade and into the body of the park. In the park itself, these pavilions could be permanent pavilions, but I think there is an emphasis in trying to create a changing programme of activity and features within the park, and so temporary pavilions really offer a great opportunity to be the focus of temporary activities and to encourage people to return to the site time and time again to see something new. As an example, these are temporary pavilions, but these are also temporary pavilions built every summer next to the Serpentine Gallery in Hyde Park in London. A lot of people come there for performances or for some artistic event. A lot of people go there simply to see the pavilions because they are temporary local landmarks although and they are a major tourist attraction and they change every year; and this is the kind of approach that we think could take place in this semi-blank canvas of the great park.

Cultural venues along the waterfront will all have terraced dining at a higher level, and this is the kind of feel that we would try and suggest for rooftop dining as part of the rooftop open spaces. This shows how that's integrated above one of the cultural venues, and the kind of feel is really already beginning to be established in Hong Kong with the podium landscapes at IFC for both casual passive recreation and for external dining.

Coming to the park itself, as I think I've been explaining all away through really, we see it as this kind of canvas on which unlimited and unforeseen type of events may take place. So rather than fill it full of fixed venues and events, it allows really the whole thing to evolve through time and for people to have unlimited access to it. It provides room to roam. Everywhere the trees are going to be limbed up. Visibility will be high through the park area. There will be really no restricted areas. The idea is that you can move anywhere through that ground plane, whether it be up a hill, through a valley, under the trees, sitting on the edge of the hills, looking out to the harbour, etc. It's a place to have fun, essentially.

And one of the fixed, two of the fixed elements within the park which are quite
important in kick-starting this programme of activity would be the Freespace area and this, the Outdoor Theatre, which are really embedded in the middle of the forest and really -- but still have distant views of the cityscape beyond the harbour on Hong Kong Island.

Extending the park into the fabric city has been one of the critical elements in the whole master planning exercise and this is achieved in several ways. Horizontal extensions, direct extensions into other parks, such as Kowloon Park, parkland above the West Kowloon Terminus station, King George V Park, the open spaces above Kowloon Station and the emerging plans for the waterfronts along the typhoon shelter. From those areas, there are then onward connections into the wider open space framework in Tsim Sha Tsui. Other extensions and of course the vertical extensions that we talked about before and the landscape is on several levels.

Greening, trees will transform the site. One of the key elements is this continuous canopy of trees that extends from Kowloon Park right the way across the development site. A large overarching living green ceiling of foliage providing dappled light and changing characteristics through the seasons and allowing sun to come into ground level in winter. So we see this as very much a changing, living green canopy. We've done many, many schedules looking at native trees and trees that are common to Hong Kong. We want the landscape in the park to look like a Hong Kong landscape, and there are areas in the park where clearly there will be opportunities of creating woodland areas using native species. The Great Park - great parks are key set pieces in the urban DNA of great cities whether it's London and New York, different scale, different location, different cultural context, but exciting places to visit.

What Hong Kong park going to be like, well it is going to be completely different from Hyde Park, I would suggest, or from Central Park. Its uniqueness will emerge from the particular character of the physical and cultural context and the way in which this park is actually merged into this urban district that's been genetically engineered to have all these cultural venues integrated within them. It will play a significant role in defining the image of the city. It is a long-term investment. Things grow quickly in Hong Kong as we all know, but it's worth waiting really to -- we can get a good effect in a very short time, we can get a great effect in a little bit longer. Adoptable spaces and free programmes for open space is a very important aspect of keeping the flexibility of
the park available and providing varied programmes and reasons for return visits; and also events that appeal to a whole range of people, whether they are involved in the arts or whether they are simply using it as a public open space.

The park is intended with the integration of these events and art programmes to really start to expose people to the cultural aspect of the development; and so we see it as really a seamless transition between elements within the park, elements on the threshold of the buildings, elements within the foyers of the cultural developments and so forth. Essentially, it's an opportunity for it to become a major attraction for both the community and for overseas visitors. And there I'll end. Okay.

3. **Discussion Session:**

**Mr. Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCDCA):**

Thanks, Sion. From Foster & Partners. Right. Now to warm up the discussion, we have invited two guests, which are our collaborators. First one is actually Mr Tak Wong representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, and the other one is Mr Matthew Pryor, who is now the Head of the Division of Landscape Architecture in Hong Kong University.

So I would give them each five minutes to share their comments and views or their own vision of the area with us; and then after that, I will open the discussion to the floor and I think we would like to also take the opportunity to rearrange the space as well by then. May I first invite Tak. So without much ado, I'll just hand over time to Tak.

