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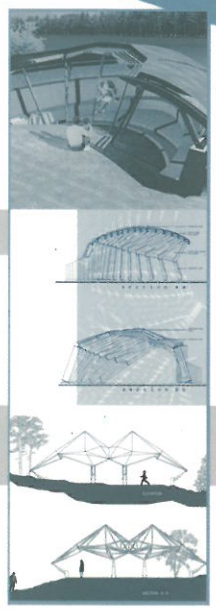
INTERVIEW

PROJECT

architecture 2001

AWARDS



COMPETITION

Journal
Issue No.29
3rd Quarter 2001

FROM THE EDITOR

J29

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Architectural Practice: Hong Kong and Beyond

Hong Kong as a metropolitan city provides the ideal conditions for practising with an international perspective. The practice boundary of local architects has never been limited to within Hong Kong only. Apart from accommodating international firms in Hong Kong, local architectural practices have always being reaching out internationally through joint ventures / consortia and establishing overseas offices. More significantly, most of the HKIA members have been practising architecture in mainland China since 1980s. With the recent policy of the central government to develop the Western region of China, there are new opportunities for construction works and architectural practice. In the following pages, the Institute's President timely offers an overview for members to consider 'Go West'. For economic reality and for architectural diversity, local architects have more reasons to think beyond Hong Kong, in particular with interest in mainland China. The unique environment of Hong Kong allows HKIA members to incubate and nourish with the benefit of international exposure and be able to extend and exercise our strength in Hong Kong and beyond.

In this issue of the Journal, we continue receiving articles to address local hot topics including design awards of the Institute, urban renewal, school design, building problems of housing and fire engineering in shopping malls. There are also articles submission from places outside Hong Kong such as Singapore and mainland China. On issues of concern for Hong Kong and beyond, we have articles covering topics of quality system in Singapore, view of overseas professor, architectural education in mainland China and history / culture of antiquated Chinese building regulations.

Edwin H. W. CHAN

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Go West

Accompanying the Hong Kong SAR Delegation to the Western region of China was a unique experience. Both the Hong Kong and China governments has input tremendous efforts to make the trip a success. It was a rare opportunity to be able to make friends amongst over two hundred top investors and government officials, travelling together in a chartered Dragon Air jet, given the excellent food and service to see what was there for one to explore in the West of China. The trip started from Xian, then Beijing, Chengdu and finally Urumqi. The press and the media massively covered the daily routine. Our Chief Secretary and the Delegation has obviously accomplished the task of showing China that Hong Kong has offered to our country's 'Go West' policy.

The Visits

The visit to each city was well organised. Clear documents and booklets were provided to illustrate the events to the delegation that was divided into small groups of seven to eight participants. Each group had a hard working 'minder' to keep track of every move of the members. All cities gave a red carpet welcome reception to us. However, Urumqi had outdone all of them by their impressive long queue of dancing girls in traditional costumes! There seemed to be little traffic in the cities as we cruised in coaches to the hotels where the luggage had already awaited us in our rooms. The arrangement of the visit was similar in each city. Chinese leaders gave introduction about their province and the city. Our CS returned a polite reply. Then it came the welcoming banquet which was usually superb, highlighting their local cuisine. Next we would visit their places of interest selected from a few choices; or attend opportunity discussions arranged by local authorities. The Hong Kong Delegation also attended the opening ceremonies

of the 'Hong Kong Advantage Exhibition' held in each city. If time permitted, there would be some evening entertainment. The reciprocate banquets hosted by the HKSAR were a bit disappointing. Guess it would be difficult for the chefs from the western region to find the right ingredients for Cantonese food. We ended the visit to each city with a most fruitful and happy event - the contract signing ceremony.

Meeting the Premier

The highlight for the visit had to be the meeting with our country's leader, Premier Zhu Rongji, in Beijing. Being friendly and approachable, he made us all feel at home, asking us many questions before he would offer his view on the issues. In fact, he outlined the objectives of the Central Government towards the western region. He commented that China is a vast country that has to be seen to be believed. He felt that the Eastern and the Southern regions have already got many opportunities. On the other hand, the Western region has minerals, natural gas, energy resources, beautiful scenery, cultural heritage, supply of labour and a lot of history yet to be tapped. The Central Government is committed to assist in the exploration of these opportunities by investing heavily in infrastructure and allowing tax benefits. 'If you have vision, it would not be inconceivable that you could become one of the richest man in the world,' cited our Premier. He also admitted that the policy of opening up the Western region to the world had received considerable objections from the Middle provinces. However, he firmly believed that 'whatever comes from the West will have to pass the Middle and the Middle will therefore always enjoy the benefit from this process'. He ended his meeting with us by shaking hands with the delegates on the right side and apologised humorously that due to poor feng shui he did not have time to do the same for those on the left.

