

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Annual General Meeting 2024
President's Report

Dear Members

Thank you for attending the Institute's AGM which marks my final formal meeting with Members as the HKIA President. Amidst the festive season, I am pleased to report to you all the latest activities of the Institute.

The successfully completed awards presentation on the 6 November Annual Dinner and the 10-day Awards exhibition ending on 28 November have revealed the long-awaited list of award recipients from several HKIA award programmes. In summary, the 2024 Gold Medal goes to Rocco Yim, an HKIA Member whose projects have already received numerous prestigious awards both locally and overseas over the years. As to our signature Annual Awards, similar to last year, we received an excellent response from our Members, resulting in over 100 quality submissions. This led to the selection of 3 Medals of the Year awards which are best of the best, 8 HKIA Awards, 12 Merits, 3 President's Special Prizes, 12 Special Awards and 16 Finalists. It is heartening to see that the younger generation stepping up and competing against more mature Members. Another example is this year's Young Architect Award recipient, Owen Lam, whose exceptional performance tells us that he is ready to take up the baton.

After a hiatus for a few years, the 5th Cross-Strait Architectural Design Awards (CADA) has returned this year with an overwhelming response of 201 entries. With the final adjudication came to a close last week, I can tell you that there are quite a number of exceptional projects. The awards presentation ceremony is tentatively scheduled for 1 March of 2025 at Asia Society, with the exhibition to follow in the first quarter.

A new event organized by HKIA is the International Belt and Road Forum, a 2-day symposium to be held on 28 February and 1 March of 2025. The Forum is funded by government PSP, with a lineup of esteemed speakers. Please stay tuned for more details in upcoming HKIA announcements.

We have been actively engaging with our counterparts in Mainland China and overseas during this year's fourth quarter. Twenty-six HKIA Members, including myself, participated in the UIA 2024 International Forum held in Kuala Lumpur in November. The Forum's theme was "Diversecity". Not only did HKIA set up an exhibition booth showcasing our Members' achievements, we also successfully held a parallel session on "Water, Sustainability and Architecture" with UIA President Ar. Regina GONTHIER being one of the speakers. Meanwhile, the ARCASIA Forum22 is confirmed to take place from 14-19 January 2025 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Many of us are keen to join and look forward to meeting other architectural professionals at the event.

Market conditions have deteriorated in the fourth quarter, with notable declines in both public and private works. Sarcastically, not that long ago we were talking about lack of manpower and now there are lack of works, and salary freeze and layoff cases are common in the construction industry. HKIA is collaborating with other professional institutions and engaging in frequent meetings with government officials to address

these challenges and boost the industry. Talent retention is a key concern in that the drop in demand for young professionals could drive them to seek opportunities elsewhere. The resulting talent drain may slow down the recovery when the market turns around. Despite the gloomy situation, our BP and BLA colleagues as well as HKIA representatives sitting on various government committees continue to contribute their time and efforts relentlessly to streamline government procedures, enhance site safety, explore job opportunities for young professionals and create a better built environment.

There were some 270 to 400 candidates took part in last month's Professional Assessment paper exams. Owing to the closure of KITEC for redevelopment, the exam venue was moved to Science Park in Shatin. Despite the new venue and arrangement, everything went smoothly. Meanwhile, to facilitate the influx of new blood into the architectural profession, BEdA is studying the consolidation of Professional Assessment exam papers so as to lower the hurdles for students to become an architect.

In an effort to modernize, we will be discussing the introduction of electronic voting later today. Another new initiative of the Council is that we are launching an HKIA WhatsApp Community Group today as a platform for special announcements. Participation is totally voluntary, and your personal identity and contact information will be kept confidential.

Our Sports Teams have continued to perform well in the final quarter of the year. After winning the champion of the soccer tournament in late September, our table tennis team was the second runner-up in the RSCP November tournament. Our volleyball men's team was the champion while the women's team 1st runner-up in the 1 December tournament. Looking forward, HKIA will host the RSCP badminton tournament in January, and I hope you will join me to be the cheerleaders to support our badminton team. The success of our sports team depends on members' participation. This year HKIA has formed two new teams which are the tennis team and cycling team, and they are already participating in practice sessions and tournaments. I encourage you to sign up with one or more of the teams to showcase the diverse talents that we architects possess.

As this marks my final formal HKIA general meeting as President, may I extend my best wishes to the new Council in advancing the Institute's work. I look forward to serving on the new Council as Immediate Past President.

Thank you.

Benny CHAN Chak Bun, *FHKIA, R.A.*
President
13 December 2024