**Mr Wong Tak Yip (Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects):**

After the presentation, I have around three points I want to make on the landscape design for the District. The first point I would like to raise is I see a very good connection between the east and the west side of the site, but this seems quite inadequate from landscape point of view that the north and south connection is not well addressed in the design. For example, this is actually the major city hub of Kowloon, and there is a
lot of commercial, residential and office uses. And I just wonder how could this existing city centre could penetrate to the waterfront. To me, right now seems that the design of the building along the waterfront like a big wall to block all the connections from the city centre. So I suggest maybe we could consider some backing over structures in the West Kowloon residential development, not only connected with pedestrians, but also could connect the landscape and open space network from the city centre towards the waterfront area. And same thing, the future, I think is fixed XRL, right, Terminus. Yeah. XRL Terminus, right? Not only a line that is saying that we could connect the pedestrian from the terminus to the waterfront, but I think the design is more sophisticated, has to be more comprehensive. We should think about how we could bring the landscape also from the terminus to the waterfront, and by doing that, we got several good reasons. The first one is we are not only improving the connectivity between the urban centre to the new area, but also opening up the gap for air ventilation as well. Also we could integrate the existing living habitat/habit to the new design area.

My second point is right now the buildings give me the impressions is very regular. The layout and design are very regular, and not quite interesting; and I wonder if we could have some integration between the landscape and the building. Don't give us the impression that the building is building and landscape is landscape. They are not related, they are not interacting. Could we have some open sky courtyard or garden within the buildings so the landscape could penetrate into the buildings as well and make it as a whole. Okay, that would be more interesting.

And my third comment will be: I see a lot of different design ideas in the whole district, but we need some very distinctive landscape design themes to unify all these bits and pieces of design ideas.

For example, could we have a fragrant boulevard as we all know that Hong Kong in English means ‘fragrant harbour’, right? So we could design some fragrant avenue so that all the trees with flagrant flowers could be selected along the avenue to have an identity of the place and also, for example, we could have maybe a Bauhinia Walk or Bauhinia Boulevard. Bauhinia is the signature flower of Hong Kong, so it gives us a very strong identity of Hong Kong. And with this kind of distinctive design theme to some particular areas, it will help people to recognise the place and know the place, and unify the landscape design in the overall. That's what I've got here.
So far, I didn't hear anyone mention about what this building is.

**Mr Sion Edwards (Foster + Partners):**

It is mainly a hotel building.

**Mr Wong Tak Yip (Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects):**

Oh, a hotel building. From landscape point of view, I think this building attracts too much attention. The structure is very massive and actually it is not contributing much to the overall design of your district, in terms of landscape, in terms of visual impact and in terms of even urban design, you know. It does nothing. I think it does very little to the overall design.

Maybe we should have some more thought on this hotel building. Could that be used as part of the open space around it? For example, I see a lot of big TV, LCD TV on top of the -- on the building facade that could do some presentation or promotional thing, if it is necessary, okay. That's it.

**Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCD):**

Thank you, Tak. Now, may I now switch to Matthew.

**Mr Matthew Pryor (Division of Landscape Architecture, HKU):**

I think raised a lot of interesting points already. I know we don't have very much time. Thank you very much, Andrew. Thank you to the Foster's team. I've had the privilege of sitting on the technical panel and so I have seen this presentation before, three or four times; and it is getting a lot better as we go through, but it's -- and I've seen the hard work that the team has invested in the scheme and seen the scheme develop and it is a tremendous effort. And I'm deeply impressed with the commitment to landscape and the way that landscape is embodied in the master plan and the details that we've seen today.

I would like to urge the team to continue to use landscape as a driver for the
formulation of the entire master plan. I'm still a little bit nervous about landscape being sort of filleted in at the edges and fingered in and sort of put in where the buildings aren't. I would like the buildings to sit in the landscape rather than the landscape to go around the edge of the buildings; and I think if the Great Park is to be truly great, then it needs to encompass the entire site and not just the open space at the end. And I think that may just be in the way that the landscape is talked about or the whole development is talked about. I was pleased to see your definitions of what would make the park great. I think it should be more than just the setting. The setting is great, it is the finest piece of real estate in the world; but I think the design of the park and the spaces and the entire master plan needs to be constantly focusing on this great element, what makes it unique, what makes it special and what makes it different, not from Hyde Park or Central Park, but what makes it different from Kowloon Park or Victoria Park. What is new and innovative and different about it. There are many good things about the design as we see here, but I think innovation, making it a park of the 21st century rather than a park of the 20th century, is going to be a key to its identity and thereby its success.