The Cities

Over seventy members completed the whole journey including me. Our CS presented to everyone a vase for appreciation of good attendance. All in all, the visit has left me with some unforgettable experiences. China is a vast country; each place has its own characteristics. Unfortunately, the cities I have seen are developing in a very similar manner. High-rise developments are replacing old district buildings without much care about traffic, density or the distinct character of the place. A number of buildings are abandoned only part of the way through construction. I took pictures from the windows of the hotels in Xian, Chengdu and Urumqi. Frankly speaking, I could hardly tell which picture comes from which city. There needs to be more care about complimenting natural features with the built environment. Perhaps these cities have repeated the same mistakes that Hong Kong has made.

The Opportunities

Outside these cities, the countryside has a variety of interesting tourist spots. Xian, being an ancient city, has a lot of culture and history to offer. Chengdu and Urumqi have beautiful landscapes matching European and American scenery. Natural resources are abundant in the West, but to bring them out and people in you need to build sizable infrastructure. A lot of opportunities are outlined by the leaders. It will be necessary for the investors to make careful analysis to see if they can obtain reasonable return within an acceptable period of time. I suppose architects can always help investors in visualising what can happen in the future. Innovative commissions can definitely be successful through joint partnership. An area of particular interest is the development in education. The Western region will need developers to train young people to fulfil the variety of needs in the near future. As always, architects will be needed in a developing area. This time why not 'Go West'.

Note: I have left with the Institute the documents and materials that I brought back from this visit. Interested readers are welcome to view them at leisure.

Patrick S. S. LAU

DIARY & EVENTS

January 2001

19/1 Architects Registration Board Meeting
31/1 Council Meeting

February 2001

01/2 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting
15~18/2 Career and Education Expo
20/2 Board of Local Affairs Meeting
22/2 Board of Overseas Affairs Meeting
23/2 Board of Practices Meeting

March 2001

01/3 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting
07/3 Council Meeting
09/3 Architects Registration Board Meeting
22/3 Board of Overseas Affairs Meeting
26/3 Board of Local Affairs Meeting
30/3 Board of Practices Meeting

April 2001

18/4 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting
19/4 Board of Internal Affairs Meeting
25/4 Council Meeting
27/4 Architects Registration Board Meeting

May 2001

03/5 Board of Overseas Affairs Meeting
04/5 Board of Practices Meeting
07/5 Board of Local Affairs Meeting
29/5 Board of Internal Affairs Meeting
30/5 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting

June 2001

01/6 Architects Registration Board Meeting
06/6 Council Meeting
13/6 2nd Quarterly General Meeting
15/6 Board of Practices Meeting
21/6 Board of Overseas Affairs Meeting
27/6 Board of Local Affairs Meeting

July 2001

11/7 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting
13/7 Architects Registration Board Meeting
17/7 Board of Internal Affairs Meeting
25/7 Council Meeting
27/7 Board of Practices Meeting

August 2001

02/8 Board of Overseas Affairs Meeting
06/8 Board of Local Affairs Meeting
22/8 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting
31/8 Architects Registration Board Meeting

September 2001

04/9 Board of Internal Affairs Meeting
07/9 Board of Practices Meeting
12/9 Council Meeting
13/9 Board of Overseas Affairs Meeting
17/9 Board of Local Affairs Meeting
19/9 3rd Quarterly General Meeting

October 2001

10/10 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting
16/10 Board of Internal Affairs Meeting
19/10 Architects Registration Board Meeting
26/10 Board of Practices Meeting
29/10 Board of Local Affairs Meeting
31/10 Council Meeting

November 2001

01/11 Board of Overseas Affairs Meeting
14/11 Board of Educational Affairs Meeting
27/11 Board of Internal Affairs Meeting
30/11 Board of Practices Meeting

December 2001

03/12 Board of Local Affairs Meeting
06/12 Board of Overseas Affairsf Meeting
07/12 Architects Registration Board Meeting
11/12 Council Meeting
12/12 Annual General Meeting

Science Park, Phase 1A

Architectural Firm:
Simon Kwan & Associates Ltd.
(Master Planner: MLP; Architect: Phase 1A)
Architectural Services Department
(Project Management)

Design Team:
Simon Kwan, Patrick Cheung, Michael Yam, Edwin Wong, Felix Li, Jeffrey Au, Esther Wong, Edward Leung, Paul Lee and Maggie Chu

