

智樂 playright

10 December 2007

BY MAIL AND BY FAX (3102 5997)

Home Affairs Bureau,
25/F Wanchai Tower,
12 Harbour Road,
Wanchai, Hong Kong

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Views on the Recommendation Report of the Consultative Committee (CC) on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District (The District)

We are most grateful for the opportunity you have given Playright Children's Play Association ("Playright") to comment on the above report, given the potential importance of its recommendations for improving and strengthening the cultural life of Hong Kong.

Playright is a not-for-profit organisation promoting the child's right to play. It has a clear and increasingly well recognized vision—to enrich the life of every child through quality play—and in this context we consider that the District has the potential for providing valuable opportunities for further enrichment, both for the children on whose behalf we are advocates and for other members of the community.

Our comments below have been distilled from the views of a large group of Playright staff and volunteers and are keyed directly to the main report's main recommendations.

The comments are a succinct outline of our views, and we and our expert teams trust to have the opportunity of meeting with staff of your bureau for an in-depth review and discussion.

Thank you for taking our views into consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Chow Chun-bong
Chairperson



Kathy Kin-ho Wong
Executive Director

Playright Children's Play Association 智樂兒童遊樂協會
Incorporated in Hong Kong and limited by guarantee

Patron: Dr Rosanna Wong Yick-Ming, DBE, JP 王葛鳴 博士 Honorary President: Mrs Anne Marden, BBS, JP

18A, Block F, 3 Lok Man Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong 香港柴灣樂民道3號F座18樓A室 Tel 電話 (852) 2898 2922 Fax 傳真 (852) 2898 4539

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Views of Playright Children's Play Association

**on the Recommendation Report
on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District
(The District)**

The District should be conceived of and presented as a sustainable development for future generations

Playright is very pleased to learn that the Government positions the project as “an investment in diversity of expressions, creativity, and community development as well as social harmony”. This is a major social investment, and whether or not The District proves a success will depend not only on the visionary ideas it embodies but also, and crucially, on its sustainability. As generation follows generation, the value of the cultural, recreation and educational experiences that today’s children will derive from The District will help to ensure its continuity and shape its gradual evolution. We thus urge the Government to see to it that The District is developed along progressive lines that are future oriented, readily sustainable and of strong appeal to all generations, including children.

The views and needs of all stakeholders, including children, must be considered in the design and planning of The District’s design and facilities

This leads us further to assert that the Government should ensure that in the planning stages, the mechanism for pro-actively seeking out and determining the cultural and recreational needs and interests of all stakeholders should include carefully planned and executed engagements with children and their families. Key decisions or endorsements made regarding the concept, design planning and operation of the hardware and the software of The District should take due account of well researched views and needs within the community, and the Authority should further ensure that stakeholders, including children, are adequately consulted and informed at various stages throughout the planning process.

Involving the views of children and professionals who work with them and for them

To enlarge on this last point, Playright proposes that children and their families should be ranked high among the key stakeholders of The District. Organizations working locally for children should thus be involved in the process of the development and planning of The District under the proposed Authority. When designing and managing the play space in The District, at least the following experts in children's rights, needs and issues should be involved: child care professionals, playwork professionals, and playground safety specialists, as well as play environment designers. Naturally, the voices of children themselves must also be directly heard.

M+ — a facility that expressly engages children and their families

The recommendation report refers to the iconic M+ with its four key groupings. This bids fair to become a new and forward-looking cultural institution with exciting museum functions. Playright welcomes this proposal as it is a good means of making The District stand out from existing cultural facilities. We propose that the Government should seize this opportunity to include at least the key elements of a children's museum, providing ample play opportunities for children to enrich their learning experiences and promoting adult-child interactions. With these two elements firmly in place, M+ can become a major repeat destination that will delight and educate families with children.

Conclusion

One reliable way of making The District a sustainable project that will imaginatively and effectively serve future generations is to consider the needs of children as expressed by children. M+ in particular should cater to children's needs and should ideally aspire to containing a fully dedicated children's museum along established and progressive international lines.

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