The other key elements that I notice, and I've noticed since I've started sitting on the technical panel, is concerns over the practicality or the achievability of what is shown in the images. We see this lovely forest with trees that would suggest that they're sort of 1800 years old in a beautiful, lush meadow grassland where my experience in Hong Kong is that those sort of trees don't tend to grow along the waterfront without getting picked out by typhoons very easily and that the grass gets trampled in the first major event. I think there is a lot of technical details. You know, how do you get trees to grow that big on top of structure where nobody has done that before in Hong Kong. All our big trees grow on solid ground, not on structure, and I think it goes back to the point I make about landscape as a driver. Landscape, you know, you have to start with the idea of 15, 18-metre high tree and shape the structures and buildings around the requirements to make that work, and thin plates of structural slab are never going to create big trees. We've seen that at the Convention Centre, that those trees, even though they had a dedicated trench and a lot of provision was given to them, they're still only 8, 10 metres high at most simply because they're in a very exposed situation. They don't have the natural forest setting to make it work.

So there is quite a lot of technical detail. Things like view corridors with trees in them - doesn’t really make a great deal of sense. Anybody's who has been in a view
corridor with trees will know it’s not a view corridor because the trees tend to block out
the view. Some of the spaces along the waterfront, some of the images -- and again I
would stress this is not a criticism of the ambition, but maybe a question over the detail.
But some of the spaces are right along the waterfront's edge with only one or two metres
wide and I question whether actually it is very practical to have a foot path of only a
couple of metres wide along the waterfront.

What I think, what I would argue in terms of any modern open space, any modern
public space - and I think open space is the wrong definition - any public space, really
needs to focus on flexibility, adaptability, the ability to go into, for people to modify and
personalise and to occupy space in a number of different ways and for space to be shared.
These are all points that are raised in the scheme at the moment, but when you have
grassy hillocks and big trees, that doesn't really give you a great deal of flexibility. You
can't really do anything else other than sort of sit on the grass. Putting sculptures,
putting structures on them is very damaging to grass and it would rapidly kill it. And I
would expect to see a lot more hard paving. I would expect to see a lot more ability to
have surfaces that could be adapted to many different types of use.

I would like to see a lot more open space along the edge, that the idea of taking
trees right down to the waterfront is an exciting one, but also the ability to bring that
fabulous harbourscape into the site through more than just narrow view corridors within
the Great Park. And I think, I'm pleased to see the tops of the hillocks being opened up
to the sun to allow the grass to grow, but maybe that could be expand had a little bit
further. I don't think it needs to be planted very densely as a forest to make it, to give it
that sort of character.

And just on a similar note, I also see the sort of -- within the developed area, the
very long lines of trees. This is a great avenues of Terminalia mantaly, which, you
know, is probably the most overplanted tree in Hong Kong. I wonder whether that
could be broken down into something a little less formal, a little less structural, and for a
greater variety of tree species to be envisaged. I appreciate there is a lot of study and it's
not easy, but the planting plan as shown at the moment looks just the same as the planting
plan would have done 30 years ago. I think there are big opportunities to really
introduce some more interesting, more diverse tree species if there was more space.
Mantaly is being proposed probably because it is a very narrow street corridor and you
have to get a thin tree in there. If the street corridor could be opened up, it could be -- as it is in places, but I think more opportunity to get a wider variety of trees and tree species into the master plan really needs to be an initial thought and the master plan to be adjusted to allow that to happen. And this goes back to the point I make about landscape being a driver rather than being something that is fitted in around the structure.

I'm going to finish there, but I would say for those criticisms, these are sort of marginal at the edge. The master plan is very impressive and I very much appreciate the work that has been done, and I think it will eventually become a great landscape. I'm going to stop there.

Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCDA):

Thanks Matthew. Right, I think we have the luxury of -- the wisdom of two very experienced practitioners; and I think before I open it up to the floor, I would just like to kind of ask perhaps Sion to provide a quick response to those comments. But in general, in general, I think Tak has made several points, mainly on the connectivity, particularly north-south connectivity, and also about the interaction between buildings and landscaping, and Tak also mentioned about the -- or raised expectations about the theming and of course he has a view on the hotel block and how the screens should be more appropriately expressed in design form.