Project Data (Phase 1A)
Location: Pak Shek Kok, New Territories
Function: Core Building with research office, service apartment and a wide range of communal facilities
Structure: Precast concrete structure with steel roof
Main exterior finishes: Curtain wall system, glass, aluminium and stone
Site Area: 36,426m² (Phase 1A under lease)
Gross floor area: 22,813m² (Building 1 and 2)
No. of floors: 5
Construction cost: HK$735,950,000
Design date: Feb 1999 (MLP)
June 1999 (Phase 1A)
Completion date: December 2001

Project Description
A 22-ha site at Tolo Harbour will be developed in three phases to foster the research, development, and commercial application of new technologies in Hong Kong. The master plan promotes clustering and interaction, multi- and single-tenant facilities, residential accommodations and a full set of retail, recreation and communal amenities are distributed within three designated zones - campus, core and corporate. An enclosed arcade, waterfront promenade and vehicular ring road optimise access, while graduated massing and a sequenced open space network ensure experiential continuity. Phase 1A comprises three buildings, two linked office blocks and one car park building. The overall design projects a Hi-tech image, reflecting the technological research programme of the Science Park. The building's envelope is curtain wall, topped with curve metal roof and contains a 30-m high pedestrians atrium street with allowance for linking up with buildings of the latter phases.

The Phase 1A building offers sufficient office space, with its flexible floor plan layout and will be provided with state of art information technology facilities. It is also supported by a wide range of communal facilities at ground and first floor including restaurants, conference rooms, fitness centre and cyber café to create a friendly and self contained environment.

Atrium Street

Hong Kong Science Park, aerial view

Car park building

Master layout plan

Lift lobby atrium

Building 1 & 2

Main elevation, Science Park, Phase 1A

HKIA Annual Awards 2000

Ten Points to win the HKIA Awards

I was honoured to be selected as one of the jurors for the HKIA Award this year. Looking from a juror's point of view, I would like to share my experiences and personal opinions on how to approach and hopefully win the Award.

Submit the Presentation before Deadline

It is well-known that the Institute is strict and punctual. All the late submissions would be disqualified as stated on the competition brief. So try to prepare your submission earlier. There is no harm in checking your travel time from your office to the Institute before, if the submission has to be delivered very close to the deadline.

The Presentation must be Smart

There are approximately eighty submissions annually. The time dedicated to each presentation by the jurors is about five minutes. A smart and sharp presentation is important to grasp the attention of the jurors.

The Photos must be on a Professional Level

The first round of the selection is significantly dependent on the photographic impact. These are the projects that reach the shortlist (nomination). Try to choose informative and good looking angles of your design. To avoid presenting photographs that tell nothing.

Clear Concept and Short Essay

Using short words, clear plans and simple diagrams are effective in describing your concepts. There is no added value in having a long essay on the concept or spatial experiences. The jurors are not English teachers but Architects. They intend to see the concept and the special qualities expressed in an architectural language rather than words.

Bring out the special Features or the Essence of the Project

Starting from this year, the HKIA Award has new awards for specific features. For example, if your project emphasises on the environmental issues, historical preservation, disabled convenience or any other topics, it would be beneficial to express them on your presentation. This would assist the jurors to consider the prize in relation to your design.

Don't be late on the Site Visit

After the first round is selected, the jurors have to make site visits to the selected projects. Of course it is rare that the architects of the selected company would be late on site; although it is possible that the jurors would be, this is due to their previous site visits. Please be patient in waiting for the jurors and take into consideration that they have a hard day ahead.

Have a Clear Guide through the Projects

Careful planning on how to guide the jurors through the project is very important. Direct your emphases on guiding the jurors to the positive aspects of your design. If possible, avoid passing through underdeveloped areas. To be short, make the site visit as an enjoyable architectural journey for the jurors.

Assist the Jurors to know mor

The time dedicated to each site visit roughly thirty minutes. Practise you speech before the juror visit. There i no harm in presenting panels tha demonstrate concept diagrams, plans sections or details to give a bette understanding of your design.

Make a well Handout to the Jurors

Providing a handout to the jurors i acceptable. This handout could b used as a tool to re-capture all the majo issues. The final award nominatio would not be carried out on the day o the site visit, therefore, the handout i very important to refresh the essence o your design to the jurors before an during the final selection.

The Project must be Outstandin

No matter how well your presentatio is; there is nothing more importan than the project itself. The design ha to be outstanding and exceptional. The effort in developing the project and it execution can be recognised in the design; in other words the architecture can speak for itself.

Irrespective of this award, I wish every architect could continue the will to promote excellence and essence o architecture in its true meaning in the future.

By Michael CHAN