

Press release

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New exhibition of West Kowloon Cultural District plans opens in Hong Kong

A display of the latest designs for the West Kowloon Cultural District has opened in Hong Kong. This is the third and final public engagement exercise and will last for a month, after which the scheme will be finalised for submission to the Town Planning Board around the end of 2011.

Foster + Partners' masterplan is a framework for a sustainable new urban quarter focused on 17 core arts and cultural facilities. The views expressed by the public during the previous exhibitions have been incorporated into the design - the result is a more diverse sequence of urban spaces, including three new squares along the quarter's main artery, The Avenue: Xiqu Square, Central Square and Artist Square.

In response to stakeholder demand, West Kowloon Cultural District now includes a Freespace with a 150-seat Music Box; a variety of different Arts Pavilions; installations of public art across the district; and, subject to relevant statutory provisions, a floating arts pontoon along the waterfront and piers for water access.

There is an even richer mix of activities - new arts education facilities, resident company centres and arts and crafts studios, all connected by a new ground level public transport system.

Some of the cultural buildings have also been renamed and relocated. The Xiqu Centre has been moved from Central Square to Canton Road, in order to establish better synergy with the neighbourhood. M+ has been relocated from Canton Road to the headland of the Great Park, the focal point of Artist Square. The Concert Hall, now called the Music Centre to reflect its wider function, becomes the focal point of Central Square, together with the Centre for Contemporary Performance, which was formerly a cluster of black box theatres.

Norman Foster said:

"Once again, we have listened to the people of Hong Kong and the design has evolved as a result. We have incorporated the spaces and features that matter most to them - their input is vital to make the new cultural quarter a success long-term. We have been equally inspired by everything that makes Hong Kong such a great place - its energy, the shape of the streets and their rich mixture of activities. In this way, the new quarter will be a familiar extension of the city, but will offer so much more to Hong Kong's cultural life."

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