Now, while Matthew might have actually suggested something differently, and he is more on the positioning side on general landscape framework and how important landscaping is as a driver forward in entire master plan rather than just to use as an afterthought to fill the space, I think that is actually the position of all landscape architects. We would like to make sure that the landscape designs are done actually in parallel with building design. And Matthew also talked about details, the need to attend to details, and in a way, he actually bring us to kind of looking at the real function of those public spaces. Whether it should be fully planted or whether it should be hard paved for allowing the more appropriate activities to be put in.

Now, that said, I would have to make sure that everybody understands what the team has done so far is just a framework. It's just a concept. We haven't reached the stage of detailed design yet, and I think I also would like to kind of make sure you know,
if you have attended the morning session, our CEO Michael actually highlighted the importance of bringing people to the waterfront and actually that ties nicely with the point that Matthew raised about the context of the site.

So -- and, you know, how to kind of use those elements to incorporate all those good views, to make the park and all the open spaces and public spaces within the West Kowloon site a 21st century open space that has an identity and makes a mark, not just in Hong Kong, but in the world. So there is something not just for people who have or at the moment are involving in the Project, but also we have a lot of opportunities for the practitioners in the future to take part in the detailed design of each and every part.

So, sorry, Sion, if you could be kind enough to just --

Mr Sion Edwards (Foster + Partners):

Well, I'm not sure that I can cover all those points, but I think from the point of landscape being a driver for the master plan, it has been a driver right the way through the master planning process; but I would agree that it needs to continue to be driving through the next stage of the design development so that the fundamentals that have been put it into place in the master planning exercise are not undermined by the development of the detailed design. But the fact of the matter is that the open space and the way in which it fingers through, even the disposition of the main blocks of development, where they are and how they relate to each other, has been driven during the course of the development of the concept by public open space and landscape objectives. So we just need to make sure that that continues really, and I would agree with that.

On the north-south connections, first of all on ventilation corridors, an exercise has been done on a technical basis to check the ventilation corridors too because on the one side, we want to create streets and lanes and so forth that are reflective of the general -- of the character of Hong Kong within a new urban district, but at the same time provide free ventilation and so forth. So exercises have been done to check that and have demonstrated that actually there is good movement in a north-south direction of air through the developments.

It is sometimes difficult to gauge the scale of the plan, and I think some of these
corridors like the open space, the series of squares -- and they are a series of squares as opposed to an open space corridor that connects the West Kowloon Terminus, XRL, through to the waterfront is really a very big space, and it's designed really to provide that movement through in a very major way from not only the West Kowloon Terminus, but also the connections into the edge of the Kowloon Station developments. The major entrance to the Kowloon Station developments is from the corner that adjoins that space.

Similarly on the other end of the Station Square is a connection into Austin Station and proposed bridge links beyond into King George V Park and beyond into the existing urban areas. So West Kowloon Terminus itself provides a major corridor of open space along its roof space up to connect with open spaces that go all the way up through the Kowloon peninsula to the next district. And so we've been mindful of all of that really and bringing people through to the waterfront.

In terms of decking over, the roads of course, Austin Road is going to be decked over anyway to accommodate these things, but there are also, as is suggested, bridge links from Kowloon Station development to a higher level, from base of the landmark tower at the corner of development directly into the heart of the District, and really in a very convenient connection to the Star Ferry. So there is a synergy that is going to exist between the activities in both investments along that axis.

There is also potential connection in future through China Ferry Terminal down into the Canton Road corridor which also should be explored if possible, if the opportunity arises; but those connections are, we agree, very important.

Building there is regular. Well, I think there are lots of reasons why the buildings are as they are. I don't think personally that the landscape is landscaping between the buildings. It is actually, we deliberately created avenues and squares in a more formal way in some areas and then much more loose fit landscape in others; and the intention of putting things like retail and dining and lobbies for cultural facilities onto these edges is to really get that interaction between public spaces within the cultural, public cultural developments, merging functionally with the open spaces on the outside and into the landscape. It's the kind of relationship that you see on the Southbank in Festival Hall where really the ground level Festival Hall is really a major public square that is covered by a cultural development; and so that is something that's changed
recently in London, but it's something that's becoming more and more part of the lexicon of language used in the development of these cultural developments, we would suggest. So we would really be trying to encourage people to move between, in and out of buildings into these spaces in that way.

Unifying themes, I think there is plenty -- it is a huge area, there are many, many trees shown on the master plan. There is certainly opportunity at the next stage to kind of identify areas where there could be a particular character; and it is not the intention of actually the tree canopy would be the same throughout. It will change and merge, but we would suggest that maybe it would be good to do that in a more organic way, but for say street avenues and corridors, Terminalia is suggested, but it could equally be other, other species, and it could actually be a mix of species as well. So I think all of those things can be looked at.

In the square, in the squares because they are left as unprogrammed space, we're suggesting that there would be really big signature trees in there that would be a particular attraction like the Money tree, for example, in the New Territories.

Hotel. Well, the hotel conceals -- the main business of the hotel is that it controls the negative impacts of the toll plaza on the adjoining park. It provides a backdrop to the park, but we see that, you know, we see the park as being much more quiet. We think like LCD screens and so forth is probably going to occur in the urban district as opposed to the park, but those things can always be looked at, of course.

I think I've covered most of these things. Grasslands and trees of density. If you look at Tung Chung, for example, in a very short period of time you have very massive trees growing. And I think the thing to point out is because of the disposition of, you know, and its an exposed sites as well, but if you look at the disposition of building elements and underground elements in the plan, a very significant part of the Great Park, almost all the Great Park really and the waterfront promenade does not have underground structures underneath it, and so this is planting in real ground and we would suggest that it needs to be planted at density so there is a mutual benefit in planting in terms of achieving the visual effect and also in ameliorating negative environmental impacts that would be on the peninsula. It is an issue. It needs to be looked at. Okay.
Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCD):

Right, thanks, Sion. I think the floor is very much ready. Dillard. So please identify yourself and your affiliation and I hope that you can keep your comment or your questions within three minutes.

Unidentified Speaker:

Hello? Is this on? Okay. I think from this morning's conversation it was really, we talked about vision and ambition. So that's important in terms of this Project. We cannot underestimate the importance of this Project. Normally within Hong Kong, but also globally, in terms of open space, public realm, and how you define that. This will create an identity for the city. I think in terms of it being -- this is not really the 18th cultural facility, it is actually the first cultural facility because it will be the first portions that will be built; and that connectivity between all the venues would be very important, whether they're temporary or permanent. I think one of the things that -- my comment about this is more of a comment than a question, is that I think that we do need to have a stronger framework for what this park will be, not only cultural, but also social identity of what it will be. I think the framework is not as, not as strong, particularly for the Great Park as it could be. And I think one of the things about that is it should be a place for large scale venues, for the people of Hong Kong, and frankly we don't have those things now. We don't have those things and it's that opportunity that I don't want to have missed.

I think in terms of the urban fabric, though, I think certainly the promenade is a big part that was urban fabric and certainly I think again the framework there is not as strong as it could be. Connectivity is certainly an important part of that. I know that with that District, it's hard to get that east-west connection because of the existing urban framework. I think the east-west is easier and it looks like that's actually the fact that was taken in terms of the master plan. I think that in terms of that District, though, I think within the District you need to strengthen that north-south connection, and I think that would be of benefit in terms of what the identity of that District would be. But I think one of the key things is that we do need to think about the vision for this park, for what this will be and what this means.
And I think that within Hong Kong, the process for landscape architecture and landscape design is not as strong as it could be. I think that we should think of about that in terms of the design of this park and the international competition for this park, and that there are different ideas that are thrown out as part of that.

**Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCDA):**

Thanks. Any other questions?

**Mr Sion Edwards (Foster + Partners):**

Maybe I can reply to part of that. I think we're pushing the margins, I think, in terms of what the Hong Kong park is about on many levels, really; and I think that there a lot of way to go, but, I mean, a lot of Hong Kong parks are very prescriptive in the way in which you use space. Kowloon Park is a nice park. It's full of permanent sculpture that maybe would be a good thing to go and see once or twice or whatever, but it doesn't have the dynamism that you associate with a very changing programme you get with something like the Southbank or Chicago, for example, as well.

So I think what we're trying to do is to move away slightly from the typical Hong Kong park, and to Hong Kong, that move is a big move, I think; and we want to explore the fact that hardscape is not paths running through grass. The hardscape is an area which blends into other areas which is not so much defined, where the programme is not as much prescribed, whether it's freedom to move and to utilize space as you want. There is a need to define and to provide practical solutions to areas that would be used for temporary art installations because they will have an impact on the landscape. But I think it's creating a space which is, which has all the green. A lot of it is at a high level, of course, but allows for this flexibility of use that you don't get in other Hong Kong parks, at least not in the urban area. And so even planting schedules and so forth where we're trying to move it away from the conventional approach in Hong Kong, to look at areas where woodlands might be introduced in some areas and in a reasonably substantial amount, that we allow people the freedom to utilise the space as they wish. And that part of that is -- I think there was a guy who came along to one of the earlier seminars whom we showed the park as we had it in the photo; and then as he thought it would had been as and when you cannot drink and here and/or you cannot take your dog here signs
up all over it; and that is the major problem and the thing that we need to move away from. And also the fact that these parkland areas do need to move into the urban area and kind of meld in a way. So there are lots of good points made, but I think on many levels which may not be apparent in the plan, we're trying to kind of move things away from the way things are done here.

Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCDA):

Michael?

Mr Michael Lynch (Chief Executive Officer, WKCDA):

I just want to get Sion’s point about -- I think the defining characteristic of the park is that it is going to be a very different space to the rest of the parks in Hong Kong; and I think the idea -- as articulated by our former chairman, that you'll be able to walk on the grass, you'll be able to lie on the grass, you'll able to do all manner of things, that it will not have guards at the door saying you can't come in. We'll have extended access. And so that it is actually shaking up the notion of what parks are about in this city, and providing significant, you know, well, in a way, importing the notion of a park as a free, fun, public space. So I guess I take your point in terms of trying to better articulate what it's about, but I do think at the core of where we're going is to say that as much as Kowloon Park's a great space if you want to sit on rocks or concrete or feel boxed in, it doesn't actually encompass the whole idea of why I want to go a park or if I use many of the parks that I'm well acquainted with, that I just want to go there and have my moments of solitude or my moments of community or whatever else, and I think that's going to be the contribution we need to make.

Unidentified Speaker:

I don't want that to be an issue because I'm not talking about recreating Hong Kong park. I'm talking about exactly what we're talking about. We're talking about actually opening up parks in a way that is different from the way parks are used now, and connecting the waterfronts of Hong Kong in a way that is special and new, not only just for West Kowloon, but all along the Hong Kong waterfront. I think that is an important piece of that and I think that's something in the future that needs to be
addressed is how you can connect these open space pieces. And I think, yes, flexible space is important, that doesn't mean that you don't design those spaces. It is just about talking about the identity of those spaces and I think with the master plan, I think that certainly as it evolves, that identity will become clearer and clearer; but I think there is also the need to really be clear about what that is for the landscape and the waterfront.

Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCDA):

Right. Okay, I can entertain one more question or comment. No? We're all very eager to join the following sessions. All right. Actually, Derek would like to have a couple of supplementary comments.

Mr Derek Sun (Head, Planning and Development, WKCDA):

I would like to share with everybody here about two parallel efforts concerning what I've heard today.

Number one, on competition. Actually, we have engaged a consultant to formulate procurement strategy for us. Actually, they will present their findings in the session after this on the criteria or condition or the priority that the Authority would like to take forward for design competition of different venues. So our open space definitely is part of our development. Another one is on the particularity or on the technical issue to plant different trees or different theme of trees in our area. Actually, we are -- we have invited tender to build up a tree nursery on-site in WKCD. I think it would be a very good opportunity in the -- apart from provide us tree supply where we are going to build a park, we can also test different species, different trees, different lawn, whether it is really sustainable for the purpose of our park design later on. So we are -- we are quite lucky here. We have this site available for us for this kind of test, so I hope that we can do a better job for the plantation.

Mr Andrew Lam (Board Member, WKCDA):

Thank you, Derek. Now, I have to wrap up this session, but I would like to use this opportunity to kind of just stress a point, a couple of key points. Now, first of all, when we talk about the vision of not just the park, but the West Kowloon district as a
whole, I think -- and that also makes -- is a key element that makes the green park or any public space very different from other public space in Hong Kong. There is a very strong arts and cultural element that we're expecting.

That said, we also made it very clear that it's a place for everyone, all right, so we have to encompass a lot of activities. We have to make room for all, and it's not about design flexibility, it is about usage flexibility. And how we are going to do that is a matter of how everyone in this room and in the development sector to work together to bring our vision to reality, and we are just approaching the end of the first stage. Hopefully, we'll be able to incorporate all your wisdom and submit our plan and get it approved by end of next year if everything's smooth, the third quarter, possibly, and then -- but during this period, our team will work very hard in parallel to engage you on the implementation side.

So thanks for joining this session, and I'm sure that we're going to have more elaborate discussions in connection with other issues including sustainability and connectivity in the coming two sessions which will be moderated by Ron. Thank you.

-End-